

**III** – Here are Forbes magazine’s top 10 most powerful people:

1. Hu Jintao, President of China
2. **Barack Obama**, President of the United States
3. Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia
4. Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Russia
5. Pope Benedict XVI of the Vatican
6. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany
7. David Cameron, Prime Minister of Great Britain
8. Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve
9. Sonia Gandhi, President of India
10. **Bill Gates**, Co-Chair of Microsoft

[Top 10 Most Powerful People in the world \(2010\) | LUXUO Luxury Blog http://www.luxuo.com/celebrities/forbes-most-powerful-people-2010.html#ixzz2b99cep1y](http://www.luxuo.com/celebrities/forbes-most-powerful-people-2010.html#ixzz2b99cep1y)

*Forbes* magazine defines “power” with words like: “wielding influence over masses of people”, “the size of their audience” and “net worth”.

Today, we’re talking about REAL power. And where it comes from. Paul wants us to know what real power is.

- And he talks about it in three ways in verses 16, 18 and 20.:

1. Power that works **in** us.
2. Power that works **through** us.
3. And power that works **out of** us.

## 1. Power that works **IN** us.

1. Our power comes from OUTSIDE of us. Not from **within** us. Verse 16:

- *16I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,*

God strengthens us with HIS power, not with OUR power. Our power comes from God. And his power works IN us, in our inner being. In other words, God is the powerful one.

**III** – Tony Robbins is the author of the book “unlimited power” and “personal power II”. He’s a motivational speaker and author. He encourages people to “unleash the power within”. Here’s a quote from him: (slide)

- *“One reason so few of us achieve what we truly want is that we never direct our focus; we never concentrate our power. Most people dabble their way through life, never deciding to master anything in particular.”*

And he’s absolutely right! We often don’t direct our focus or use our power. We dabble our way through life! And that’s the point Paul is making. With one slight difference. Our power comes from **God**. It’s not OUR power.

You see, human power is limited. Not unlimited. Human power is flawed. Human power often fails us. Like when I pull a ham string walking down the stairs at home! Human power comes and goes. Human power is judged by influence and wealth and the size of our audience.

But **our** power comes from God – **through his Holy Spirit**. And THAT is an **unlimited** power. And what is this power for? Verse 17:

- *17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*

**III** – Have you ever tried to change?

One of the funniest images of my youngest son is when he’s trying to get a jumper off. But his head is a bit too big for some of his jumpers. So he gets stuck. And he walks around with this jumper half way off his head. Stuck. Arms up in the air. And I hear the muffled cries of “Dad, I can’t get my jumper off! Help!”

He can’t change on his own. He gets stuck. And he needs the strength of his Father. One of the things Robbins and many leaders talk about, again and again, is the power to change. The power to change ourselves. The power to inspire change in others. To power to make changes in our world.

For us, the power to change comes through Christ **dwelling** in our hearts by faith. Think about that. God makes his home **in us** by his Holy Spirit. We become places where Christ is at home. Where he **dwells**.

**III** – Think about your **dwelling** place. Think about when you’re relaxed and “at home”.

- Home is where your toothbrush is. Where your bed is. Where your fridge is. Where you dwell is where you eat, sleep and brush your teeth.

The fact that Christ dwells in our hearts means that he lives with us **all the time**, in our WHOLE LIFE.

The power for change doesn’t come from finding our strength within. It comes from the strength, the power, of Christ dwelling in our lives, every moment of every day. It’s not a power that we muster up for special occasions. It’s God’s power IN us, all the time.

And when Christ dwells in our lives, then we see that power at work THROUGH us:

## 2. Power that works THROUGH us.

So what happens when Jesus dwells in us, and his Holy Spirit works through us? What does that look like? Verse 17:

*“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have **power**, together with all the saints, **to grasp** how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.” (18)*

We are given the power to: **grasp the love of Jesus Christ**.

Isn't that interesting? That God's power enables us to grasp the dimensions of the love of Jesus. Not power to do. Not power to know. Not power to influence. But power to **grasp**.

- **To grasp that his love is wide, long, high and deep.**

His love is **wide** – encompassing all of our life.

His love is **long** – enduring – everlasting.

His love is **high** – he lifts us up to the heavenly realms.

And his love is **deep** – it reaches to the depths of our needs – into our inner being.

God's love is complete. And unfailing. And he gives us the power to **grasp** that love.

Why? Why is it so important for us to **grasp** his love? What comes out of grasping that love? Verse 20:

## 3. Power that works OUT OF us.

*“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his **power that is at work in us**, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus. (20-21)*

Glory. With God's power working in us, and the Holy Spirit working through us, we are able to grasp the love of Jesus and **glorify** God. Glorifying God is what comes OUT of us.

As we talked about last week, we don't DO good works to be saved. We're already saved by simply putting our faith in Jesus. But because we have been saved, because his love has been made ***known*** to us, we respond by living in ways that glorify God.

So what is glory? What is it to glorify God? One helpful dictionary definition is this:

- **“To reveal the glory of God by one's actions”**

- **III** – Learning piano.

My oldest son is learning piano. And there are two ways he can glorify his teacher. He can say “thank you” and he can tell her she’s a great teacher and that he loves learning from her. But he can also glorify her by practicing and performing. By playing. It glorifies her when he plays well and puts into practice what he’s learning. It reveals how good **she** is when he plays well.

We can glorify God by saying thank you and using words and songs that give him glory. But we can also glorify him when we put into practice what he teaches us. By being obedient. By being merciful and kind and forgiving, and generous. By being good students. By doing what he’s taught us to do.

Paul prays that God’s power will be at work in us to glorify God. To him be the glory IN THE CHURCH and IN CHRIST JESUS. These are the two places where we should see God glorified – **in the church** and **in Christ Jesus**. First, in us, the church – by the way each of us speak and act. And secondly, in Christ Jesus – in his life, death and resurrection.

It all comes back to the work of Jesus on the cross. The cross is the greatest display of God’s glory – it’s where God is glorified by the actions of forgiveness and mercy and love. Only when we GRASP this love, can we start to respond in a way that glorifies God.

In other words, if we don’t grasp GRACE, we can’t show grace. If we don’t grasp LOVE, we can’t show love. If we don’t grasp the **mercy** and **forgiveness** and **generosity** and **humility** of the cross, we cannot **show** it, and we cannot glorify God.

- We NEED God’s power to work in us to enable us to GRASP God’s love, to understand it and take hold of it, so that WE can show that love to others and glorify God.

When we get greedy... – have we **grasped** the generosity of the cross?

When we hold a grudge – have we **grasped** the grace of the cross?

When people are unkind to us – have we **grasped** the mercy of the cross?

When people do wrong against us – have we **grasped** the forgiveness of the cross?

When we serve – have we **grasped** the humility of the cross?

Let’s pray that we would be able, in God’s power, through His Holy Spirit, to grasp the wide, long, high and deep love of Jesus that he showed us on the cross...

Let’s pray...

### **A Prayer for the Ephesians**

**1**For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

**2**Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me

for you, **3**that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. **4**In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, **5**which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. **6**This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. **7**I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. **8**Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, **9**and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. **10**His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, **11**according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. **12**In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. **13**I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

**14**For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15**from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16**I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17**so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18**may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19**and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. **20**Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21**to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.