

## The Seduction of Power

Scripture used: [Ephesians 1:19-22 \(NLT\)](#)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued our new message series focused on the concept of power. Here, he asks: "What is our relationship to power? What do we wish it to be?" Some of us may be living on the wrong side of power, and feeling completely powerless. Some of us may feel powerful thanks to material advantages. But earthly power is inherently a flawed concept. An illusion is that power is fixed and finite, and we must hoard it and monopolize it for maximum gain. In fact, power comes from God, it's infinite - but we need to organize to push for positive change.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) Last week was Easter, with a message focused on power. The disciples were completely dejected on Holy Friday after the crucifixion. The leaders in Jerusalem had been seduced by the power of fear, jealousy, and misinformation. They misused religious authority. They leveraged the Roman Empire's authority to put Jesus to death. But on Holy Sunday, the tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive, **again**. This is *resurrection power*. Power that is bigger than death. The final word over evil, truly ultimate power! Transcendent power regardless of our stage in life.
- 2) [Abraham Kuyper](#) wrote that Christ is sovereign over every square inch of the universe. His power has cosmic scope (see [Ephesians 1:9](#)). This power has a redemptive purpose. God's work is expansive, and applies to all of Creation. C.S. Lewis uses the metaphor of going to a higher authority, who has total sway to make decisions. We, children of God, have the power of prayer. We have the privilege to participate, by prayer, and by engagement in the world.
- 3) Worldly power is not ultimate power. We should not place undue faith in it. State (governmental) power, economic power, technology, and even education, are not the real sources of power. The film "Oppenheimer" chronicles the life and accomplishments of the father of the atomic bomb. The Manhattan Project, and the use of the atomic bomb against Japan to end World War II, are iconic and tragic examples of the ultimate power of the state. But Oppenheimer and many of his colleagues had a complicated relationship to power. They knew that power is seductive, that it controls us. In a 1956 interview reflecting on his career, Oppenheimer lamented the sin of pride. In 1954, during the McCarthy era, Oppenheimer's security clearance was revoked. His own status and power had dwindled to virtually nothing.
- 4) Abusive power rarely self-corrects. Absolute power corrupts absolutely (Lord Acton, 1887). We should never indulge abusive power in the home, in the workplace. It's toxic, and will only get worse. The new generative AI tools are extremely powerful. They will be used for good and evil, in unimaginable ways.
- 5) Jesus' power aligns with His character and ultimate goal for Creation. Jesus uses His extraordinary dominion to empower those on the margins of life. His power is fully and perfectly integrated with His sacrificial, redemptive love - that's why we can trust and be safe with God's power, and that's why God's power and authority, perfectly combined with His love, is necessary to provide guardrails for every use of human or worldly power.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - How does worldly power most affect your life right now? Is it power dynamics at work, at school, or in your family or close relationships? What kinds of power (technological, economic, etc.) do you most commonly interact with? What is the upside of power and the downside of power in your experience?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Ephesians 1:19-22 \(NLT\)](#). What are the implications of God's authority and power in Jesus being the ultimate power, having sway over all Creation? How does the ultimate reality of God's power change the way we perceive and interact with sources of worldly power? How can we be more wise, faithful, and redemptive in the way we interact with worldly power? What do we learn from the way Jesus utilized power? What is the relationship between power and love in the world? What about the relationship between power and love in God's kingdom?
- 3) **DO** - Take time this week to reflect and pray about where you feel oppressed by worldly power, and where you have access to utilize worldly power. Ask God for wisdom for how to make wise, redemptive, and empowered choices knowing that God's power and love is ultimate. See you next Sunday!