

Sunday, August 27, 2017

New Worship Service: 10:00 a.m., Inter-age and interactive

Theme: Connecting to God as our power source

Message: "Plugging In"

Scripture: Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV)

Text: 1 Thess. 1:5a "Our good news didn't come to you just in speech but also with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction."

Blurb: This Sunday we begin our new inter-age format. Worship will be different, but better! Kids stay in church, so expect interactive involvement as we worship.

The message will be "Plugging In!," encouraging us to check our power source and to be sure we are connected to God in a way that keeps us going like nothing else. Our Bible verses will be Ephesians 3:14-19. Need a "power up?" Don't miss this Sunday!

Gathering Song: *O Taste and See* - Sanctify

Welcome: -David

- Good morning! I'm David the pastor here, and
- Welcome you to Forest Hills, where we gather to Love. Grow. and Serve. Jesus.
- First time guests go to welcome center.
- New worship style
 - Kids will stay in worship
 - The whole service will be worship for all ages
 - We will be doing some new things.

Do you need a recharge? Do you need a power up? This morning is for you!

When you choose Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit to be your power source!

This morning we are here to plug into our God, who is our strength, our power.

PP: Greet one another, wishing them, "May the Holy Spirit bless you!"

Greeting Time: -David

To help us do that, I want to ask you to pass along God's blessing to each other.

I invite you to stand up, turn to your neighbor, shake their hands, and bless them by saying,
"May the Holy Spirit bless you!"

Worship Music Set: -Sanctify

There is Joy in the Lord

There is Power in the Blood

(Congregation sit, kids come up)

A Mighty Fortress

(Conner helps the kids build a fort; then hangs a sign on top, saying "God is our fortress.")

Worship prayer - Andrew

Prayers: - David

[Connected prayer: Everyone link hands. I pass around “pulse” by squeezing hands.]
 Prayers for power, strong connection to God, to each other, that we would shine bright. Also
 Hurricane Harvey, Eclipse, Violence.

Kid's Church Teacher Recognition: -Andrew

[Have them come up front, have kids give them small jars filled with nuts...with the double meaning that they might be a little nuts, that they are nuts about Jesus and sharing his message with kids, and that we are nuts about them.]

Offering: *This Little Light of Mine* -Sanctify**Message:** “Plugging In”**PP#1:** Plugging In

“Our good news didn’t come to you just in words but also with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.” -1 Thessalonians 1:5

“Plugging In.” Will you read the text verse with me, please? It’s on the screen. “Our good news didn’t come to you just in words but also with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.” -1 Thessalonians 1:5. Thank you!

You know, we all have a new night-time ritual. It used to be we changed clothes, brushed our teeth, locked the door, turned off all the lights, take off our glasses, and climbed into bed. But in the last 10 years, we’ve added something that we never used to do before. And I think most of us do it *more faithfully* than brushing our teeth or saying our prayers. Have you guessed what it is?

PP#2: *Image of a charging station at a, coffee shop.*

[Hold up my phone.] We plug in our phones and devices! Man, have these things taken a dominant role in our lives! We grab it in the morning, use it all day, and by night they need to be recharged. Have you noticed in public areas, charging stations are popping up? Some of us forget to recharge at night!

I need a helper. You know, someone young, because they need to be able to run devices! Will someone come up here and help me? [Have a volunteer come up.]

[Give volunteer the charged phone.]

So, here’s my phone. Can you please turn it on and show everyone that it is on? Thanks!

You see, the device is only useful as long as it has power. Here’s a phone that hasn’t been charged recently.

So, try to turn this phone on. Can you? [Volunteer try to turn it on.]

Looks fine, by all appearances. But you can’t do anything with it. Without power, it is a paperweight! [Yes, pun intended: stuck in the realm of paper!]

What do we call it when devices have run out of battery? We call them, what? [Dead.] “It’s dead!” What an interesting phrase. Without power, it’s dead.

PP#3: *Image of a phone plugged into powersticks.*

Now, because we are such “on-the-go” people, we have these handy accessories for our devices, called powersticks. [Hold up power stick.] They are *amazing wands of power*, and we can plug our devices into them to recharge them. They’re great for travel, in the car, in the woods, when you’re gone for long periods.

But you know what? They’re not really power *sources*. They’re merely power *storage*, a holding container for power. Basically, they are a glorified battery, with a USB connection! Let’s ask our volunteer to plug in the dead phone into the power stick. [Volunteer plugs in dead phone to charged power stick.] Ah, now it came on! See it?

But after a while, what do you need to do with the powersticks? They run out of power—go “dead”—and themselves need to be recharged. Here’s a dead powerstick. Now plug the phone into the this powerstick. [Volunteer plugs in dead phone into dead powerstick.] See? No good. Dead!

Thank you, volunteer! You may go back to your seat. Everyone give her a clap. Good job!

PP#4: *Image of a tired person plugged into a battery or wall socket to get recharged, humorous.*

There is a Bible lesson here for us.

We are like our devices! We run on power. Now, I’m not just talking about our bodies, that need food. The whole of us runs on power, an energy that carries is through the day. Have you ever been exhausted after NOT doing anything physical? I have! One way is we can be emotionally spent. Or, you spend all day at the office, sitting in your cubicle, solving crises. By the time you get home, you’ve had it! You need to do nothing, “down time,” recharge. Or, how is it that after riding in the car for six hours, sitting and doing nothing!, when you arrive you want to go in and sit down? Why is that? Rest—in the variety of forms it comes in...sometimes it’s something active—is a recharging.

We have an inner energy that powers us. God puts it there. And we have to manage it wisely, so we don’t run out of day before we run out of power!

[Hold up small flashlight.] I have here this little flashlight. It’s one of those little L.E.D. lights. Shockingly powerful! It runs on two tiny batteries. Now I’m going to turn it on, but I will shine it above your eyes. Don’t look directly at it! It’s like eclipse. It can hurt your eyes. [Shine light above the congregation.] See? It works pretty well.

PP#5: *Image of an assortment of batteries.*

But just like our phones, and just like us, it runs on a power source inside. We call them batteries. And, if you want a bigger light, or longer lasting light, what do you do? You increase the battery size or number, right? Bigger flashlight has more power. Can last longer.

[Hold up bigger flashlight.] Here’s a flashlight that runs on D-batteries. Longer lasting.

So, I turn it on. [Turn it on...dead.] See the light? [No!]

What’s wrong? Why won’t it work? [Check the batteries.]

Let’s check the batteries. [Open up and see no batteries.]

Ah, empty! That’s our problem. This light cannot shine because it has no power.

[Hold up lantern flashlight.] Here’s an even bigger flashlight. [Turn it on.] It has room for a much larger battery. It can shine a very long time! [Open it up and show the battery.] See how much bigger it is than, say, a AA battery? Have you ever seen a car battery? Or a boat battery? Ever see a battery even bigger than that? What’s the biggest battery you’ve ever seen?

PP#6: *Image of a battery-powered car battery.*

Turn to your neighbor and tell them the biggest battery you've ever seen. Go ahead. Take a minute. The biggest battery you've ever seen. [Let people discuss.]

Bigger is better, isn't it?

When we want more power, we get *more* batteries, or *bigger* batteries.

We do this in our lives, too, you know. We try to increase our power capacity by resting, exercising, practicing self control, non-anxious presence, coaching ourselves not to expend our energy on what we can't change, using the power of positive thinking, doing activities that recharge us, managing our days with better direction. Or we try things that we think should fill us. A different job, a new relationship, spending money on that new toy, that new device. It's exciting.

But here's the problem. Our power supply is limited. We can try to manage it, but our reality is that we all run out of power. We can't just keep going! Eventually, we falter, and fail.

PP#7: *Image of way too many things (like 10) plugged into one cord or outlet (with adapters).*

[Bring out a lamp.]

Here's a table lamp. It's made to make light, right? Even though it looks great, right now, it can't produce light. Why? [Not plugged in.]

It has no power source! What do we need to do? [Plug it in.]

[Hold up power strip.] Here's a power strip like many of you have in your homes. We can take the lamp and plug it into the power strip. Now, will it work? [No!] Why not? [The power strip is not plugged in!]

Ah, the power strip has no power. So, what a miss-leading name, huh? I mean, if you needed to plug in a lamp, and someone told you they had a power strip, wouldn't you think that should work? The name is misleading!

Actually, there are a lot of misleading power options that we try to tap into as people, you know. We seek out recharging from a lot of sources. We rest. We play. But many of our sources really don't empower us. We seek power and energy from being in charge, getting our way, from controlling people, from saying mean things about others, by being negative, by trying harder and harder and harder. Ever try to stop swearing? Or stop getting so angry? It's hard! So, try harder and harder. But no matter what you do, it's not enough. Or earn money, or seek affirmation from others, or be known for being good at what you do. All these things we use to build us up. And it may work for a time. But after a while, we realize it just doesn't sustain us. We see how limited they are.

You see, most of us, most of the time, try things that don't really recharge us. They look like they should, like this power strip. But in the end, they have no outside source of power.

[Plug power strip into itself.]

This is the kind of life many of us struggle with. Certainly this is true for all of us in some part of our lives. What do you do to seek power and energy in ways that don't deliver?

PP#8: *First image at*

<http://whatsnext.nuance.com/office-productivity/lawyers-stay-productive-with-speech-recognition/>

The bible tells us to *plug ourselves into an outside power source*, one that actually does provide power. Batteries can extend power for a time. But we need more.

I asked Chuck to bring such a power source. Chuck, could you please come up here and show us your generator? A generator makes power! Turn it on, and let's plug our lamp into it and see if it works.

[Turn on generator and plug lamp in.]

Yea! It works!

But you know what? A generator makes electricity by an engine that uses gas. What happens when the gas runs out? Show us, Chuck.

[Chuck turns the generator off.]

Look what happened to our lamp. It's dark again.

A generator is basically a big battery. It uses stored energy, in this case gas, to power things.

Thank you, Chuck! Let's give him a clap, too.

The Bible says that we should turn to God, and make Him the source of our power. He is our outside power source, and one that will not run out. We need to stop trying to depend on ourselves, and stop running on limited power sources, and plug ourselves into the direct power source.

[Plug the lamp into the wall socket.]

So, like this lamp, we need to go directly to the source, and plug in.

See? The lamp works! And it won't wear down or go dead. It'll just keep on shining, and shining and shining.

PP#9: *Image of a huge power-generating plant.*

Now, of course, if you know about electricity, we know that the plug in is connected to power stations that create power from fuel, right? And all fuel on earth ultimately comes from the sun, be it solar, or gas, or coal, or even wind. So, on earth, all of our power sources are limited, even the sun.

But the Bible teaches us that we are to get our power from God. This summer we learned all about the Holy Spirit. When we follow Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit within us. This is God, who comes and lives inside of us. We have God within us, and we have His power to power us. He is our power! *Being a Jesus follower is about unplugging from our limited sources of power, and plugging into the power of God living in us in the Holy Spirit.* The power we get from God, when we connect to it, never runs out, because it is actually God Himself in us! Amazing!

PP#10: Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV)

16 I pray that out of His glorious riches the Father 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.

OK, how? Well, turn to our Bible lesson for today. It's Ephesians 3:16-19. It's Paul's prayer for the Christians in Ephesus. And he is praying for them to plug into the power of God.

Verse 16, "I pray that out of His glorious riches the Father may strengthen you *with power through His Spirit in your inner being*, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. [When we plug into the Holy Spirit, Christ becomes the center of our hearts.] And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 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, [God's power in us helps us grasp what we cannot on our own, the limitless and boundless love of God. Verse 19] and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." Wow!

I'm going to ask all the grade school kids to go out into the lobby with Rebekah and learn today's memory verse. When you've got it down enough to do it all together in front back here, come back in, and teach it to us. OK? Head out with Rebekah, kids! [Rebekah takes kids out. Memory

verse: Ephesians 3:20 “Glory to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us.”]

Let’s look at verse 18. God gives us His power within us, not to make us able to do more what we want to do, or have superhero strength. He gives it to us so that we can become better connected to Him! God is love, and His love is our power! His power in us connects us to know Him better, and begin to enjoy the boundlessness of His love! At first this doesn’t seem to make much sense. His power makes us able to revel in His love? But go there with me, will you? For it is when we revel in His love, that we are now made able to do all that He wishes and plans for us. If you find yourself tired, and drained, and needing more energy in your life, worship God! Throw yourself into His measureless love! Bask in how awesome He is! *And this will become for you the power you need.* If you need help trying to control your anger, spend some of your attention imagining the width of God’s love. If you are struggling with bitterness, celebrate the length of God who is love. If you wrestle with a selfish attachment to money, ponder the height of God’s agape-love. If you are at your wit’s end with your teenager, or spouse, fall into the depth of God’s love. You will be restored. You will be made new. You will be made able to succeed, where you, in your own strength, failed. God’s love opens up the impossible! The Gospel is words, but also power in the Holy Spirit!

Look at verse 19. God’s transforming powerful love is more than we can ever imagine. Be careful not to mandate that God *has to* make sense! You will only limit God within you! God wants to fill you, completely, with His fullness. And that fullness keeps giving and giving, making you into who God wants you to be, and makes you able to do what you cannot do on your own.

So, God wants you to connect to Him, as your direct power source. In what ways do you try other, limited sources of power? They may look good, but they don’t give life! What areas of your life need a different power source? What are you trying to do in your own strength? You need to turn it over to God. Let God’s power in you change how you act, think, behave. You need to notice it, and then plug it into God. It’s a surrender, changing your power source, letting God change you.

PP#11: Memory Verse:

“Glory to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us.” -Ephesians 3:20

OK, the kids are coming back in. Come on right up front. You memorized the next verse from our Bible passage this morning. Can you do it for us? [Kids say it.]

Now, let’s join them in memorizing it, too. OK? Church, here we go...“Glory to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us.”

Thanks, kids, you can go sit down.

Church, I want to challenge us to keep this verse memorized. Every time you plug in a device (so this becomes part of your bedtime ritual, right?) every time you plug in your phone, say this verse as a reminder of how you need to stay connect to God, who is your power. Will you do that?

“Our good news didn’t come to you just in speech but also with power and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.” Amen.

Closing Song: *Fill My Heart* -Sanctify

Benediction: Ephesians 3:20-21

“Glory to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us; glory to Him in the Church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always.” Amen.

Church @ Home

Here are some ways for you to take worship home with you this week!

Memory Verse (review at least once a day):

“Glory to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine by His power at work within us.” -Ephesians 3:20

Digging Deeper

Read: Ephesians 3:16-21. (Or read all of chapter 3.)

Reflect: What are the main requests Paul is praying for the Christians in Ephesus in this passage?

Look out at creation or a beautiful picture of nature. Reflection on the expanse of Christ’s love (v.18).

Discuss: How does God’s love surpass our knowledge (v.19)?

What from God’s riches (v.16) do you need right now?

Pray: [Consider kneeling (v.14) when you pray.]

Ask for the Holy Spirit to give you power to grasp God’s love better (v. 18)

Ask to be filled with fullness of God (v.19).

End by praying verses 20-21.

With Kids:

A MIGHTY FORT

Activity: Some evening after dinner, gather together in the living room and build a fort together.

What materials should you use? What characteristics should it have?

Discuss together:

What makes a fort strong?

How is God like a mighty fortress?

What does God protect us from?

Read: Find a couple of different versions of Psalm 18:2. Read though each one. Note where there are different words but the same meaning.

Activity: Come up with a version as a family that makes the most sense to you. Post it on the fridge or in the bathroom mirror.