

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

by Chuck Smith

This sermon emphasizes the struggle between the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh in serving God. It highlights the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit's power to be true witnesses for Jesus Christ, rather than depending on our own efforts which lead to failure and defeat. The key to victorious Christian living is surrendering to the control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture: Matthew 26:41, Psalm 103:14, Romans 7:18, Romans 8:9, Acts 1:8, John 14:16, Joel 2:28, Romans 8:37

Topics: "Struggle of the Spirit vs. Flesh", "Empowerment of the Holy Spirit"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the struggle between the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh in serving God. It highlights the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit's power to be true witnesses for Jesus Christ, rather than depending on our own efforts which lead to failure and defeat. The key to victorious Christian living is surrendering to the control and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

We have all of us experienced that defeat and frustration from having failed God because of the weakness of our flesh. After one of Peter's failures, Jesus said to him, Peter, the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Amen.

There have been so many times when in my own life, my spirit indeed was willing, but my flesh was weak. And I failed God because of the weakness of my flesh. Now it is good to know that God understands.

In the Psalms it says he knows our frame, that we are but dust. It was only us that thought we were the rock. Super saint.

God knew all the time that weakness was there and allowed the testing to come, not so he could see, but so that we could see our weaknesses. God knew they were there all the time. And it was necessary for God to let us know what he knows in order that we would not rely in our flesh or trust in our flesh.

And sooner or later, God allows all of us to come to that same realization that Paul the Apostle came to when he said, I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. Now, if you have not yet been brought to that place, if you still think that there is surely some good thing in your flesh and sooner or later you're going to discover it, then good luck. You've got a ways to go because God will ultimately bring all of us to that place where we have come to the end of our flesh and of our own efforts.

And we have resulted once more in failure and we come to the place where I say, God, I can't do it. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. You may say, Chuck, are you saying that my Christian experience then must ultimately end in failure? No.

Your Christian experience is ultimately going to end in glorious victory. But that is after you have learned that there is no good thing in your flesh and you've turned your life over to be controlled by the spirit and to be empowered by the spirit. And so Jesus spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Last week, we looked at the promise of the coming of the spirit. He promised to give us another comforter, even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive. We discovered that the word comforter, the Greek word parakletos means someone who will come alongside of you to help you.

Oh, how I needed that. Because I couldn't make it on my own. I couldn't do it myself.

I needed someone alongside of me to help me. But not only that, he would begin to teach me all things, begin to instruct me in the things of God, in the word of God. And then he would bring all things to my remembrance.

Whatsoever the Lord had commanded me in his word. And not only that, he would testify of Jesus Christ and he would speak to me of things to come. He would give me understanding of this whole prophetic picture in these last days.

Now, in the first chapter of the book of Acts, Luke is writing again to his friend Theophilus. He addressed his first book to him, the gospel according to Luke. This second book now he writes.

And he said, the former treatise that is referring to the gospel of Luke. Have I made unto thee, O Theophilus, of all of the things that Jesus began both to do and to teach. The key word here is began.

The work of Jesus isn't over when he ascended into heaven. The work of Jesus wasn't finished when he died on the cross. The Lord is continuing to work.

The former treatise, did I write unto you, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach. Jesus is continuing his work. He's continuing to minister only now through the anointed lives of his servants.

And so this second treatise is the continuation of the gospel according to Luke. It is still the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is still dealing with the work of Jesus Christ, the teachings of Jesus Christ, as now these men who he had promised the Holy Spirit had received that promise and brought by the Spirit into that relationship with him are continuing to do his work and to teach his truth.

For Luke asserts to Theophilus that Jesus showed himself alive after his death by many infallible proves, having appeared to his disciples over a period of 40 days. And he was speaking to them about the things of the coming kingdom. And when he was assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father, which he said, you have heard of me.

Now in the prophecy of Joel, God said in the last days, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon my servants and my handmaidens will I pour out of my spirit in that day, saith the Lord. God had promised to pour out his spirit upon all flesh.

Jesus said, but wait in Jerusalem, for in a few days, you're going to receive this promise of the Father, which I've told you about. Jesus said, I'm going to pray the Father. He'll give you another comforter, even the spirit of truth.

He told them about it. Now, wait in Jerusalem. It's going to be in a few days.

This promise is going to be fulfilled. Actually, it was about 10 days later that the promise was fulfilled as they were waiting in Jerusalem. For John indeed did baptize with water unto repentance, Jesus said, but you're going to be baptized in the Holy Ghost in just a few days.

We will be dealing with the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a later lesson, and so it is not our purpose tonight to delve into that particular issue. For tonight, we are continuing the study of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Now, at this point, they have their instructions.

It's just wait in Jerusalem until you receive this promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The disciples said, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Now, remember, he had been talking to them these 40 days about the kingdom. So it was a natural question for them to ask, but it wasn't a relevant question to what he was promising.

He was promising them an experience with the Holy Spirit that was going to be a life changing experience. They were still concerned about the kingdom on down the roadways, but he's talking about something you're going to get right now in just a few days. And so he passed off their question just saying, it isn't given unto you to know the seasons that are appointed unto the Father.

But coming back now to his subject of waiting for the promise of the Father, this baptism of the Holy Spirit coming back to it, he said, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And here we have the key for victory in our lives. It is not by reforming our flesh.

It is not by making promises and vows to God. It is by receiving that power that God has promised to us that would enable us to be what God wants us to be his witnesses. Paul, the apostle, experienced the same problems that we have all experienced in our great desire to please God.

And Paul followed the route that so many of us have followed in that he sought to please God in his flesh and with his flesh. And as you read the seventh chapter of the book of Romans, you find Paul saying, and I and I and I and I. As he was talking about his endeavor to live a righteous life in his flesh and in the power of his flesh, Paul in Romans seven tells of this frustration that he experienced by his endeavor to please God in his flesh. And he said, that which I would not, I do.

That which I would, I do not. A weird experience. That which I want to do for God, I don't.

That which I don't want to do, I do. And I found that there's some kind of a perverse law that is working in me in that when I would do good, evil is present with me. And again, that which I, I, I, I. You see all of the I's there.

And this chapter in which he speaks of his efforts, he ends this chapter with a desperate cry. Oh, wretched man, that I am who shall deliver me from this body of death. And sooner or later, it seems we all come to that cry.

As we realize the weakness of our flesh, oh, wretched man, that I am now. Chapter eight is a flip-flop. He no longer is talking about I. But in chapter eight, he begins to speak about the spirit and the life in the spirit.

He speaks about the spirit of God dwelling in us. He speaks about the spirit of God making us alive unto God. He speaks about the spirit of God helping us to mortify the deeds of our flesh.

He speaks about the spirit of God leading us, but as many as are led by the spirit of God. He speaks of the spirit of God affirming our sonship. He speaks about the spirit of God making intercession through us, helping our infirmities.

And the chapter ends. For we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Chapter seven, the I chapter, me, my flesh ends with a cry of despair.

Oh, wretched man, that I am. Chapter eight, dealing with the life of the spirit ends with a glorious cry of victory. For we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Chapter seven ends in defeat. Chapter eight ends with a glorious cry of victory. And so it is.

If you are seeking to please God as you're living after the flesh, you're going to end up with a desperate cry of defeat. But if you will yield your life to the power of the Holy Spirit, you're going to end with a glorious cry of victory. Thanks be unto God.

For I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature is able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. I'm more than a conqueror through the power of the Holy Spirit. So God does not intend that your Christian life be one of defeat.

God intends that your Christian life be one of glorious victory. But it can only be so through the empowering of the Holy Spirit. So the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is to empower him to be what God wants him to be, basically a witness unto Jesus Christ.

Now, ye shall receive power. After that, the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me. The word power comes from the Greek word *dunamis*.

And we have an English word *dynamic* that is a transliteration of this Greek word. We speak of he was so dynamic, and we speak of something that's got real power behind it. There is another English word that comes from this Greek word.

It is dynamite. I don't know that I like that. In this context, you shall receive power, dynamite. There are too many Christians going around blowing things up.

One is one is dynamic is really power to live. Dynamite's power to explode. So I like the dynamics of the Spirit.

You'll receive a new dynamic of life. A new power in your life. When the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And that power will be to help you. It will cause you to be a witness unto Jesus Christ. The word witness has been grossly misunderstood by the Christian church.

Because we think of a witness as one who verbalizes his experience in Jesus Christ to other people in order to lead them to Jesus Christ. And we think of witnessing, you know, going door to door and knocking on doors and asking people if they're born again or if they know Jesus Christ or. And we think of witnessing as verbalizing to others about Jesus Christ.

But a witness is not something that you say it is something that you are. And your life is a witness for Christ without your saying a word. If you are walking in the spirit and living in the spirit, your life is a dynamic witness to the world around you, and you don't even have to open your mouth.

Now, there are a lot of people that are opening their mouths, but their lives don't follow. And thus their whole witness is destroyed. You know, they may be going around making enemies of everybody on the job.

Because they're actually pushy and even sometimes obnoxious. And then their life isn't consistent. And they're getting angry, they're losing their temper, they're cursing and they're they're doing, you know, what everybody else is doing.

And yet they're condemning everybody else and tell them they're going to hell for doing that stuff. Well, they are a witness, but they are a bad witness. Their life you see is what is the true witness, not what you say, but what you are is the true witness.

That's what people are going to observe more than anything else. Now, if you can combine it, a life in the spirit. And then as the spirit directs you to speak a word, that becomes the most dynamic and powerful witness.

You see, God wants you to represent him. The world doesn't see God, thus it doesn't know God. God wants you to represent him to the world.

And every Christian is a representative of Jesus Christ. Now that's an awesome responsibility. I represent Jesus Christ.

Now, he is going to hold me accountable. He is going to hold me responsible for how I represent him. And it's a very serious matter.

We should each be asking ourselves, how am I representing Jesus Christ to the world around me? Do they really know that he is loving and kind and patient and long-suffering and gentle and meek and good? Do they get that impression of him as they look at me? I'm his representative. They're going to draw their opinions of Jesus Christ by what they see in me. And now you see why the church has been so ineffective.

Because people have the wrong ideas of Jesus Christ because they've been looking at the people going to church. And a lot of them are saying, well, if that's Christianity, I don't need it. Because unfortunately, we have been guilty of misrepresenting Jesus Christ, and yet that is a very serious thing.

God doesn't like us misrepresenting him. You remember when the children of Israel were wandering there in the wilderness, and now they've been going at it for almost 40 years. And oh, Moses' nerves were getting a little frayed, and he just wasn't as patient and all as he was in the beginning.

And they come to one of those barren places, there wasn't any water, and they said, they came to Moses and they started giving the same old pitch, you know. He brought us out here to die. You know, there

weren't enough graves in Egypt to bury us.

He brought us out here to bury us in the wilderness. We should have stayed in Egypt. Why did we ever listen to you and come on this, you know, 40-year trek through this wilderness anyhow? We ought to have seen our psychiatrist, you know, never should have come here at all.

And they were giving him a bad time. And Moses had been hearing this for 40 years. And it just, he went in before God and said, God, I've had it.

I don't care if I ever see them again, Lord. I've had it. God, they're getting on my case again.

And they're, oh God, I can't stand it. And the Lord said, well, Moses, they are thirsty. This is a dry place and they need water.

So Moses, you go out and speak to the rock that it might give forth water. You mean just, I'm to go out there and just speak to the rock? God, I'm so mad at them. I can't stand them.

And Moses, just go speak to the rock. Moses went out and he said, you generation of gripers. How long do I have to put up with you? Must I smite this rock to give you water again? And he took and he hit the rock with his rod.

The first time around, God said, hit the rock. And water will come forth. Second time, God said, just speak to the rock.

Water will come forth. But that wasn't dramatic enough for Moses at this particular point. He was so mad.

He wanted to do something to let, to vent his feelings. Now, God is very gracious and water came out because God knew the people were thirsty. But he said, Moses, come here, son.

Moses, I've got some bad news for you. You know, your lifelong ambition has been to cross the Jordan River with those people and lead them into the land. But you can't do it.

What do you mean I can't do it, Lord? After all I've taken from them? You mean I can't go into the problem? I can't see the land that you promised? No, Moses, you can't go in. Because you did not represent me before the people. They're at the waters of strife.

So don't even ask me about it. It's a closed issue. You just can't lead them in, Moses.

That's all there is to it. And he was robbed of his lifelong ambition because he failed to represent God. That's how serious God is about our representing him.

You say, but what does, you know, just smiting the rock? It seems like an awfully fierce judgment for such a minor infraction. It's not a minor infraction when you misrepresent God. And if you realize that the rock from which the water came was Jesus Christ, he was, and the water that came forth is the water of life.

And Christ was smitten once on the cross that life might come forth from him to all who are thirsty. But once the rock was smitten, it needs never to be smitten again. He was crucified once and for all.

And once Christ was smitten for our sins, all anyone has to do to receive that water of life is just to speak to the rock. You see, and he blew the whole illustration that God wanted for all of history. For all people to know.

You don't have to smite Christ again. He was smitten once and for all. Just speak to the rock and you can have that water of life.

Just ask Christ. And you know how many times Jesus was talking about, in fact, the very last invitation of the Bible. And let him that is a thirst come and drink of the water of life freely.

You know, here I am, come and partake of this water of life. Enjoy it. God wants you to represent him in such a way that people will know the truth about God.

Now, that is a responsibility that is greater than what I can fulfill. That is why I must have that power of the Holy Spirit in control in my life. I must yield my life to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

For Jesus said, you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be witnesses unto me. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, my life can become a witness as the Spirit works in me and works through me and empowers me to be what I can't be in and of myself. So my life needs to come under the controlling influence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Otherwise, I will not be a real witness. I can only be a witness for God as the Spirit empowers me and enables me to do so. Now there is a poor lost world out there.

And it's only hope is to find Jesus Christ. And it's only hope of finding Jesus Christ is by being touched by one who has found Jesus Christ and impressed by what they see in that life which is a witness for him. You have the opportunity.

Of being God's witness. Now the Bible says of Jesus that he was the true and faithful witness. He so represented God.

So completely represented God. That when Philip said unto him in the 14th chapter of John, Lord just show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus said, have I been so long a time with you and haven't you seen me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father.

You want to know what the Father is like, Philip? Look at me. If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. That is what a true and faithful witness is.

One who so represents that you can say if you have seen me, you've seen him. Someone says, well, what's his old man like? And I say, well, you've seen, you know, his son. You've seen the dad, just like his dad.

People are wondering, what is Jesus Christ like? What is the Father like? If I am the son. Through the work of God's spirit. Then I should be reflecting the Father.

And it should be said of me, well, if you've seen him. You've seen his father. He's just like his father.

He's like his father. Oh, God, help us. As I say these things, I am convicted as I say them.

Because I realized that there are areas where I have misrepresented God. Because I got into the flesh. Because I didn't walk after the spirit.

Because I didn't yield to the spirit. And people got a good idea of what Chuck Smith is like in the flesh. Rather than what God is like.

And I and I so often. Come before God and say, God. Fill me with your spirit.

To such an extent. That people will not see me, but only see you. And let my life be a reflection of your love.

Of your goodness. Of your kindness. Of all that you are.

Help me, Lord. Through thy spirit to represent you. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you shall be witnesses. Unto me. Oh, how we need the power of the spirit tonight.

Because there's a world out there. That is dying. And the end is coming soon.

And they need to see reality. The reality of God in your life. And if they don't.

They could very well perish without God. You're his witness. A heavy responsibility.

But I dare not. To shirk it. Or to run from it.

My only alternative is, oh, God, fill me with your spirit. Fill me with your spirit, Lord. Let thy spirit come upon me.

Shall we pray? Our Father, we ask your help. And we thank you, Lord, that you have provided it already. For even as the disciples waited.

Even as you promised the Holy Spirit came upon them. And they began to be your witnesses. And in a few years, that witness spread through the whole world.

And the world was turned upside down. Oh, God, tonight. As we have gathered here before you.

We ask you now to again. Work by your heart. Your Holy Spirit in such a way.

That we will be changed. And that we will no longer live after the flesh. But live after the spirit.

Walk after the spirit. Serve you in the spirit. That we might, oh, God.

With Paul, have that glorious cry of victory as the result of the spirit in our life. I am more than a conqueror. Through the power of your spirit.

Working in me. Lord, without your spirit, we can't do it. We're only wasting our time.

We only can get frustrated and feel the futility of the failure of our own flesh. Oh, God, help us. In Jesus name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/1VQIhE6p1il.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/baptism-of-the-holy-spirit/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net