

The Power of His Word.

Today I take my text from something once said to the Lord Jesus by a gentile centurion (Matt. 8. 8¹):

‘speak the word only’.

King Solomon² once wrote, ‘Where *the word of a king* is, there is power’ (Eccles. 8. 4³). How much greater therefore the power wielded by the word of Him who is *the ‘King of kings’* (Rev. 17. 14; 19. 16) – by the word of One far ‘greater than Solomon’ (Matt. 12. 42).

And, throughout the days of our Lord’s so-called ‘Public Ministry’, He demonstrated time after time that His word carried immense, *seemingly* invincible, power.

(i) No **disease or bodily sickness** could withstand the power of His word. By way of example, you have only to ask the paralytic of the following chapter (Matt. 9. 2-7).

(ii) **Distance** was no match for the power of His word. You have only to ask (a) the centurion who provided me with my text, or (b) the royal official whose dying ‘child’ had been healed at a distance of almost 20 miles⁴ (John 4. 46-54⁵).

(iii) **Demons** were not proof against the power of His word. You have only to ask (a) Mary Magdalene (Luke 8. 2), (b) the man with the unclean spirit in the synagogue (Mark 1. 23-27), (c) the man named ‘Legion’ (Mark 5. 1-13), or (d) the father of the young child at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9. 14-29).⁶

(iv) **The devil** himself could not resist the power of His word. Jesus had only to command, ‘Go, Satan!’ and ‘the devil left Him’ (Matt. 4. 8-11).⁷

(v) **Death** (the so-called ‘king of terrors’, Job 18. 14) could not counter the power of the word of *this King!* You have only to ask (a) Jairus and his wife (Mark 5. 22, 41-42), (b) the widow of Nain (Luke 7. 12-15), or (c) the sisters from Bethany (John 11. 1, 43-44).

Yes, all of these (*disease, distance, demons, devil and death*) were subject to the power of His word.

But so too were (vi) **the natural elements**. You have only to ask His fearful disciples (Mark 4. 39).⁸

In summary, neither *disease nor distance* – neither *demons nor devil* – neither *death nor the elements* – were a match for the Saviour’s mighty word.

Not that this should surprise us. For His was the powerful word (i) which once *made all things* (Psa. 33. 6, 9⁹), (ii) which now *upholds all things* (Heb. 1. 3¹⁰), and (iii) which one day will *destroy all His foes* (Rev. 19. 15¹¹).

Oh, yes, it certainly *seemed* that there was *nothing* which this King could *not* accomplish by speaking ‘*the word only*’.

Ah, but, **there was one thing** (just one thing) **which lay altogether outside the range of His powerful word.**

And *that* was my salvation. *That* would cost Him, *not His word, but His very life*. That would cost Him the suffering of the cross!

Let us thank God today that we can each say, ‘the Son of God ... loved me and gave *Himself* for me’ (Gal. 2. 20).

Notes

¹ Many people 'marvelled' at the Lord Jesus and His words and works; for example, in Luke's Gospel alone, in Luke 2. 33; 4. 22; 8. 25; 9. 43; 11. 14; 20. 26; 24. 41. (The word 'marvel' translates the Greek word 'θαύμαξω', although in several verses some translations render the word 'θαύμαξω' in various ways.)

But there are only two occasions when we read that the Lord Himself marvelled; (i) here at the '*great faith*' of a gentile centurion in Capernaum, Matt. 8. 10; Luke 7. 9, and, (ii) in Mark 6 at the '*unbelief*' of a Jewish congregation in His own town of Nazareth, Mark 6. 6.

² Solomon was better placed than most to know the truth of his claim.

³ 'Power' in the sense of 'control over', 'rule over'.

⁴ 'Jesus was in Cana and this man lived in Capernaum, almost twenty miles away', William Barclay, '*Daily Study Bible*', on John 4. 46-54.

⁵ Note that the royal official 'believed *the word* that Jesus had spoken', John 4. 50.

⁶ On each of the last three occasions, formidable demonic forces had been expelled by our Lord's emphatic command, 'Come out'.

⁷ One short, pointed word from Jesus ('Go') was enough to expel the nefarious overlord of evil.

⁸ As often noted, in their days both Moses and Elijah had controlled mighty waters. But Moses had needed a rod, Exod. 14. 16, and Elijah had needed a robe, 2 Kings 2. 8, and, in both cases, simply to *divide* the waters. The Lord Jesus needed neither rod nor robe to *master* the surging waves of the sea; His powerful word was sufficient.

⁹ Cf. 'and God said', Gen. 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26.

¹⁰ Cf. Col. 1. 17.

¹¹ Cf. Isa. 11. 4; 2 Thess. 2. 8. And also see Matt. 21. 19-20.