

Steadfast Living Kindled

A month ago yet another new super hero movie opened in theatres.

On opening day it brought in \$44mil.

That ranked it number 20 among the top opening day movie sales.

Within 2 days **Man of Steel** had earned worldwide total of \$200,281,486.

That was just the beginning.

Compare \$44mil with **The Dark Knight** (Batman) ranked 10th at \$67mil in 2008.

The Dark Knight Rises (Batman) ranked 3rd at \$75.7 mil last year.

The number two opening day sales movie Marvel's the Avengers \$80.8mil.

Somehow Harry Potter ended up in first place with Deathly Hallows Part 2.

Nine of the top 20 opening movie sales go to super heroes.

Four of the top 20 were Harry Potter movies.

Super-hero movies like **The Dark Knight** and **Man of Steel** ask some questions.

They ask questions about power - who really is in control?

What will they do with the extraordinary power that is theirs?

They ask questions about love - does the hero care enough to sacrifice?

They ask questions about self-control.

Can the hero keep emotions in check in order to bring justice?

These are the same questions God asks of His children.

When we have yielded our lives to Jesus God asks us questions.

How are you going to live with the power of Jesus in spiritual warfare?

How are you going to express My unending love for the world?

How are you going to live a life of self-control?

Those are the questions asked of the disciple.

What are you going to do with the spirit of power, love, and self-control?

That was the question Paul had of Timothy.

Are you ultimately going to turn them in on yourself?

Or are you going to use them to bring others to Jesus?

God is asking you those same questions this morning.

Paul knew that God's voice can begin to fade.

The questions are easily dismissed.

The disciple of Jesus can fall into a spiritual lull.

Paul reminded Timothy to rekindle the gift of God.

Don't let it weaken or flicker or go out.

We can forget just like we can forget the resurrection.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead (2:8)

Remember to rekindle.

Hence the questions that remain.

How are you using My power?

How are you expressing My unending love?

Are you living a life of self-control?

Paul knew these questions get crowded out of our focus.

He also knew the devastating results when we allow that to happen.

Our failure to answer these questions devastates our spiritual walk.

It also devastates our witness in the world.

We begin to return to the life that Jesus liberated us from.

We worry more about ourselves and self preservation.

We forget what Jesus said.

He who would save his own life will lose it.

We begin to limp and flounder in our joy for the Lord.

We lose our focus on the lost.

We desperately need to hear what Paul has to say to Timothy.

He looked at his young disciple named Timothy.

He knew what God had done in Timothy's life.

God had flooded his life with power and love and self-control.

Paul was certain of this in Timothy's life.

And he did not want to see that change.

He wanted to watch Timothy's faith grow and mature.

He wanted to meet Timothy in the harvest field.

That is why Paul does something almost unexpected.

He says to Timothy something that we would think does not need to be said (READ Scripture).

He says, **"Hence I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you."**

Timothy, you must keep the gift burning properly!

Do not be consumed with the wrong passion!

Don't become distracted.

I need that reminder.

I need to be told, "Keep the fires burning intensely!"

"Be on fire with the power of God!"

"Be aglow with the Spirit!"

"Be a vibrant and dynamic witness."

"Don't cave in to the resistance you will experience."

"Don't be ashamed to testify about Jesus."

"Don't be embarrassed about your church!"

"Don't give up doing the good that God has empowered you to do!"

"Don't let your love grow cold!"

"Rekindle the gift of God!"

God has given you a spirit of power and love and self-control.

He wants to know "How are you using My power?"

"How are you expressing My unending love?"

"Are you living a life of self-control?"

I What will you do with the SPIRIT OF POWER?

Will you use your great gifts to help others or help yourself?

This question is not just for fictitious characters.

This question confronts you every day.

Do we fight, or do we cower and hide in the safety and comfort of our homes?

In movies the superheroes overcome their fears.

They confront the super villains, like The Joker, aliens, Lex Luthor.

It takes great courage to make a difference.

God has not given us the spirit of timidity.

God has given us the spirit of power so we may stand.

"And having done all to stand." (Ephesians 6:13b)

Paul says, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." (Ephesians 6:10)

We need to rekindle the **SPIRIT OF POWER.**

II What will you do with the SPIRIT OF LOVE?

Will you choose to Serve others or Subdue others?

Every Superhero could instantly become a powerful ruler.

Instead, each decides to fight the injustices in our wicked world.

Will you rescue people or ignore them as they cry out for help in your city?

Commissioner Gordon used the Bat Signal because Batman always responded.

When Gotham was in trouble, Batman came.

Do people call you when evil rears its ugly head?

Or do they already know that you're probably too busy?

We need to rekindle the **SPIRIT OF LOVE**.

III What will you do with the SPIRIT OF SELF-CONTROL?

Paul calls Timothy to rekindle his self-control.

This is the hardest one of all.

I read the following statement and it really hit home to me.

"Pastors quit all the time when they don't see growth or feel under-appreciated. Mission's leaders fold up their tents when the first few years of their enterprise don't yield fruit. The rest of us stop ministering in the marketplace when we encounter pushback or rejection. But God challenges us to persevere and pray for the Lord of the harvest to send forth workers. Endurance in the face of defeat is a great part of our legacy."

God's spirit of self-control enables us to endure the challenges of the enemy.

Our Adversary functions very much like the Joker.

He is determined to push people into anarchy.

Satan places people in terrifying situations and watches in delight.

God tells us the Devil is focused on killing.

Satan's methods are to steal and destroy.

Satan tries to convince us to fight him with the same weapons he uses on us.

Only spiritual weapons truly work against this terrorist of our soul.

God has given the gifts of power and love and self-control.

They are what liberate us to endure and resist the enemy.

Jesus calls us to turn the other cheek, forgive the offense, love the unlovable, pray in all situations, and walk in peace.

This code of Jesus will break down the strongholds and deliver us from evil.

Will you give in or will you endure?

Paul calls us to rekindle the **SPIRIT OF SELF-CONTROL**.

The superhero movies that ask these questions are smash hits.

They are the right questions to ask.

Because these are questions that God asks of the church.

They are questions that resonate within us.

We know we should not be living for ourselves.

We know we should be heroic in our actions.

We want to be heroes ourselves.

The dream to be heroes becomes a reality only through surrender to Jesus.

We must live with a daily, continuous, unreserved surrender.

There are no Supermans to save the world.

There are no Batmans.

There is no League of Extraordinary Gentlemen.

There is no Fantastic Four.

There are no super-heroes to save the world but there is the Church.

There is the Church that responds to God's questions.

What are you going to do?

"the gospel in the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago, and now is manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:8b-10)

Rekindle the gift of God!

Closing Song Refiner's Fire