

S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT THE DENVER COUNTY JAIL,

Sunday Morning, March 26, 1911,

By Jim Goodheart.

Scripture Reading: Romans 13:1-7.

Text: Romans 13:1,2.

I want to talk to you to-day on the first and second verses of the thirteenth chapter of Romans:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Listen! Every man in this world is subject unto some power. If you have never known what it is to have the power of God settled down into your poor sin-burdened soul, then you are under the influence and power of the prince of the power of the air--the prince of the power of darkness. There are two powers which are greater than man possesses. I thank God that I am under His power, and I want you to be under this same power.

Suppose I drop a piece of steel down into a well, and I look down into the clear water and see that the steel is many feet below the surface, and I would like to have it, so I take a horse-shoe magnet and tie a string to it and lower it carefully into the well until the magnet comes in touch with the steel and the power from the magnet draws the steel to itself, and I lift it out of the well and have it in my hands once more.

Now, then, do you know that that is just exactly an illustration of the power that the Lord Jesus Christ has? He has power to draw men--all men--to Himself; and the very last words



that He spoke to the eleven, after He had risen from the dead, just before leaving them for His heavenly home, were: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Where does Jesus get this power? He gets it from the throne of God. God, who gives all power unto the Son, holds the power of the entire world in the hollow of His hand; He has it at His throne. Jesus gets His power from the Father, and gives it to us, if we will only take it; but we have refused to take it. There is something that has caused us to be insulated from His power; something that prevents our prayers from going any higher than the ceiling, and then causes them to fall to the ground, forgotten and never to be heard from again.

The horse-show magnet gets its power from the dynamo, while the dynamo is running, probably one thousand volts being generated through a high-tensioned one. It is an easy matter to charge them in this way; I have magnetized many a one myself. The magnet takes its power from the machine which is generating the electricity. Nobody knows how electricity is made or generated. We think we know, but we don't. Nobody knows which is the positive and which the negative wire, but we know that if we sever either wire the circuit is broken. And you can take a horse-shoe magnet, after it has been magnetized, and fix it, by tying something around it, so that it won't have power to draw anything.

And it is just this same way with us. We come to Jesus by God's power. Jesus goes to God and gets the power from Him and brings it to us. And then, when we are not right with God, we are insulated from His power. "Thy sins have hid thy face from Me until I will not hear thy voice." Now, then, He says: "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power." What you need is power, so take off the insulation this morning, and look up to God through Jesus Christ, and say: "I want for-



givenness from thy hands; I want to receive power."

Just think of the power of the cyclone! Yet, when it first appears, it is only a small cloud. I remember once, watching from a distance, the progress of a cyclone. It looked, from where I was, just like a little funnel; but as it advanced it took everything before it. An elevator at a little town called Stanford was moved, buildings were turned round, and a big two-story house was moved over three or four lots and placed in exactly the same position it had occupied on the other lot. This cyclone only looked like a small cloud at first, but it grew larger and larger.

And so it is with our sins. We first sin in a little way, and we think it a small matter; but I want to tell you that the true character of every human being can be read in the little things and what he will do when he knows he won't be found out. That is the test of your character and mine to-day, so let's start out this morning, with all our sins and burdens, whether large or small, and look to Jesus and tell Him that we would be freed from them. Though these sins may not seem large now, they will grow and grow, and the power with which Satan is working through you will not only bring you down very rapidly, but will bring others down with you and land you in eternal damnation forever.

I once heard a young man tell of being overcome by a cyclone in the state of Kansas. He saw it coming and ran to a slough and lay down there flat on his back, and the wind and the current swept over him, uprooting the trees and the grass and swirling them together, but it didn't touch him.

And in just this way God comes and covers us with His wings, and hides us from the power of Satan, and brings peace and joy and safety into our hearts.

The only reason you and I have gotten into trouble is because we have listened to the power of darkness and sin. You



can lay it to anything you choose, but at the bottom of all your trouble is just the one word--"S-i-n." And when you get rid of sin, you will get rid of every bit of your trouble. I don't mean that you won't have sickness and worry in the flesh, because those are the things that make us grow strong; but I have never been in jail to pay the price of breaking the law since I gave my heart to Jesus. Some change has been wrought.' But how wrought, I don't know. Not because of me, but because of some greater power that I now possess, and that power I found in the God-head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you and I today are no more on the center-line--are no longer "kids"--but are going down instead of up the grade, and going fast, and at the bottom we can see only destruction and failure, a hopeless grave, and underneath it all, summed up in two words, condemnation forever. We are outside of the Ark of Safety; there is no power--nothing--to head us off; nothing to bring us back to the pleasure and the joy that God gives to them that love Him. Some of our locks are whitened by age, and we are no longer in the prime of life. Some of us are going to early graves through refusing to accept the higher power that comes only from God. And today we are miserable in the flesh as well as the soul.

Now, listen to the two verses of that scripture:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

Insulate the magnet, as I have said, and the power is gone; commit sin, and your sins have hid His face.

I know a fellow that came into the Mission only a short time after I had been saved. He was a great big strong man, weighed two hundred and fifty or seventy-five pounds, was over six feet two, apparently a young man (hardly over thirty), and



had been at one time as strong as an ox. He showed the traces of better days; he showed marks of refinement, showed that he had been brought up in a good home by a Christian mother. But he had turned a deaf ear to the pleadings of his mother and his God, and had chosen a mess of pottage for a moment and destruction rather than God; had chosen damnation for himself. There he stood in Sunshine Mission, a hopeless wreck in body as well as soul.' I looked into his face and saw that the skin was pale, and said: "My brother, what kind of 'dope' are you 'up against?'" He said: "If there is anything on the calendar I am not 'up against,' I don't know what it is. I use cocaine and morphine, drink 'booze,' (and he had an empty flask of alcohol in his pocket) smoke tobacco and cigarettes and commit adultery; and I don't know what it is to be free, but I would like to be. They tell me that you help folks down here." I said: "I can point you to a friend of ours that takes away the sins of the world; His name is Jesus Christ." He said that he would like to find Him. We knelt down, and he prayed; but he didn't accept, and he left the Mission only to go to his doom--only to go to the grave, and to be cursed forever and ever on the other side of the grave.

So many want to get rid of their sins, but not to save their souls. If you want to be free, you must come to the One who is ready to mend both body and soul.

Some of you have had no aim in life up to this time. You have floated around like so much drift-wood on the water. Some of you men have served time with me in here, and you are no better but worse off today than you were when I first knew you. The only reason it is so is that you have resisted the power of God.

Talk about great men.' Why.' the only men that are great are those that are drawing power from on high. There once was a man by the name of Nebuchadnezzar who transgressed the law. He



was a king and a ruler; but it wasn't very long before God took his kingdom away from him, and he was out eating grass like an ox.

He is offering a kingdom to you, through *Jesus Christ our Lord*, but you are refusing to take it.

And then we read about a little man--a shepherd--whom God had need of. This shepherd was David, and when the Lord called him, he said: "Here I am, Lord, send me." So God sent him out to fight the Philistines; and when he faced Goliath, who stood there in his mighty armor, inlaid with precious stones, the great giant sneered at little insignificant David, with only five stones and a sling, and made boast that he would give his flesh "unto the fowles of the air and to the beasts of the field." But God said to David: "I will be with you; I will give you strength to subdue every power and trample it under your feet." So David threw off the armor that the king had given him, saying: "I want to be free; I want what God gives and God only." And one little stone from David's sling threw Goliath off his feet.

It was only God's power, working through David, that put the Philistines to flight, and the Lord will use you in the same way. He has a great purpose in life for you. Will you not accept this power that has been working through the ages and be made free? For "He that the Son sets free is free indeed."

And finally, when the last mile post has been reached, when things seem to be terminated so far as mortal is concerned, when the doctor has left your dying bed and gone out to tell the loved ones--dear old father and gray-haired mother and wife and children--and they have come in and taken their places on either side of the bed, and the glassy stare of death has gathered in your eyes, you will see hovering around your couch the angels that have come to bear you away; and as the earthly friends begin to fade from your sight, the smile that God puts upon the face of His dear ones, when they walk through "the valley of the



shadow of death," will light up your countenance; and the last words you will say to those you are leaving behind will be: "Surely this is not death, but the beginning of life. I see a Power, and it isn't so far away; it is drawing my soul to Him." And then as you are standing upon the threshold of God, you will see leaning over the battlements of heaven all those dear ones that have gone on before--the prophets, the disciples who had suffered martyrdom--John the Baptist, who was be-headed; Peter, crucified head-downward; and the Apostle John, exiled to the Isle of Patmos--the loved ones, and then the angels--hundreds and thousands of them--and then as you glance up the main street of heaven, you'll see the throne of God, and by His side Jesus Christ standing, and He will say to you: "Come, I have a place prepared for you, 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' and be with Him forever and ever, where no power will ever separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."