

(Audio Book) The Enduement Of The Spirit

by Charles Finney

This sermon recounts a powerful experience of witnessing the manifestation of God's power from on high during a time of preaching in various locations. It highlights the impact of prayer, the preaching of God's love and judgment, and the profound transformation that occurred in the hearts of the listeners, leading to a significant revival in the community.

Scripture: Acts 18:9, John 3:16, Hebrews 4:12, James 5:16, Luke 15:7, Genesis 19:1, Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 9:37, 2 Chronicles 7:14

Topics: "Manifestation of God's Power", "Community Revival"

Description

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Transcript

Since the publication and the independent of my article on the power from on high, I have been confined with protracted illness. In the meantime, I have received numerous letters of inquiry upon that subject. They relate mostly to three particular points of inquiry.

One, they request further illustrations of the exhibition of this power. Two, they inquire, who have a right to expect this endowment. Three, how or upon what conditions can it be obtained? I am unable to answer these inquiries by letters to individuals.

With your leave, I propose, if my health continues to improve, to reply to them in several short articles through your columns. In the present number, I will relate another exhibition of this power from on high, as witnessed by myself. Soon after I was licensed to preach, I went into a region of country where I was an entire stranger.

I went there at the request of a female missionary society, located in Oneida County, New York. Early in May, I think, I visited the town of Antwerp, in the northern part of Jefferson County. I stopped at the village hotel, and there learned that there were no religious meetings held in that town at the time.

They had a brick meeting-house, but it was locked up. By personal efforts, I got a few people to assemble in the parlor of a Christian lady in the place, and preached to them on the evening after my arrival. As I

passed round the village, I was shocked with the horrible profanity that I heard among the men wherever I went.

I obtained leave to preach in the schoolhouse on the next Sabbath. But before the Sabbath arrived, I was much discouraged, and almost terrified, in view of the state of society which I witnessed. On Saturday, the Lord applied with power to my heart the following words, addressed by the Lord Jesus to Paul, Acts 18 to 9, 10, This completely subdued my fears, but my heart was loaded with agony for the people.

On Sunday morning, I arose early, and retired to a grove not far from the village to pour out my heart before God for a blessing on the labours of the day. I could not express the agony of my soul in words, but struggled with much groaning, and, I believe, with many tears, for an hour or two, without getting relief. I returned to my room in the hotel, but almost immediately came back to the grove.

This I did thrice. The last time I got complete relief, just as it was time to go to meeting, I went to the schoolhouse, and found it filled to its utmost capacity. I took out my little pocket Bible, and read for my text, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I exhibited the love of God as contrasted with the manner in which He was treated by those for whom He gave up His Son. I charged home their profanity upon them, and, as I recognized among my hearers several whose profanity I had particularly noticed, in the fullness of my heart and the gushing of my tears I pointed to them, and said, I heard these men call upon God to damn their fellows. The word took powerful effect.

Nobody seemed offended, but almost everybody greatly melted. At the close of the service the amiable landlord, Mr. Copeland, rose and said that he would open the meeting-house in the afternoon. He did so.

The meeting-house was full, and, as in the morning, the word took powerful effect. Thus a powerful revival commenced in the village, which soon after spread in every direction. I think it was on the second Sabbath after this, when I came out of the pulpit in the afternoon, an aged man approached, and said to me, Can you not come and preach in our neighborhood? We have never had any religious meetings there.

I inquired the direction and the distance, and appointed to preach there the next afternoon, Monday, at five o'clock, in their school-house. I had preached three times in the village, and attended to prayer meetings on the Lord's Day, and on Monday I went on foot to fulfill this appointment. The weather was very warm that day, and before I arrived there I felt almost too faint to walk, and greatly discouraged in my mind.

I sat down in the shade by the wayside, and felt as if I was too faint to reach there, and if I did, too much discouraged to open my mouth to the people. When I arrived I found the house full, and immediately commenced the service by reading a hymn. They attempted to sing, but the horrible discord agonized me beyond expression.

I leaned forward, put my elbows upon my knees and my hands over my ears, and shook my head withal, to shut out the discord, which even then I could barely endure. As soon as they had ceased to sing I cast myself down upon my knees, almost in a state of desperation. The Lord opened the windows of heaven upon me, and gave me great enlargement and power in prayer.

Up to this moment I had no idea what text I should use on the occasion. As I rose from my knees the Lord gave me this, Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. I told the people, as nearly as

I could recollect, where they would find it, and went on to tell them of the destruction of Sodom.

I gave them an outline of the history of Abraham and Lot, and their relations to each other, of Abraham's praying for Sodom, and of Lot, as the only pious man that was found in the city. While I was doing this I was struck with the fact that the people looked exceedingly angry about me. Many countenances appeared very threatening, and some of the men near me looked as if they were about to strike me.

This I could not understand, as I was only giving them, with great liberty of spirit, some interesting sketches of Bible history. As soon as I had completed the historical sketch I turned upon them, and said that I had understood they had never had any religious meetings in that neighbourhood, and, applying that fact, I thrust at them with the sword of the Spirit with all my might. From this moment the solemnity increased with great rapidity.

In a few moments there seemed to fall upon the congregation an instantaneous shock. I cannot describe the sensation that I felt, nor that which was apparent in the congregation, but the words seemed literally to cut like a sword. The power from on high came down upon them in such a torrent that they fell from their seats in every direction.

In less than a minute nearly the whole congregation were either down on their knees, or on their faces, or in some position prostrate before God. Everyone was crying or groaning for mercy upon his own soul. They paid no further attention to me or to my preaching.

I tried to get their attention, but I could not. I observed the aged man who had invited me there as still retaining his seat near the centre of the house. He was staring around him with a look of unutterable astonishment.

Pointing to him, I cried at the top of my voice, Can't you pray? He knelt down and roared out a short prayer, about as loud as he could holler, but they paid no attention to him. After looking round for a few moments, I knelt down and put my hand on the head of a young man who was kneeling at my feet, and engaged in prayer for mercy on his soul. I got his attention, and preached Jesus in his ear.

In a few moments he seized Jesus by faith, and then broke out in prayer for those around him. I then turned to another in the same way, and with the same result, and then another, and another, till I know not how many had laid hold of Christ and were full of prayer for others. After continuing in this way till nearly sunset I was obliged to commit the meeting to the charge of the old gentleman who had invited me, and go to fulfil an appointment in another place for the evening.

In the afternoon of the next day I was sent for to go down to this place, as they had not been able to break up the meeting. They had been obliged to leave the schoolhouse, to give place to the school, but had removed to a private house nearby, where I found a number of persons still too anxious and too much loaded down with conviction to go to their homes. These were soon subdued by the word of God, and I believe all obtained a hope before they went home.

Observe, I was a total stranger in that place, had never seen or heard of it, until as I have related. But here, at my second visit, I learned that the place was called Sodom, by reason of its wickedness, and the old man who invited me was called Lot, because he was the only professor of religion in the place. After this manner the revival broke out in this neighbourhood.

I have not been in that neighbourhood for many years, but in 1856, I think, while labouring in Syracuse, New York, I was introduced to a minister of Christ from St. Lawrence County by the name of Cross. He said to me, Mr. Finney, you don't know me, but do you remember preaching in a place called Sodom? I said, I shall never forget it. He replied, I was then a young man, and was converted at that meeting.

He is still living, a pastor in one of the churches in that county, and is the father of the principal of our preparatory department. Those who have lived in that region can testify of the permanent results of that blessed revival. I can only give in words a feeble description of that wonderful manifestation of power from on high attending the preaching of the word.

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