

This is week 2 of our series 'He is called'. As we run up to Christmas we're looking at four titles given to Jesus by the prophet Isaiah.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

This was written 700 years before Jesus was born but there is little doubt that it was written about him. Today I want to spend a bit of time on the second title and there's better explanation of what we're talking about in Jeremiah 32:17. It's interesting because it starts with this word translated 'ah'. Now, ah is a Hebrew word and it means a painful groan. So the verse says: *Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great* – what? Say it with me: your great *power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.*

What's too hard for God? Maybe you came to church today, and you've got problems. Maybe your marriage is a mess. Let me tell you, nothing is too hard for God. Maybe you lost your job or your income isn't quite enough, and you don't know where to turn. No matter how bad it looks, let me tell you, nothing is too hard for God. Maybe the doctor has given you some information about an illness and it's bad news. Let me tell you today, nothing, nothing, nothing is too hard for God. God is the mighty God. He is all powerful. He is almighty.

I want to share some characteristic of God that relate to this. Omni might be the latin way to think of what Jeremiah was trying to describe with his 'ah Sovereign Lord'. God is:

Omniscient: that means God knows us but also nature, the past, present and future. It involves everything we can imagine and then much more. He has always had this knowledge and he doesn't need to learn. To some people that seems really scary – that there is someone who knows everything about us: even those things we try to hide from everyone else. But the good news is that God knows every thought, word and action of my life – and loves me anyway!

God is also: ***Omnipresent*** - God is everywhere. Here's what amazes me: right now other believers are meeting all over Scotland and God is with them, just as he is with us, and wherever believers meet today he is there. But he is also in places Christians avoid. God is at work throughout the world.

God is also: ***Omnipotent*** – God is all powerful. God can do anything. This living word is full of signs and wonders and miracles that God has done. There is nothing that is too hard for God. God is almighty. God is all powerful. He can do anything. Yet, often, I know that in here. I really do. I know it, and I

read it, but I've got to be honest with you today. Sometimes, I just don't see it. I look at the world and it's just full of pain and suffering. It is wars and famine and people going off to Iraq, and just, I hear and see on the news what people are going through, and I'm thinking, "God, where is Your power?" Maybe today in your life, you're asking the same question. "Where is God's power in my life?" Maybe you're in a real tough road here with a relationship, and Christmas is just making it worse, because you can't seem to reconcile and you've got more problems, and you're thinking, "God, where are You?" Maybe you've had a dream for something to happen, and it hasn't yet, and you say, "God, where is Your power?" Well today, we are going on a journey in God's word, because let me tell you. Jesus' power is real. We just may not see it the way we want to see it.

The first spiritual truth is this: ***Jesus' power is at work in you.*** In Philippians 2:13 Paul writes, 'Yes, it is God who is working in you. He helps you want to do what pleases him, and he gives you the power to do it.' Where is God working? In you! Helping you to want to do what pleases him. Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that life with God should be easy. That he should take all our problems away but that is not what God is doing. God's power is not to make my life easy. God's power is to work in me, the scripture says, to change me. To take me from being selfish, self-centred into someone who is Christ-like with love and compassion, with peace and patience and gentleness and self-control, and those fruits of the Spirit. You see, God's power is real. We just don't always see it. God's power is working in us. Now, maybe for you, you don't see God's power. You think everyone else gets the breaks. Maybe someone at work gets the promotion and you get passed up. Maybe today you think that God has put you on the shelf and forgotten about you, and nothing seems to be happening. You think, "Where is God's power in my life," and you don't see it. Remember, it's not about making your life easy - God's power is real. Jesus' power is working in you to change you, to make you more like him. ***Jesus' power is working in you.***

Secondly, ***Jesus' power is working for you.***

In Isaiah 40:29 it says: He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary. Now, youths in the Hebrew is a word that equates to Olympic athlete, the best of the best. Even the best of the best grow tired and weary. And it goes on to say, "Young men, they stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." Maybe this hits home for you today. You're weary. You're tired. You're worn out. It took everything in you just to get to church today. You're worn out. It's coming towards the end of the year and you're struggling to keep going. The good news is, God gives strength and power to the weary.

One of the heroes of the faith is Paul, the apostle. He wrote a lot of the New Testament. And Paul had a weakness. He had a handicap, and he asked God, "Take it away." Not once, not twice, but three times. He's knocking on God's door. He's saying, "Take it away. Take it away." And God responds to him in 2 Cor 12:9, "*My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.*" And then Paul replies, and he says, "*And so now I am glad to boast about my weakness so that the,*" what? "*So that the power of Christ can rest on me.*"

He goes on to say something very significant:

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. For Paul, one of the most significant believers who ever lived, it boils down to, 'When I am weak, I am strong'. (Give him plans and ambitions etc become weak to receive his strength)

Sometimes it is only when we reflect on those moments when we felt at our lowest that we realise God was with us and we can recognise his power in our circumstances. I don't know where you are today, whether things are going well or are difficult, but no matter where you are be assured that God loves you. He cares about you and has a plan for you. Christ's power is real and he is working in you to make you more like him. He is working for you and when you are weak you can become strong.

Lastly, ***Jesus' power is at work through you.***

Look at Acts 1:8 – Jesus is sharing last words with them before he goes back to heaven and he tells them this: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* One of the most significant lies the devil whispers to us is, "You can't". God says, "YOU CAN!" I don't know how many times I've heard people say, "Oh no, I couldn't do that!" Couldn't read the bible, couldn't pray, couldn't do a reflection, couldn't help with young church. Of course, I understand that everyone has different gifts and that we're not all called to the same things but too often it is an excuse not to trust God. Remember Paul – when I am weak, then I am strong. This week someone told me I would never get them on the chancel – I thought about that and while I think that person could, with a bit of thought and preparation, read or pray well, that's not where their gifts lie. I see that person having taken up challenges that have stretched their faith and have allowed God's power to work through them in other ways. God says, "You can – if you let my power work in you!"

I want to tell you today, that every one of you, if you are a Christ follower, you are a minister. Whether you're a council worker, or whether you have a business, or you're an employee, or you're retired, whatever you do, if you're a

follower of Christ, you are a minister. And Jesus' power is available to work through you, if you will just step out in faith and have a go. Jesus' power works through you.

I stand here not today anyone special. I'm just an ordinary guy who has had to get over reluctance about following God because it didn't fit my plan; who has had to learn to overcome shyness; who has failed God and other people. I just love Jesus. And today, I'm here because God's power has worked in, for and through my life.

Maybe you feel that God couldn't use you but that's simply not true. Something extraordinary happens when Jesus' power comes in and works through you. Jesus, two thousand years ago, chose twelve ordinary people: fishermen, tax collectors - they had nothing going for them in the world's eyes. They weren't Pharisees or Sadducees. They weren't some spiritual leaders, and He took those twelve ordinary people, and when the power of Jesus worked through them, they did extraordinary things and changed the world.

We are ordinary people who know an extraordinary God. Look what God has done when ordinary people were willing to allow God's power to work in, for and through them. So the question is will you allow God to make you more like Jesus, through your weakness and into his strength. Are we as a congregation willing to allow Jesus power to work through us to bring faith, healing, signs and wonders and miracles because when we let Jesus' power work through us extraordinary things will happen.