

## Power Clothed in Humility

*By Linda Rex*

**November 26, 2023, Christ the King or Reign of Christ / After Pentecost**—It seems as though a common thread in our political sphere today wherever we may live, is a thirst for power. To control the assets, policy, and people of a country or a company drives many to seek out positions of power, often with little regard for such virtues as integrity, compassion, courtesy or generosity. Very often, the code followed is that the ends justify the means, and for that reason, anything that works is what is done, even if it is at the expense of others. If you don't move out of the way of such persons, you will be stepped on and crushed as they pursue the position of power they seek.

This pursuit of power is in huge contrast with the way in which God manifests his power. Daily, we experience the divine power at work as in hushed tones, the planets rotate on their axis in common orbit around their stars. The earth rotates continually from night into day, and the life manifest on the planet continues through each season of spring, summer, fall, and winter. We experience a sunrise or sunset that is clouded or glorious, without giving any thought as to how these even came about. We don't hear God saying, "Look what I did today!" He just does it—one more time.

When we read the biblical story, we find a God who relentlessly pursues a relationship with creatures who resist and reject him. At any point God could have allowed the humans he created to fall back into the nothingness out of which he created them, but he hasn't. Instead, God does the unthinkable, and in the person of a tiny infant, enters into our world to become an infant, birthed in humble circumstances, and laid in a manger.

We find God's humility written all over the human existence of Jesus Christ. The angels didn't keep silent when Jesus was born—they celebrated with a glorious announcement. But it wasn't too long, and Jesus' birth was smeared with blood as the babes in Bethlehem were slain by a power-hungry king, who feared for his throne. So Jesus, true and divine heir to the Judean throne, went into exile in Egypt, and then spent his childhood growing up in the backwater nowhere town of Nazareth. Called bastard by the locals and rejected by the religious leaders, Jesus was still the most powerful man on the planet. As God in human flesh, he would speak the word and people were healed, the blind could see, the deaf could hear, and the dead awakened.

Even so, the power manifest in Jesus Christ, which Paul describes in Ephesians 1:15–23, was not revealed until our Savior went all the way into the depths of an ignominious death on the cross. This was a death that the Jewish people of his day called accursed, and the Romans considered foolishness. This undeserved end to Jesus' life, he fully embraced, even intentionally sought out, for the sole reason of exposing the depths of human depravity, sickness, and death to the light of his divine love.

How many people today would be willing to go to this extreme in their positions of power in order to lay down their lives for others? Who would be willing to give up completely, even to the point of death, their ability to control, manage, direct, or change things? Who would be willing to take this position of humility and shame for the sake of others?

The apostle Paul prays that the members in Ephesus would have the ability to comprehend the surpassing greatness of the power Jesus had for those of us who believe. When Jesus talks about the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46, he is describing what he was about to do on behalf of all creation. Jesus gave himself as the Bread of Life for the spiritually hungry; he gave himself as the Water of Life for the spiritually thirsty; we were strangers to God, but Jesus invited us into the Triune life and love; we were spiritually naked and full of sin—Jesus covered us with his

garments of salvation and his righteousness; we were sin-sick and ravaged by evil—Jesus healed us; we were imprisoned by sin, self, and Satan—Jesus set us free!

The way God uses power is humble, self-sacrificing and serving. God's greatest power was manifest in Jesus' resurrection from the dead, for in it, he brought our human flesh out of death into new life, seating us face-to-face with our Father in the Spirit. In sending the Spirit, Jesus invites every human being to participate in his own life, and draws together people from all nations into union and communion as his Body, the Church. As the Body of Christ, we manifest the risen King's divine resurrection power to a broken, hungry, and hurting world through faith, hope, and love—as we serve, love, and care for others. This is true power clothed in humility—Christ in us by the Spirit—expressing his love for all he has created.

*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we stand amazed. In true humility, you have invited us to share in your glory and your goodness. Thank you, Jesus, for manifesting so marvelously the majesty of true power, through your humility and sacrifice on our behalf. Open the eyes of our hearts that we may know the hope of your calling, the riches of the glory of your inheritance in the saints and the surpassing greatness of your power toward us who believe. Give us your Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of you, Jesus, as King of kings, who reigns over all, now and forever. Amen.*

*“For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:15–23 NASB*