

Essence of the River's Power

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian, and how it can bring transformation and renewal.

Duration: 56:20

Scripture: Psalm 1:3, Psalm 46:4, Isaiah 35:6, Ezekiel 47:1-2, John 4:10-14, John 7:37-39, Revelation 22:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the current state of defeat and victory in the lives of Christians. He acknowledges that many believers are disillusioned, discouraged, and defeated, lacking the true experience of faith. The speaker emphasizes the need for a real and vibrant relationship with Jesus, rather than just attending church or having head knowledge. He introduces the theme of the sermon series, which focuses on the resources for Christian living, specifically discussing the essence, experience, and effect of the river's power.

Transcript

Could we have a prayer together? I wonder if you'd stand for a word of prayer. We thank you Lord for all that you have said to us already in this evening in music and in song. And now as we turn to thy word, we do pray that we may approach it with yielded hearts and thou wilt speak Lord for thy servant heareth.

Speak just now some message to meet my need which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Please be seated. Well good evening everyone.

Thank you very much. How many of you here tonight haven't been to any of these three meetings that we've already had? Would you mind raising your hand? I thought so. By far the large number.

That's very good. Well we welcome you and we're glad indeed to see you this evening. Everybody's been saying to me that I ought to be able to preach much better tonight following the events in Sydney.

I don't quite know. But I've always had a very keen interest in cricket for many reasons. I think it's a very clean game usually.

I think that a number of Christian men have been very active in it and have contributed quite a lot to it right from the days of C.T. Studd whom I'm sure you all know. In modern times we have a man like Colin Crowderly who this time must have had a very unhappy experience in Australia for six months. And on the Australian side a year or two ago Brian Booth.

I remember once sharing a platform in England with him and he gave his testimony when he was part of the Australian team. And after giving a lovely testimony in the town hall a meeting in Birmingham he said well now I'd be grateful if you would all just pray for me because at the present time I've lost my form. Well I didn't quite know how to pray for that because I didn't really want him to cover it.

That made a big difference. You know I remember some time ago in Chicago a series was being played in Britain between England and Australia. And I was very interested to know how we were getting on.

So I decided to go down into the town in Chicago and buy every Chicago newspaper I could find, which I did. I bought them all and that's like buying a library they're all so fat. And I looked through from beginning to end and not a word, not a single word about these terrific events that were taking place in Britain.

So I didn't quite know what to do but a friend of mine in London sent me by air mail a copy of the London Daily Telegraph. He knew I'd be interested. Well I opened the paper and knew exactly where to look as you do and for cricket news and during test match times right in the centre of the front page nothing else matters.

And there in large black letters I read some words that sent a chill down my spine. England facing defeat. I had a very unhappy day.

I took that paper to the office, nobody was interested. They were only concerned about some people called, I think it was Black Sox or someone, that played baseball. Sort of grown up rounders I think that is.

I can never understand it really. But I know about two days later another copy of the London Daily Telegraph arrived and I hardly dare opened it. But I opened it, plucked up courage and opened it and opened it at the front page and what do you think I saw? England in sight of victory.

The whole situation had been completely transformed in two days. Now that leads me into exactly what I want to say to you now. Let me just ask you a very simple straight question.

In relation to your Christian life, right now, today, are you facing defeat or are you in sight of victory? Which? Because my theme for these three nights, tonight, tomorrow and Friday, on Saturday I purpose to speak to you something on the subject of the global situation today as opportunities for service and testimony to Christ, missions. But for these three nights I want to speak to you about resources for Christian living. That's our theme for these three evenings.

The messages will essentially be connected one with another, though I hope that they will each stand apart on their own. So I do trust you're able to set aside not only tonight but other evenings also. By the way, one of my, I haven't harnessed any strong points, but one is certainly not brevity.

And so if you get tired or bored, well just you get up and go out and goodbye and God bless you, it's been nice to have you here for a while, but I hope you'll be able to see it all through. I remember after a meeting not so long ago my wife and I returned to our hotel room and there was a moment's sort of awkward silence which isn't usual with us and I wondered what I've been doing and then she said I think we should

have a prayer together. So I said yes rather.

I said but particularly why? Well I think we need to start asking the Lord to bless the people a little more quickly. I thought that was put very kindly but I knew exactly what she meant. Now that is not my strong point.

And so, well if you get bored just goodbye, but I trust that I manage even on a hot evening to keep you awake because we're concerned in this subject with something that is tremendously controversial and that is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of a child of God. A really controversial point upon which many many people are confused today and I take this theme deliberately not because I delight in being controversial, far from it, but because I meet every day almost so many people who are discouraged and defeated and disillusioned and somehow don't get any thrill out of the Christian life. Some are in business and through the sheer pressure of business their testimony has suffered.

Some are in the ministry and the claims of other people's lives upon them are so tremendous that they themselves have almost snapped under the strain. And in spite of the training and preparation they don't seem to have what's required. The people are just ordinary folks like you and me in homes and businesses, all with varying responsibilities, but so many of us suffering under the pressures and tensions of life in these days.

So often our heads are full of knowledge, but our hearts are empty of experience. Now I want to speak, and I trust that God will speak to you in these three nights, about this subject of how many are disillusioned and discouraged and defeated and what is the real answer to it all. Because if that is a true description of life, of so many of us, and I cannot think it can be other than true, without being cynical or critical or seeming to be censorious, but simply being realistic, I meet so many few Christian people who are excited about their faith.

So few to whom it's real. So few to whom every day of the week Jesus is a living person and who is a vital factor in their lives. So many of us, it's simply attending a church, attending on Sunday once or occasionally twice, and then we turn off the spiritual tap and turn on the secular tap, and it makes no difference to our lives during the week.

And others say, well, we've dedicated our lives to God and we've committed our lives to God, and it doesn't work. There's nothing in it. Not real.

Not for me. Now it's time then that we took stock and asked ourselves, what's the reason for all this? And what's the answer to it? Why is it that I believe so much and I experience so little? For the basis of our messages on these three evenings, we're turning to an Old Testament passage of Scripture, and we shall stick pretty closely to it and refer to other passages for the sake of bringing further light upon it. And I want to read to you, if you will follow in your Bible, and it'll pay you in these three nights to bring your Bible, the first few verses of Ezekiel chapter 47.

I'll give you time just to look it up in your Bible. If you haven't got it with you tonight, don't be embarrassed. Get one out of your pew or borrow one from somebody else, share one with somebody, but be prepared to bring one with you tomorrow so that you can follow the Word more easily.

The story of Ezekiel's vision of a river, Ezekiel 47. I'm reading in the authorized version. Afterward he brought me again into the door of the house, and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the

house eastward.

For the forefront of the house stood toward or faced the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward. And behold, I ran walk out waters on the right side.

And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters. The waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters.

The waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through. The waters were to the loins.

Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass over, for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on one side and the other.

Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea, which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that everything that liveth, which moveth, whether soever the river shall come, shall live. And there shall be a great, a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither, for they shall be healed.

And everything shall live, whether the river cometh. And it shall come to pass that the fishers shall stand upon it, from En Gedi even unto Eneqlem. There shall be a place to spread forth nets.

Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea exceeding many. But the miry places and the marshes thereof shall not be healed. They shall be given to salt.

And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees from eat, whose leaf shall not fade. Neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed. It shall bring forth fruit, new fruit, according to his months, because the waters they issued out of the sanctuary.

And the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine. Now just a second, in case there are any theologians here, especially those who are dispensationally minded, let me just say to you in passing that I am not unmindful of the future fulfilment in the millennial age of everything that is written here. When our Lord Jesus will return and will reign in Jerusalem in visible glory and power, and his kingdom will be established on earth, in symbolic language, here's a picture of blessings that one day will be absolutely worldwide.

Therefore let me defend myself and say that I'm not unmindful of that interpretation. But I don't look at my Bible to what dispensation I'm in. I don't look at my Bible, read it, with a view to increasing my knowledge of doctrine.

Every time I turn to my Bible I say, Lord Jesus, what has this portion got to say about you? And Lord Jesus, what has it got to say about my life and how I can live it? And here is a graphic illustration of resources for Christian living. The Bible is an Eastern book, and the pictures of it, the pictures in it and the

illustrations it uses, are such as would be understood by people living in the Middle East. The people of the land knew the value of water.

The ground was often hard like iron, and the heavens as brass. And the picture here in this chapter of Ezekiel is the picture of a great river. Now you know it's rivers which make cities, and rivers which establish countries.

There would be no London without the Thames. There would be no Rome without the Tiber. There'd be no Egypt without the Nile.

No New York without the Hudson. And so I could go on. No Adelaide without, you know, exactly.

I was just going to say Melbourne, and I thought, well the Yarra, and I couldn't remember what was the equivalent, but you know what I mean. Well they wouldn't, would they? The difference that a river makes is the difference between desert and garden. And oh, what an illustration this continent is of that very thing.

If only rivers could be diverted. If only enough salt water could be transformed into fresh water. If only water could get in to the interior, what potential there is in this, the only underpopulated continent of the world.

What a tremendous thing it would be to see a river transforming a desert into a garden. It's not surprising therefore that much is made in the Bible of phrases like this. Springs of water, wells of salvation, showers of blessing, floods on dry ground.

These have immense significance. It's a picture that runs right through the book from beginning to end. For instance, in Isaiah, or if you come from the States, in Isaiah, chapter 35 and verse 6, in the wilderness shall waters break out and streams in the desert.

Psalms 46, verse 4, there is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God. Psalm 1 and verse 3, the godly man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit. And taking the picture into the New Testament, you remember what the Lord Jesus said.

If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me out of his inner man shall flow not a trickle, not a stream, not a river, but rivers of living water. And right in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, where John, describing for us what heaven will be like, tells us that there is no moon there, no sun, no sorrow, no sin, but a river, a pure river of water of life, as clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne and of the Lamb.

Now what's the significance of all this? Here is the theme of the Bible, running right through it. John, explaining Jesus, said, This spake he of the Holy Spirit, whom they that believe on him should receive. And Ezekiel records that God said, Everything shall live where the river cometh.

So I find here a tremendous promise. Everything shall live where the river cometh. This spake he of the Holy Spirit, whom they that believe on me should receive.

He is a promise of a person, a living person, who can come into my life and meet my need and transform the barrenness into a watered garden. A year or two ago, I was with the Sudan Interior Mission in that lovely country of Ethiopia. And I went for a week or two to stay at a town of the name of Sodu for a conference, missionary conference, of the Sudan Interior Mission.

And I stayed that time with the mission builder and his wife. And immediately he greeted me and took me into his home and he said, Come and let me show you what I have just bought my wife for a silver wedding present. So I said, Sure.

And I went to see it. I'll guarantee that if I gave you, every one of you, a piece of paper and asked you to put down on paper what this man bought his wife for a silver wedding present, those in one of you would get it right. Because I don't think many husbands would have the audacity to buy their wife what he did.

Do you know what he bought her? A bathroom. A bathroom. Fancy giving your wife a bathroom.

Wow. It was beautiful. All marble tiles, marvellous chromium plated taps.

Oh, it was the loveliest bathroom I'd ever seen with shower and everything. He deserved it. He'd worked like a slave there for 25 years.

And now he'd got that lovely bathroom. And I was glad for a different reason as well. For two weeks, I had been living in the most primitive surroundings imaginable.

And I was in great need of sharing the blessing of this 25th anniversary present. And so when I saw this bathroom, I said, Praise the Lord, that's fine. And I went back to my room and changed and returned to the bathroom and went to start my bath and turned on the tap and nothing happened.

So I dressed again and went to find him and I found him and I said, Pardon me, I said, I was just going to have a bath and I couldn't get the tap to run. Oh, he said, I forgot to tell you. I forgot to tell you.

The local council haven't connected the water supply and it won't be connected for three months. So I never shared in the blessing of that day and remained in the condition in which I was. What a situation.

Everything but the water. All the lovely equipment. All the beautiful bathroom.

All the lovely tiles but no water. What on earth's the good of that? And what on earth's the good of the church without the Holy Spirit? And what's the good of a Christian life without the Holy Spirit? In power. Everything except the one thing that matters to bring men to Christ.

Everything but life. There's so many of our churches just like that. Doctrine, got that.

Deacons, got those. But no dynamite. No Holy Spirit life.

Organizations galore in an attempt to do something to meet the needs of the generation in which we live. But the one person who can do it somehow, I don't want again to be cynical, but there are hundreds and hundreds of churches in Britain today, if the Holy Spirit was to remove and go, nobody would know any different. Nobody would know any different because nothing happens in these churches as evidence of life and miracle.

I wonder if that's not true of your life and mine. Everything except the Holy Spirit. How much we need to pray that prayer of that lovely hymn, Spirit divine, attend our prayers and make our hearts thy home.

Descend with all thy gracious powers, O come, great Spirit, come. Come as the dew and sweetly blast this consecrated hour. May barrenness rejoice to own thy fertilizing power.

Now, of course, as I have said already, here we're going to run into controversial territory. I'm going to skate on thin ice. That's not a very good metaphor on occasion like this, but do you know what I mean? Perhaps it's better to say in a church like this, I'm going to get in the deep water and in trouble maybe with many people who won't agree with me.

Some who say, what a pity you don't go far enough in your teaching. Other people who say, what a pity you go so far. God helping me in these three nights, I want to go just as far as the Bible goes.

No further, but just as far. Now, if you're afraid of this subject, my friend, as I know many people are, let me say to you, don't let fanaticism, the fear of false fire, keep you back from knowing the reality of the Spirit of God and only knowing no fire in your life. So many of us have exchanged the false fire of a fanatical faith for the no fire of an orthodox one, and we haven't got anything to say to anybody.

Now, as I turn to this passage of Scripture in particular, I want the Lord helping me to deal with it under three headings. If you've got notebooks, you might like to jot them down. Tonight, I'm going to speak to you about the essence of the river's power.

Tomorrow, the experience of the river's depth. And on Friday, the effect of the river's flow. Let me begin then tonight with the essence of the river's power.

First of all, notice the source of it. Verse one, this river proceeded from the threshold of the temple. That is to say, it came from the very throne of God.

Its source was right there. And any true blessing that God can give in our lives owes its origin to that source. It comes from the throne of God in heaven.

Now, what assurance and what strength it brings to us to know that the flow of the river of life, the Spirit of God, into his people and into his church, the life of God the Holy Spirit, has its origin from a throne to which the Lord Jesus has been raised, where justice has been satisfied, where no promise has ever been broken. And where he received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. Let me just read to you in Acts chapter 2 a moment.

Acts chapter 2, 32. Here is Peter's summary of the events of Pentecost. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear. That was his explanation of this dramatic, dynamic event that took place on that day. That is of tremendous significance.

The Holy Spirit did not come to us because 120 people met for a 10-day prayer meeting in an upper room and waited upon God. He came because Jesus prayed that he would come. He came because our Lord had been down here for 33 years and lived as a man the kind of life all of us are intended to live, of absolute obedience to the will of God, never diverted from God's will.

And on the day when that man hung upon a cross, that kind of life couldn't stay dead. It was impossible, as Peter said that day, for him to be holden of it. The grave couldn't hold a man who had been obedient to the will of God.

So up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph over his foes. He arose a victor over the dark domain and lives forever in heaven to reign. And when he entered heaven and stood in the presence of the Father, the presence of that perfect man made a demand upon God.

He had won back for humanity the right to live. And he received of the Father promise of the Holy Spirit. And that Spirit was shed abroad on the day of Pentecost.

And when you and I become Christians, when I receive Jesus Christ into my heart, I receive life that has come from a throne, a life of authority, a life of power. You remember what Jesus said? You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me. Acts 1a.

You shall receive power. And therefore, at my new birth, I receive from heaven the very life of Christ himself. The life of authority has come to dwell in my heart.

Oh, how tremendous. It is throne life that I have, and that you have if you're a Christian. Throne life.

You can't explain a Christian, a real Christian, except on the basis of miracle. If any man be in Christ, he is a totally different kind of person inside. He's at a revolution.

Something's happened. A new power has taken over, and there's no explaining it. Many people try to explain Christianity by psychology.

All I would say is, if you can explain your experience by a psychologist, you have a church member on your hands, but you don't have a Christian. A Christian can't be explained, except on the basis of a miracle having taken place in his life, and God having come to live within him. The life that I possess from the moment of my new birth is throne life, heaven's life, a life of absolute power.

But notice something else. Not only the source of this river, but the course of it. It came from the threshold, verse one says, from the threshold of the temple eastward, and the waters came down at the south side of the altar.

Now, if you were thinking of having a nap, would you just, for a minute, hold it, and waken up, because this is tremendously important, of tremendous significance. It came from the threshold eastward. Go back right to the beginning of history, Genesis chapter three.

When God created a man, and incidentally, he did create a man, thank heaven I haven't evolved from a monkey. God created a man in his own image, and in his own likeness. What a hopeless idea the theory of evolution is.

This whole story in Genesis throbs with truth, when I accept the fact that God created a man in his own image, and in his own likeness, to have dominion over his world, to have authority, to rule it, on one condition. God placed in that garden two trees, one of them the tree of life, which meant the tree of access, the tree of relationship, the tree of fellowship with God, our Christing place, if you like, where we could commune and talk with him as we walk in the light, as he is in the light, and enjoy intimate fellowship with God, and then a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and of every tree in the garden we had free permission to eat, with one exception, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man had not to touch it, which simply means that God reserved from himself, for himself, the right to choose between right and wrong. I reserve, he says, in effect, for you, I reserve the choice, and the decision as to what is right and what is wrong.

You have absolute freedom, but you observe that condition under my authority. And you know the story, that man disobeyed, and following his disobedience and rebellion, he was driven from the garden, and driven from fellowship. He refused to accept the condition, and immediately lost life and relationship with God.

And Genesis 3 closes this way, so he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, at the, notice that, at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. In that garden, on the eastward side, there was a sword, which kept back forever a rebel entering into the presence of God. No more could rebels have fellowship with a God who created them.

And God kept the flaming sword to guard the entrance to that garden, and it was set at the east side of the garden. And Ezekiel 47 tells me that this river came from the threshold eastward, the very direction where God had put judgment, and God had put a sword that was drawn, there came this river of life. Ezekiel 43 says something else about it, listen.

Verse 2, Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of east, the east, and his voice was like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory. Verse 4, And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate, whose prospect is toward the east, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And so the river comes, and God's sword is put in its sheath, for this river came by way of the altar.

And in New Testament language, that just means this. The Spirit of God could not come until there'd been a calvary. When the blood had been shed, when judgment had been dealt with, when the price had been paid, when rebels had been forgiven, when the Lord opened a way, a living way, into the presence of God through faith in his precious blood, when the cross and the price and the blood had been shed, then out flowed the river.

And God's sword, which guarded the entrance to life, was put in its sheath, and God is on my side. Oh, that's all I can do to stop shouting hallelujah. But you know, the amazing and ridiculous things that people say about God, things like this, he's a great policeman, just running around, snooping away, taking away all my fun.

He's against me. God isn't against you. There's a friend of mine whom I know very well in Scotland, he has five kids, and one weekend his wife decided she'd go away for a holiday, get release from the effort and the strain.

She went away, took four of the kids with her, and left one with her father for the weekend. The one she left was a boy aged nine who never stopped talking, and that was the one she wanted to be away from him for a weekend. So she left him with Daddy.

And this man was a preacher, had a church, and he was going to preach on that Sunday for three services, and he had to look after this boy who wouldn't stop talking. So he thought the only thing he could do was bring his little bed into my room and put him in one corner and trust he'd be quiet. I must get some sleep.

So he told the boy to be quiet. No, he wouldn't stop talking. He went on and on.

So he thought, well now, look, he said, I'm going to put the light out and we'll go to sleep. Please be quiet. Oh, and he started talking.

Now here's the light going out, so please be quiet. So it was quietness for about 10 minutes, and then suddenly a voice said, Daddy. Oh goodness, that boy again.

He said, Why, what's the matter, son? Daddy, is your face turned this way? Yes, it is, son. Thank you, Daddy. That was all, and he went sound asleep.

There's a place called Calvary which tells me that God's face has turned my way. He's on my side. He's for me, not against me.

It doesn't matter how far I wander away from himself, how far I've disobeyed, how deeply habits have got hold of me, of which I'm ashamed, God is for me, never against me. Calvary assures me of that. The blood has been shed.

The way is open to his presence if I'm prepared to repent and to trust him. But before I can have a Pentecost, I must have a Calvary. Before I can know the Spirit of God indwelling my heart, I must know in my life what it means to meet God at the foot of Calvary's cross.

Calvary precedes Pentecost. When I go to some church prayer meetings and I say, I hear people pray, Lord, give us another Pentecost. I think I know what they mean, but I sometimes think that the angels in heaven and look over the ramparts of heaven and say, you give us Calvary and then we'll give you Pentecost.

Pentecost is inevitable. When I'm prepared to die out to all my rights and let God have his supreme sovereign way in my heart, then inevitably Pentecost comes. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come.

Every Sunday morning. Have you ever prayed, our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, my kingdom go. You can't ask God's kingdom to come until you say, my kingdom go.

The course of the river, it came from the east side telling us that judgment has been satisfied. It came by way of the altar, it comes to us by the way of the cross. And that's always how the Holy Spirit comes into my life.

Comes when I've met God as a sinner at Calvary and acknowledged to him that I can do nothing about it. So this life, this life which is a life of authority is also a life of submission. I want to illustrate what I mean by that.

A little time ago I was in London in July, that's our summer, on a very hot day, oh it was an awful hot, temperature was at least 65. And we was all sweating it out. Evening papers as much back came out with a huge headline, in the sizzling 70s, no hope of a break.

And everybody was sweating. And that day I went down Regent Street, if you know it, towards Piccadilly Circus. And for some reason or other, I saw hundreds of double-decker buses all standing still, stationary, nobody moving.

They're all taking over, the engines were, drivers sitting at the wheel, nothing moving. Being an accountant by nature, I began counting up the horsepower under hoods of those buses, soon lost count. Hundreds of

thousands of horsepower, all stationary, couldn't move an inch.

And I wondered why, and then I got to Piccadilly Circus and I found out why, the traffic lights were broken down. And in place of the traffic lights, there was one little fat London policeman, I don't think he was more than five foot eight in height, and he had his helmet on the back of his head, sweating it out in the heat, and his hand on his hip, and a hand up in the air like that, with his back to all the buses, and they're all stopped, none of them moved an inch. And I stood and looked at him, absolutely fascinated.

He was so fat, it was terrific. The size of the man, outwards, I mean, not upwards, outwards, he was tremendous, as tall as he was broad. And there was that little fellow with his hand up in the air.

And I thought to myself, I said, not to him, but I said in my mind, I said, you think you're no end of a guy, don't you? Why don't you go home? I guess you live in Clapham Junction or Wimbledon or somewhere. Why don't you go home and you have a wife and five kids, and go home to them, and just take off your uniform and come back in a suit of clothes like I've got on, and stand in Piccadilly Circus and do that? In half a minute, he'd be in a hospital, if he wasn't dead. Why, there wasn't a driver on those buses that cared two pennies for a little fat London policeman, but I'll tell you what, I'll tell you what, they cared a mighty lot for the uniform he wore.

And that man was clothed with the authority of Scotland Yard. Clothed with a uniform that symbolised absolute authority. And because of that, because of that, he was in absolute control of this situation.

Down there in Piccadilly Circus, not one horse dare move. Not a driver dare put his foot on the accelerator pedal. He was in charge of the situation because he was a man under authority who's in control.

Do you see? The life that I receive is a life of absolute authority. It's a life that comes from a throne in heaven. All power is given unto me.

Go ye therefore and preach the gospel. That's the life I have. But if I want to know the power, I must submit to his authority.

I must meet him at the cross, I must repent, and I must turn to him as nothing and nobody. And then that life of authority can get through me to others. The course of this river.

Now I just want to say one more thing, then we're through. I trust you're with me. I trust you see the thrill of this message, the wonder of it, what it can do in your life.

If you really get hold of this, it will transform you. The Holy Spirit's source is in a throne in heaven. His course is by way of the cross, so that he comes to you from a throne with absolute authority, the life of a risen Lord.

He comes because you've met God in Jesus Christ at Calvary, and you've repented of sin and trusted him from and what about the force of it? Verse five, I notice that one mile or less from its source, this river had grown until it was more than a mile deep. Less, rather let me put it this way, less than a mile from its source. It was far too deep to swim in.

Waters, waters, says verse five, to swim in. No tributary had reinforced it, at least I don't read of any, hadn't been strengthened by any other stream. It owed its growth and owed its power to the fact that constantly springing up from a throne in heaven, it was fed from that same source.

Now listen, God gives the Holy Spirit without measure where he can find a channel ready to receive him, where he can find a life available for his purpose, for his use, and we have nothing we can add to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. You can't improve on Jesus, of course you can't, of course you can't. God's perfect answer for your life, Jesus himself indwelling you, filling you, thrilling you every day, you can't improve on him.

The trouble is that in our churches, in our lives, we've so often substituted this for organization and ideas and programs which simply crowd out the Spirit of God. How much room is there in your church for the Holy Spirit to work? Have you ever been at a service where he's intervened? Where you've been conscious of his presence? Where God has really broken through? Or are you satisfied to go through life every Sunday, hymn, prayer, hymn, reading, notices, offering, hymn, anthem, hymn, message, hymn, benediction, and all the go home. The moment we're out the building we talk about anything except the Lord.

Never think about anything that's happened. It happens twice a Sunday and we pray church satisfactorily to our own idea and try to fool everybody that we're religious and make some impact upon the day in which we live. It's absolute sheer bunkum.

We don't touch anybody or anything doing that. Just come inside our churches and pray religion every week. Pray at it.

Nothing in it at all. God never steps in whenever awed by his presence or have to pause with a sense of the wonder that God is with us because we've crowded him out. What's your smallest meeting in your church diary? A prayer meeting? That's the answer.

Crowded him out. Don't want him. It'd be very awkward if God intervened too much.

It'd be disturbing. It'd affect too much of our habits and customs. It would be very inconvenient to us.

I'm afraid I don't know much about Australian history but I wonder whether Australia has ever really had revival. I know it has had some wonderful evangelists, Lionel Fletcher among them, great man of God, but really has this country ever seen such a move of the Spirit of God? As years ago we saw in Wales and Northern Ireland, in other parts of the world, in East Africa. A real touch of heaven.

A real breakthrough of heaven. We haven't. And that's why it is that young people today are just sick to death of the church.

Don't think it's got anything to say. Fed up with it. Never come inside it.

Don't want anything to do with it. Don't be very sceptical about supernatural things. They don't take anything for granted simply because they haven't seen any evidence of supernatural living on the part of parents.

And the churches to them seem utterly remote and utterly irrelevant because there's no life and no reality where there ought to be. Oh my friend, I plead with you that you and your church will somehow know what to do in making room for God to do something. For God to do a new thing in days like these before it's too late.

You know, or do you, that God doesn't expect you to live the Christian life? Whether it's in your home, in the pastorate, or in business, anywhere, you can't live the Christian life in your own strength. So many of us try to do that. I don't doubt our conversion, but we live as if Jesus Christ hadn't anything to do with us.

Do you know I had a letter from a man, a businessman not so long ago, and he said to me after a meeting I'd been at, he said that's the first time I've ever heard that Jesus Christ is a factor in my Christian life. Never knew it. His religion had been going to church praying on Sunday and then just seeking to live a good life.

Oh, a Christian man, unquestionably, but never knowing he had resources in the person of God's Holy Spirit adequate to meet every situation. You and I can't live the Christian lives in our strength, no more than we can save our souls. But the fact is that the Lord Jesus is provided for us, one who is absolutely sufficient for every circumstance in order that I may live triumphantly.

I receive from givenness, forgiveness from God by faith in a crucified Saviour. And at that moment I'm sealed with the Spirit. I belong to Him.

I'm indwelt by the Spirit because He's come into my heart to live. And He's come there to meet every demand that can ever be made upon me, an answer to my obedience, my commitment. Yes, the Holy Spirit in you is God's answer to your defeat, your discouragement, your despair.

The opposite of everything that I am by nature is in Christ, and He's in me. Come on now, let's just, as I close, let's just get to grips with that thought in your life. What are you by nature? Are you bad-tempered? Well, He's gracious.

Are you impure? Well, He's pure. Are you unholy? Well, He's holy. Are you untruthful? Well, He is truth.

Do you know nothing about guidance? Well, He is the way. Whatever you aren't, He is. And He's in you to produce just what He is in your life every day.

That's Christian living. That's what turns it from drudgery to luxury. Where in any situation, when sometimes the adversary comes in like a flood and I don't know what to do, I can say, Lord, I can't, but you can.

When I'm tempted with impure thoughts, Lord Jesus, I didn't ask for these, it's over to you, you can. I trust you. When I'm impatient and want to blow my top with somebody, Lord, your grace, your patience, please, and He's there.

The opposite to all that I am is in Christ. Trouble is that most of us spend our Christian lives trying to make ourselves better, better Christians, polish up the flesh, you know, make ourselves better people. Perhaps with a little prayer, a little reading the Bible, a little understanding, a little training, a little going into college, a little study, I'll make myself a better person.

You won't. You won't. No, no, it doesn't work that way.

God doesn't want to improve you. He just leaves you alone. He says, now get out of the way and let me come in and let me do it all for you as you moment by moment take and trust and receive all my strength and all my power.

I don't want to tread on anybody's corns unnecessarily, but I want to say something that I believe to be firmly true, and that is if Christian people understood this secret of real living, I tell you that about half our psychiatrists would be put out of a job. They'd be out of work. For the tensions and strains that come in life, which drive people to the psychiatrist are rooted deeply in the conflict between myself, the old life, and this new life, Jesus in me.

And if I don't get that secret, I soon start taking tranquilizers, drinking masses of coffee, biting my fingernails, and live on tension and strain all through my life. Oh, one of the greatest men in the Anglican church was, oh, some time ago was Bishop Handley Mole, Bishop of Durham. And he went to the Keswick Convention, very rebellious against it, against teaching.

And then he saw the truth, and he wrote the hymn. Do you know it? Listen to it, two verses of it. My Savior, thou hast offered rest.

Oh, grant it then to me, the rest of ceasing from myself to find my all in thee. In thy strong hand I lay me down, so shall the work be done. For who can work so wondrously as the Almighty One? My dear, dear friend, may I say to you that if you don't make that discovery in life, I'll tell you.

I don't care what your ambitions may be, what your goals are, what your study is, how high an academic training you may have, and how dreams you have. Before long, before long, the whole business will just lie in shattered ruins around you, absolutely impossible to attain, because at the centre of your life you've left out God the Holy Spirit. Verse 1 says, He led me to the door.

Verse 2 says, He led me to the way. That's what I've sought to do this evening, to lead you to the door and to lead you to the way. May the Holy Spirit give you insight to follow.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we're helpless without you in any situation. We're reminded that thou didst say, without me you can do nothing.

Oh God, for Jesus sake, teach us all tonight to stand aside, to move right over from centre, and let you come in and take over. Live out your life through us every day, that people may take knowledge of us we've been with Christ. We ask it for his name's sake.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26465.mp3>

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