

Ye Shall Receive Power

by Billy Magee

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting for the Holy Ghost to receive spiritual power and to live a life that honors God.

Duration: 38:36

Scripture: Psalm 24:3-5, Matthew 7:11, Luke 11:13, John 7:37, Acts 1:1-5, Acts 5:32

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Witness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the prevalence of hatred in society and shares a story about Catherine Booth, the mother of the Salvation Army, who showed love and compassion to a woman in need. The preacher emphasizes the importance of standing up against hate and being a witness for God. He then talks about the power of the Holy Ghost and the need for obedience to receive it. The preacher also mentions the gift of salvation and the importance of speaking up for Jesus when His name is blasphemed.

Transcript

Now we'll turn to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1. Somebody has called it the Acts of the Holy Ghost, and that is right. The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1, verse 1. The former treatise have I made, O Theopolis, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into another room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

These all continued with one accord, and prayer, and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. Amen. And we know the good Lord will add his own blessing upon the reading of his infallible and inspired word.

Just a word of prayer, please. Our loving Father, we thank Thee again for Thy word. This infallible book, this, Lord, indestructible book, this book, Lord, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

And now, Lord, as we return to its sacred page, grant, Lord, that it will please Thee to anoint these lips of clay, and bring honor and glory to the man at Thy right hand. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Now, in verse 8 there, you read, But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. This word, power. Now, everybody is anxious about power.

At least out there in that old world of ours, tonight, men and women are constantly interested in power. Now, this is not pardon, this is power. Thank God for pardon.

It is good, all of you, perhaps, in here tonight can look back to a time in your experience whenever you knew that sins were gone. The Holy Ghost spoke to your inner consciousness. I remember whenever He spoke to me along that avenue, that, as He says, I have blooded out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and thy sins.

Marvelous, isn't it? That we can know free pardon through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And whenever He speaks that to your inner consciousness, what a blessing that is. That sweet voice, that quiet voice, that real assuring voice of the blessed Holy Ghost when He speaks to that inner consciousness, the citadel of the soul where no human voice can reach.

That's what we talk about, the assurance that all is well between our soul and God. Good to have the past blooded out, isn't it? That's pardon, to know the past, whatever it has been. Let it be black or as black as it would stay in a bucket of tar.

Thank God, it's good to know that it's under the blood. Forgotten, forgiven and forgotten by God. That's marvelous, isn't it? And that should make our hearts rejoice to know that.

But whenever the Lord Jesus is speaking here, He's talking about power. These are part of the final words of our Lord Jesus Christ here on earth. And He was speaking on the Mount of Olives to over 500 brethren at once.

Men and women who were pardoned by the grace of God. And in these words that we have been reading together, He's been telling them that you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. And then in verse 8 He says, ye shall receive power.

That's different from pardon. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. And it's only the Holy Ghost who can give power.

Now you and I know that there's a lot of realms in the secular world where power is really in evidence as far as ordinary power is concerned. You take nuclear power, the atomic energy, the atomic bomb that was dropped in Hiroshima where multitudes of human beings just melted into thin air, never were seen, just melted, just disappeared. The soul left the body and went out into eternity, but the body just simply melted.

And they tell us tonight, the powers that be, they tell us that they have got power in their fist to blow up the entire universe. They tell us that if they had four of these high explosives which they call the cobalt and placed them at certain points in this universe and donated them at the same time they would blow the universe into another orbit. That's the power that men have at the minute as far as the physical world is concerned.

And there's not only atomic power, but there's medical power. They'll do anything nowadays, only there's one thing they can do. They may clone, but they can give life.

That's one thing they can do. And my friend, only God can give life. And at the minute they would tackle anything, wouldn't they? In the medical world they would do anything that they felt that they could get away with.

But you know friend, we're not despising what medicine has done over the years. We realize that some of us maybe wouldn't be here tonight only for the medical world. And so we do thank God for the advances that they have made.

But they're insane when they get a certain distance to go a wee bit far, aren't they? And then there's hydraulic power, lifting power. And then there's magnetic power. And there's word power.

And then there's money power. And that has a good influence today, hasn't it? Money, you can do anything for money. And buy a lot of friends with finance.

And then there's personality power. And then there's political power. And whenever you think of whenever Al Gore and Bush were fighting for the White House, they spent 1.2 billion in electioneering.

Do you think of that? 1.2 billion pounds trying to get into the White House. Buying their way nearly into the White House. And Bush eventually reached it.

But that's in the secular world. But the power that's mentioned here in Acts chapter 1 and verse 8 is spiritual power. The power of the Divine Spirit.

The third person of the Holy Trinity of Heaven. Don't forget that there's God the Father. There is God the Son.

And there is God the Holy Ghost. And whenever Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden, there a way back 6,000 years ago, they were spirit possessed. They were perfect beings.

They were created by God. And the Bible tells us that God breathed on them. And they became living souls possessed by the Spirit of God.

And you'll remember that whenever they disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden fruit, you'll remember they were driven from the Garden. And the Holy Ghost folded his wings and went back to glory. And from that day until the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost didn't come to end well men and women.

Didn't do that. Because Jesus said that it would be better for him to go away. Expedient for me to go away.

For if I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come unto you or the Holy Ghost. He says, I'm with you, but he will be in you. Power where it counts.

Right in the center of personality. The Holy Ghost operating through consecrated vessels cleansed in the blood of Jesus. That's what matters, isn't it? And it's this power that Dr. Luke in writing the Acts of the Apostles under the inspiration of the Spirit is talking about.

And as I say, he's talking to the people of God. Now I take it tonight that every one of you can look back to a night in your experience whenever as a guilty lost sinner you came to Jesus and knew what it was to obtain pardon through the merits of the atoning blood. But I wonder how many of you in here tonight can look back to another night, to another time in your experience whenever you realized that although you were saved by the grace of God, you weren't able to live as you knew that God wanted you to live.

And this became a reality. You had your upper room experience. The Holy Ghost came and changed everything as far as you were concerned.

I wonder how many of us in here tonight can see Him into that. It's good to be saved. That's a perfect work in itself.

Can't add to it and we dare not take away from it. A perfect work of grace. But this Pentecostal experience is something different.

It's power. Now, you and I know tonight that there's the scarceness of this power in operation. If I had it within my power tonight, I would try and get every child of God in the north of Ireland and get them located in certain places and we would wait until we had another outpouring of the Spirit of God.

Or if I could get their ear and get everybody in northern Ireland tonight to surrender fully and trust the Lord to fill them with the Holy Ghost, we would have a power in operation in 24 hours that would turn multitudes to Jesus Christ. But it's not happening. Why? Because the Spirit of God is not in operation.

And that's a tragedy, isn't it? You see, we are living in the age of moral depravity. Hell is let loose. It would seem that the very sewers of hell are open, spewing out all the muck on the mire that hell can do.

And you know that's what's happening, isn't it? Moral corruption. And it's everywhere. Moral depravity.

And whenever you open your daily newspapers, I buy them down again for you to find out what's going on in the political realm. That's all. And I said to my wife the other day, don't lift it, don't read it.

It's only corruption from page one to the back page. That's all. If you had a mind clean before you read it, it wouldn't be clean after it.

Because the growth and the movement and the advance of satanic influence in our modern age is beyond the power of human description. We know that, don't we? We're taking young girls from school as low as 12 years of age to maternity wards. Not only moral depravity, but religious hypocrisy.

I said, isn't it? Terrible lot of inconsistency, isn't there? In the world today. Especially among the people of God. You see, some people would give us the impression I have been around public houses giving out tax and things like that.

And I remember offering a man a tract one night at a bar. And he said to me, I said, well, what about salvation? Oh, he says, I am saved. There he was with his glass of beer.

No security in sin. No matter what people say. It is clear from Scripture that there's no security in sin.

And spiritual bankruptcy. No matter about the march of evil, we're not able to counteract it, so we don't. I don't know how many prayer unions the faith mission has.

I think it must be close to 300 in Northern Ireland. There's 500, I think, Presbyterian churches in Northern Ireland, or in Ireland. I don't know how many Methodist churches there are.

Or how many Elam's churches there are. Or how many Baptist churches there are. Or how many mission halls there are.

And maybe if you added up all the prayer meetings, you could have well over a thousand prayer meetings every week. A day of 27 days a week prayer meetings in Northern Ireland. And hell marches on.

There's something radically wrong. Of all these prayer meetings, where function as they ought to function, I often said that the devil would be in the air, you see. But that's not happening.

Conditions relative to prevailing prayer are a thing of the past. Psalmist writing in Psalm 24 said, Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, but he that hath clean hands and a pure heart? Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully? He shall receive the blessing of the Lord. You'll agree with me, won't you, that there's something tragic wrong.

But there it is. And I don't think any of us would say anything else. But that hell is on the march.

You see, the Bible tells me that the disciples went everywhere preaching the Word. The Lord working with them. And confirming the Word with signs full of it.

One sermon preached on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 seen. There are 3,000 sermons preached now. And a lot of cases nobody's seen.

We're not in New Testament Christianity. We have gone down the road. And one would believe that the tragedy is that the Holy Ghost has been de-officed.

You seldom today hear a word about the Spirit of God. Why? I don't know. Well, there are preachers who think that by exalting or proclaiming the work of the Spirit, you'll be taken away from the ministry of Jesus.

But John 16 would clarify that by saying, When He, the Holy Ghost, is come unto you in Pentecostal power, He shall exalt Jesus. You see, it's Him who exalts Christ in the life according to New Testament story. And so we have got to acknowledge that there is something serious wrong.

The source of this power. Well, the Bible tells us here, Now, it's the power of the Spirit of God. It's not human power.

It's not any power of our own. As I have already stated, the Holy Ghost is the third person of the Holy Trinity. And Jerusalem was in an awful state.

Sin was rampant in the city of Jerusalem. And these 120 believers in the upper room and the disciples wanted to get on the job. They wanted to get out and get at it.

But Jesus said, No. Go back to the place of failure. Back to Jerusalem.

Stay there and wait for the promise of the Father. Wait until God fulfills His promise and the Holy Ghost comes in power upon you. You see, that's what Jesus said.

And it would be good if every preacher in the north of Ireland tonight got a grip of that, wouldn't it? That Jesus, instead of sending them forth as they were, told them to go back to the place where they had let the Lord down the most. Whenever He needed them most. Whenever He was facing the cross.

What did they do? They all forsook Him and fled. And there on Calvary's Mount, naked. Naked.

Star naked. And soldiers below, casting lots for His undergarments. That's it.

But you see, my friend, tonight, that was Jesus. And these are the words of Jesus. This is what mesmerizes me.

That people never read the Acts of the Apostles. Because the emphasis on the Acts, if you read it, from chapter 1 to the last chapter, is the ministry and power and operation of God the Holy Ghost. You see, the Bible tells us that God anointed Jesus.

Even Jesus. He was thirty years at the carpenter's bench, or whatever time He was at it. In Nazareth.

He never performed a miracle. Never did anything. Was in subjection to Joseph and to His mother Mary.

But before He began His earthly ministry, and coming up out of the Jordan, John tells us, He saw the Holy Ghost coming upon Him in the form of a dove. And every miracle that He performed, every one that He touched and healed, every one that He raised from the dead, every blind man that saw, every man that was touched or woman, at that particular time, for those three years and a half, every word He spoke, every miracle He performed, every action of Jesus Christ, was in the power, and in the power alone of the Spirit. And even the Bible tells us that whenever He was dying on the cross, He offered Himself without spot to God through the Eternal Spirit.

And how dare any man or any woman say that they can live and operate apart from the Spirit of God, whenever the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, never performed a single act, spoke an inspired word only by the Spirit of God. That's already taken. But that's according to Scripture.

Tell me, dear friend, tonight, can you say that's right? And then, not only that, but there's a significance of this power. What is it meant to do? I have met people over the years, and they have come to me, and they have said, well, I feel I can't go on any longer. If God doesn't do more for me now than He has done, I can't battle any longer.

There's only one way, and that's back into the Word. But you know, friend, God is an answer to it, the Holy Ghost. You're in a meeting tonight, and life's not easy, so it's not.

But here's power to live, above this world and sin, with heart made pure, and garments white, and Christ enthroned within. Many are feeling that, aren't they? Many tonight know perfectly well that their Christian life is very inconsistent. Cried and wept, repented, and went out and did the same again, overcome, brought down, and so on.

That's it, isn't it? The disciples were the same. There they were when they were in the upper room with Jesus. They were wondering which of them should be the greatest.

And whenever He needed them, they all failed. Failure could be written over those early disciples. Failure! After Pentecost, it was different.

Peter, before a wee girl, denied his Lord with oaths and with curses. And after Pentecost, what did he do? He stood up in Jerusalem. Man, I love that phrase.

Standing up with the eleven, and he charged Jerusalem with the murder of the Son of God. Some transformation, wasn't there? Bowing to a wee girl, ten days or a few days, thirty days previously. Now, standing up with the eleven, charging Jerusalem with the murder of the Son of God.

And when He came to die, He made a big request. Tradition tells us. He didn't want to be crucified the same way as the Lord Jesus.

He asked them to crucify Him upside down. Marvelous, wasn't it? Power to live! How were you living? A man used to tell me in Archthrow, and I was always tempted to say to him, he used to say, I'm living in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. And I was tempted to ask him sometime, because I knew that he was addicted to nicotine, and he was taking an odd pull at him, even though he was professing to be saved.

And I was going to ask him, how was he getting on in earthly places? Alright, living in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus. And that's right, and I wouldn't take away from that. But how were you and I getting on in earthly places? That's what matters.

Power to live! And not only power to live, but power to love. Love. That's it, isn't it? A lot of hate about these days, isn't there? Hatred, one kind or another.

Catherine Booth was walking down the street one morning, and she was passing the courthouse, and she heard the yells of a woman, and she looked across the street, and there was a woman standing between two policemen, a human wretch, polluting the morning air with her oaths and cursings. And the mother of the Salvation Army had stopped on her step, and she left her heart to God and wondered what she could do. What did she do? She crossed the street, and she planted a kiss on the cheek of the wretch.

And the woman threw her arms up into the air. She says, My God, who kissed me? She was in the prison cell. Catherine Booth went in to see her, and every time she saw her walking up the corridor, she would throw her hands in the air, and she would say, My God, who kissed me? Mrs. Booth talked to her, and one day, whenever the mother of the Salvation Army called, she opened the door and invited her in.

And Mrs. Booth led her to Christ and became one of the Salvation Army's greatest soul winners. Power to love. The unlovely returning good for evil.

Power to labor. You see, Jesus told them here, Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and so on, right to the uttermost parts of the

earth. He was sending them out to be witnesses, living witnesses, open and red of all men.

Tell me, friend, how were we getting on at it? I went to get something there in Kassel Derg, when I was up at Ardstorfer. I was up there a week ago, and I went in to get something for the car. And there was a mission in Kassel Derg, and the man that I was looking for the parts of, I said to him, Well, have you been to the mission? He said, No.

I have no mission to go. And I said, Well then, you are going to go on to hell then. He says, You just come in here today, for they attacked me.

I said, I did nothing of the kind. I came in here looking for parts of a car. For a car.

My brother-in-law's car. It is good to tell it, isn't it? You see, there are far too many people silent in our day. You can stand back, and hear the Lord's name taken in vain, and never say a thing.

People talking about your Jesus, your Savior, blaspheming His name, and you never say. If you hear them talking about your sister, or talking about your brother, you would have someone to say, Power to labor, to be a witness, to pray. And that is what the faith mission prayer is all about, isn't it? I had better rush on, because I can see the clock is almost nine o'clock, and I think it will soon be up.

The tape. The secret of this power. Well, the Bible tells us in John 7, 37, If any man thirsts, let him come unto me and drink.

Thirst! Are you thirsty? For the Holy Ghost. The Bible tells us in Acts chapter 5, He gives the Holy Ghost to them that obey Him. Are you willing to pledge your obedience? Implicit obedience, to the voice of the Holy Ghost.

The Bible tells us in Luke 11 and 13, that ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children. How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask Him? You see, He is a gift. Salvation is a gift.

God has two gifts. A gift for the sinner, Jesus. And God has a gift for His saints, the Holy Ghost.

What do you do with a gift? You take it, and you thank the giver. You remember the night, didn't you? When you opened your heart to Jesus, and He came in. What did you do? You thanked Him, for coming, didn't you? Because you believed it was a gift, and you accepted the gift of Jesus Christ.

This is a gift, the gift of God, the Holy Ghost. Plenty of course will you give. Take Him, and thank the giver.

Jesus Christ Himself, gives the Holy Ghost to them that ask. That's it, isn't it? Ye shall receive power. After that, the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and upon me.

May God bless His Word. Amen.

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