

No One Is a Superhero

John 5:19, 30 (New American Standard Bible)

¹⁹ *Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way.*

³⁰ *“I can do nothing on My own. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.*

Introduction

Definition of superhero: *A benevolent fictional character with superhuman powers, such as Superman (lexico.com).*

Are you familiar with superhero movies? Superman, X-men, Batman, Wonder Woman, Cat-woman, Ironman, Aquaman, Spiderman, Antman, Captain America, Hulk, Thor, ... to name a few. One thing in common among those superheroes is power. Without power, none of them would be a superhero. They use their superhuman power to rescue the world from villains and aliens.

Although they are all fictional, people still live vicariously with a wish that they too want to be great and powerful in their lives. *Do something great in their lives.* Who doesn't want that, right? We all want to be great.

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Power belongs to God, not to us:

Come to think of it, our Lord Jesus was the closest to the definition of superhero. He was not fictional, though. He was a real 'supernatural hero.' He did wonders and signs. He walked on waters. Nature obeyed Him. Twice He fed thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and fish. He healed the sick. He cast out demons. He resurrected the dead. He even had divine power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). I believe He perfectly fits the category of a superhero. Yet the Bible never calls Him a superhero.

According to His own words, Jesus never admitted that He was “a great hero.” In fact, you will be surprised to hear what He said about Himself in today's text. ¹⁹ *Therefore*

Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself,....³⁰ I can do nothing on My own.**”

What?! He cannot do anything on His own! Twice He said it. It’s the truth! Not that He didn’t have power to do signs and wonders. Rather, He wouldn’t and didn’t do anything without His Father’s will.

There was a man who said that he could do all things. His name was Paul (the Apostle). He said, *I can do all things!* Really? I am always amused with this statement. *I can do all things!* Great, isn’t it? Then, I discovered that the real secret for Paul’s power lies within God’s will and God’s might, not his own. Paul emphasizes, I can do all things **through Christ who strengthens me**. In Christ, Paul can do all things. In Christ, we too can do all things. But, without Christ, Paul can’t do anything. Neither can we. Now, I hope you begin to see where we are going. Do you agree with Jesus that we can do nothing on our own? Do you also say amen to Paul that we can do everything through Christ who strengthens us?

Speaking of power, the Scriptures are never unclear. Power belongs not to us but to God. Power, might, glory and honor belong to the Almighty God. To no one else but Him. With such great power, God made the earth. He established the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding (Jeremiah 10:12). With His power and wisdom, He delivered numerous times His people from their afflictions throughout history (Great Flood, Exodus, Samson, David and Goliath, Daniel, Esther,...)

Let’s consider Gideon this time. Originally there was no king in Israel. Instead, they were led by leaders whom we call ‘Judges.’ When a leader died, the next leader was chosen by God to lead the twelve tribes of Israel. One time, God chose Gideon to fight Midian the enemy of Israel. Gideon called all able men from the twelve tribes to the battlefield. 32,000 responded. With that number, Gideon was ready to enter the battle. Then, the Lord said to Gideon, “The people who are with you are too many for Me to hand Midian over to them, otherwise Israel would become boastful, saying, ‘My own power has saved me’” (Judges 7:2). So, Gideon sent 22,000 back home. *With the 10,000, it would be difficult,* Gideon thought, *but I still have a chance.* Then, God said, it was still too many. So, Gideon ended up having only 300 warriors. From 32,000 to 300! One percent! With that number, he had to face the mighty army of Midian. But in the end, with God’s help, he won the battle. The lesson? God made sure that it wasn’t Gideon’s own power that saved Israel from their enemy. It was God’s power. Power belongs to the Lord, not to us!

Why does the Lord work that way, instead of granting us power and let us use it at our own will? Here’s why. The Lord knows us too well; what we are made of and what we

are prone to do. With power at our own disposal, due to our human depravity, we may abuse and misuse power without accountability or wisdom. Power surely corrupts us. Human history is a fine proof. Furthermore, we may become boastful and fail to give glory to the Giver of our strength and power. Power makes us arrogant. When we achieve success in our life, for instance, we tend to say to ourselves, it is I who have done it! In actuality, it was God who helped us along. E.g. Moses reminded the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land: “ ... you may say in your heart, ‘**My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.**’¹⁸ But you are to remember the Lord your God, for **it is He who is giving you power to make wealth,...**” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18).

King David rightly said, “Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever.”¹¹ Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and on the earth; Yours is the dominion, Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.¹² Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone (1 Chronicles 29:10-12). That is the right attitude we must have when it comes down to power and glory. All to God. None to us!

Use power for God’s glory, never for personal gain.

Remember Jesus’ statement? I can do nothing on My own! He did everything for God’s approval and pleasure. All the miracles, signs, wonders, healing, and even raising the dead were done for the benefit of people and for His Father’s glory. None for Himself. All for God and His people. Period. Likewise, we ought to use our God-given talent and power to serve others. To build up each other. Never for our selfish gain.

Jesus’ mission statement says it all: the Son of Man came *not to be served but to serve* and to *give His life as a ransom for many* (Mark 10:45). Seek and pursue God’s will not your own. Be a servant for others. Do all to the glory of God.

Be humble.

Have you ever noticed that our Father in Heaven always remains anonymous with all His blessings upon us? He does all things for us yet He is so quiet. May I even say that our God is so humble that He never boasts about what He does for us every day, every second, and everything? We owe Him our life, health, and strength to achieve what we desire. He does everything in secret. In humility. I like that. E.g. I believe it is still there. In Southern Ocean Medical Center. On the third floor, there’s a mural. Work hard and stay humble. I said, Wow! Who did it? Whoever did it, they understood the mission they have: to help

people to get better and, when done, stay humble! Pride goes before fall. God never works with the proud. His power never dwells in the selfish being. End your service with “Praise be to God! Glory and honor to God!” Be humble. You won’t go wrong.

Conclusion

One day, Jesus’ disciples argued about who’s great among themselves. Jesus’ warning. Don’t desire to be greater than others. Rather, learn to be the servant of all. You don’t have to be a superhero to serve others. Be the servant in your home, at work, at church, and in your communities. In God’s eyes, you are the true hero. Amen.