

Why We Need the Holy Spirit Today

by Gary Osborne

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit for the mission of the church and for personal transformation, and highlights the need to overcome the fear of the supernatural.

Duration: 56:30

Scripture: Luke 24:44-46, Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8-9, Acts 1:12

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of embracing the mission given to believers by Jesus Christ. He highlights that being part of God's family means having a purpose beyond personal happiness and success. The speaker references Luke 24:44-48, where Jesus commissions his disciples to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations. The speaker encourages listeners to understand the significance of this commission and to rely on God's supernatural power for personal transformation and the transformation of others.

Transcript

Do you bring your Bibles? Amen. What a precious gift. What a wonderful thing that we have God's Word.

This evening I want to share two portions of Scripture in particular. We're going to go to Luke chapter 24. If you want to start heading there, Luke chapter 24.

If you were not here this morning, again, we opened our conference by really setting the stage for what this is all about. We believe we need the Holy Spirit today. And unfortunately there are some that whether they mean to or not, I think that they are actively encouraging people in the opposite direction.

Of not seeking for the fullness of the Spirit. When it's something that's very biblical. And that was brought forth today and we'll touch on it again tonight.

But this is important and let's just be very clear on why it's important. Every statistic that we have out there shows us that the church in America is in decline. It is absolutely in decline.

Bible understanding is very much in decline. Just on Wednesday night I shared some statistics with you from some of the latest surveys asking very simple Bible questions of mostly Christians. And they couldn't get even to point one.

And this is a serious problem. There's no personal transformation often anymore. Now I know when I say none, I don't mean literally none.

There are some. But personal transformation in people's lives. Where someone literally comes out of darkness and they are born again and brought in to the kingdom of God.

And that doesn't mean we're perfect. Doesn't mean there's no room for sanctification. There absolutely is.

All of that happens. But you know we're just not seeing that. We're not seeing any of that here.

Often times in other places overseas we're seeing some of this. But that's I really truly believe because many of our missionaries are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit. Because they don't have all of the tools that we think we have at our disposal that are so important to us.

And yet the early church, isn't it amazing the early church, they didn't have New Testaments to hand out. They didn't have PowerPoint presentations. And those are great.

I'm not against those at all. I'm for all that. And we use that.

They didn't have even church buildings and advertising. Certainly the culture of the first century church that they lived in. Think about it.

Did they have a culture that they said wow everything is flowing together. We've got all the laws and all the people that are not saved are with us. And everything is good.

No. They had the Jewish establishment was against them. The Roman Empire was against them.

They lived in a truly a godless empire. If you look at some of the emperors. If you look at Caligula and Nero and all of them.

And yet do you ever see in the book of Acts once where the church goes and they say you know we're just, this isn't fair to us. We want our rights too. And we think that, you don't see any of that do you? But what we do see is the people that are totally dependent on God.

And I want to encourage us tonight through the scriptures to understand what that means. And to embrace what the Bible has to say concerning all of that. And I don't know about you but that's the reason I'm here.

I would just ask you the question. Why are you here tonight? Why are we here? Not in this place literally but why are we here on this planet? As a believer what's our objective? Is it just to be happy and successful? And to have a nice life and say well wasn't this wonderful? God blessed me and this is all so fantastic. Is that really our objective? Is that what the Bible says our objective is to be? You know, I got to tell you honestly.

I'm just a regular, I'm a Charlie Brown kind of guy. I may never kick the football. It may get pulled out over and over and over again.

And that's okay. I'm going to keep coming back for more of the Lord. And you may say that's all I am.

I'm just an average person. I'm just a Charlie Brown and I feel like the football gets pulled out from under me all of the time. But I've got good news for you.

You don't have to stay flat of your back. You can say Lord help me. I need help today.

Lord please. I want to be used of you. I want to work for your kingdom.

And the only way that we can do that is to take what our Lord has to say in his word. And so with that said, we have a commission from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

He's our commander in chief. We are in his family. We are in the body.

We are brothers and sisters in the Lord and sons and daughters of the most high God. But we're not here just to have fun. He's given us a mission.

And we want to look at that and see what that is. And we know the mission. But let's go ahead and go to Luke chapter 24 and we'll begin to see these things very, very clearly I believe.

Beginning in verse 44 of Luke 24. As Jesus is speaking to the disciples, he says to them, These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you. That all things which are written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day. And that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. Now stop right there. There's the commission.

We see it in Matthew 28. We see it in Mark 16. Amen.

It's all through what? We have a commission. We're to go and to preach the gospel, to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations, to everyone. Amen.

That's the commission. That's not just for a select few. That's for all of us.

That's why we're here. I wish God's plan was that you get saved and the minute you get saved, you get raptured right up to heaven. That would be really neat if it worked that way.

It doesn't. We are here in this generation to be a witness to this generation. Every generation of souls needs a generation of witnesses.

Amen. And we're here on this planet told by the Lord to carry out the proclamation. If we don't get that, then everything else we talk about going forward means nothing.

If our main goal is not the proclamation of the gospel, seeing people come to Jesus Christ, nothing else matters. As one man said recently, the angels do not rejoice in heaven when we have a good Bible study, as great as that is. And that's important and that's wonderful.

The angels don't rejoice in heaven according to the scriptures just because we come and have a good time of singing and worshiping the Lord that way. The angels don't rejoice when we get together and we figure out what the wheel within the wheel within the wheel with Ezekiel. That's not what it says.

But the angels rejoice when one sinner, one sinner comes to God. Amen. Repents and comes to the Lord.

If this is not our burning, the burning desire of our heart, then I say we have to check ourselves. We do all these other things. We teach.

We encourage one another. We have fellowship. We do a lot of other things.

But if our main goal is not to get the gospel message out, then I think we have to check ourselves. Amen. So the Lord said this is what we're called to do.

And then though he says something very, very interesting in verse 49. After he says you're going to be witnesses of these things and you're to go into proclaim. What does he say? Behold, I'm sending forth the promise of my father upon you.

But you are to stay in the city in Jerusalem until you are clothed or endued with power from on high. So I've got this big job for you to do. I want you to go all around the world and proclaim the message.

But before that, you need to stay in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high. Now if we were to go quickly over to Acts chapter 1. Let's go to Acts chapter 1. And again, you're going to hear some of this is repetition. But all of us as speakers agree to be led of the Lord.

And I believe repetition is the mother of learning. Amen. I believe repetition is the mother of learning.

I believe it is. All right. And so you'll hear some of this, but we need to.

Verse 4 of Acts chapter 1. And gathering them together, he, meaning Jesus, commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. So this is picking right up with what we read in Luke. But to wait for what the father had promised, which he said, you heard of from me.

For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And so when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, Lord, is it at this time that you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said to them, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons, the epics, which the father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. Can we pray, please? Heavenly Father, we just ask in the remainder of this time together that you would speak to our hearts by your spirit. We don't want just head knowledge.

Many of us, if not all of us, we've got the head knowledge. But Lord, if our heart is not changed, it means nothing. And so we don't want to just be challenged.

Tonight we want to be changed by your spirit. We want to grow in you. We want the application and the reality of what you want, what your heart is, what your desire for us, your people, to get the gospel message out.

That needs to really get into our hearts. So I pray tonight, give us eyes to see, give us ears to hear what your spirit would say to us tonight. And we will thank you and honor you for we ask this in Jesus' name.

And everyone said amen. Just a few things very quickly that I want to bring to your attention. Some things that kind of stand out to me in this portion of Acts that we just read in chapter 1. Certain words kind of stand out.

The first word that stands out to me in verse 4 is that we're told that he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. He commanded them. Well, a command is not an option, is it? A command is a command.

I wonder oftentimes we have, and I'm not trying to be mean about this, and somebody knows the church I'm talking about. This is only for illustrative purposes. So please don't think that I'm trying to be mean.

But we have a church in town here who when you leave their parking lot, they have two signs. It's very interesting. They have one sign that says you are entering your mission field, which, you know, good.

That's great. You're leaving the parking lot, the place, and you're entering your mission field. But then directly behind that, there's a sign that the county requires for anybody that's pulling out onto a road from one place to another, and that's a stop sign.

And I thought it was really interesting. You are entering your mission field. Stop.

Think about it. Is that not what Jesus is saying? Jesus says, I have work for you to do, but stop until you are clothed with power from on high, until you receive this infilling of the Spirit. And if you were here this morning, he's not speaking to unbelievers.

He's speaking to his disciples. He's speaking to people that are already the Spirit dwells within them. Paul makes that clear in Romans chapter 8. So we're not saying that someone that has not been filled with the Spirit, that it means that they do not have the Spirit abiding within them.

Not at all. This is an endowment for power for service. This has nothing to do necessarily with relationship, except maybe as a byproduct.

But this is for power for service, and we need this. We need this desperately. How many have delegated the Holy Spirit to the bench? I mean, if we were to use a sports analogy, the Holy Spirit should be leading and guiding, but it seems like many have just delegated the Holy Spirit.

Off to the side, and benched him, if you would. And that can't happen. Because we can't carry out the mission and the message on our own, although I think a lot of people try.

And I think that people try with charisma. Certain people are just naturally gifted, very charismatic, and they can carry a crowd. Brother Anton was mentioning someone earlier today, just could carry 5,000 people.

They would just wait on his every word. Just, oh my. And there are certain people that I think just out of straight charisma, nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, they have tried to do whatever they've done, but without the power of the Spirit.

There are some that they say, my intellect. And trust me, I put no premium on ignorance. Do not get me wrong.

If you leave here and say that, then you're lying. It's not true. I love getting into the Word of God.

I love reading. I don't consider myself an egghead, but I like to hang around eggheads and learn from them. I really do.

And I mean that sincerely. But I think there are some people that the Holy Spirit has been relegated, and they're kind of depending on their intellectual capacity to say, oh, I've got something deep here. Oh, I'm going to give you something.

And I think that we see that some in the church. I really do. I think there are some that it's just a matter of popularity.

I'm going to say what's popular and draw a crowd and thereby say, look, I'm doing this great work for the Lord. Lord, look at this. But how many of those people are truly saved, truly born again, truly brought into the kingdom of God? There's whole segments of the church that depend on power to get the job done, sometimes political power.

And they say, well, if we can just usher in or if we can link arms with other groups that aren't Christian, but we'll form a powerful coalition. And we can go out and get the job done. But what job is really getting done? Is it the job that Jesus asked us to get done? And is it through the means that he has provided for us? I would say no.

And that's the entire problem. And here's why. The mission that our Lord has given us to take this gospel message out, and none of us can save anyone.

We get that. All we do is we carry the message. But what the Lord wants from that, is it a natural thing? Is God just looking for people to agree to a creed and to say, hey, yeah, I'm going to check this off.

Yeah, I'm going to be a Christian and not a Buddhist. I'm going to agree with points one, two, three, and four on the statement of faith here, and therefore I'm a Christian. Or I'm going to agree not to do this or that, to smoke or chew or go out with girls that do, and so therefore I'm a Christian.

And is this what our Lord asks us to do? Is it just some intellectual exercise? Is it just something that we say, I'm going to be a part of this group and therefore I'm a Christian? Is that what it is? No. Listen to me. What our Lord is asking us to do, the results of that, he does it, we don't.

But this is a supernatural work. Now I'm going to say something that may surprise some of you, but I believe with all my heart. Christianity is not primarily, first and foremost, a teaching religion.

There is much teaching that is done in Christianity, but it's not primarily just you are brought into this thing called Christianity, a relationship with Jesus, by teaching alone. It's primarily a supernatural religion. Because to be initiated into this thing, to use human language, requires that we be born again.

John chapter three. So this is not just about, hey, you believed that, and now you believe this, and it's all up here, and that's great, and you've got it. No.

Our Lord is asking us to engage in something that there's something supernatural about this. Amen? Is everybody, do you understand what I'm saying? I'm not trying to, but it's real, and we have to understand this. And I don't care who you are, and we could all, if we're believers, we could stand and give testimony.

And we're just talking again about, is it just a circumstance, or is it God? You know, the Lord could take someone like me, over 25 years ago, on a missions trip to Ireland, just to speak to one drunken man, on the side of a road, about Jesus Christ, and set that up, so that that man could hear the gospel, and his life could be changed. The Lord does that. We don't do that.

That's not natural. That's beyond us. That's God.

And I could take you through all the crazy things that happened, and the healing that needed to take place in my life, just to get there. And the finances that were needed, that came in at the last second. All of that.

And none of that is natural. That's not something we can do. It's supernatural.

So the work He wants us to do, it's something supernatural, therefore, boy, I better have the Holy Spirit. I need the hand of God, if we're going to get this thing done. Amen? And so this is where we're at, and this is what we're talking about with all of that.

And yet, there's a lot of people that are scared of the supernatural today. And I have even found myself, as someone who believes in the infilling of the Spirit, and that God heals today, and works miracles today, sometimes we find ourselves backing off, and there's certain words we don't want to use, because other people can use and abuse them, and I would say supernatural is one of those. And so we have a lot of people that, well, don't use the word supernatural.

Well, you can give me another word, miracle, whatever word you want to use, but the new birth is not natural. It is not of this earth. It is not of this world.

Amen? And so, supernatural. But we've got people that are scared of that today. And I understand that, and I think there are reasons for that.

And I just wrote five things down real quick. Why do people shy away from the supernatural? Number one, I think it's because you can take it all the way back to the Enlightenment, and we know that America was founded, many of the founders, very heavily influenced by the Enlightenment, again, by an intellectualism that exalts human knowledge, which we know can oftentimes puff up. And so because of that, America founded on this.

Well, we're not like these, you know, people over here in the huts somewhere in these other continents that are just, they don't know any better, so they believe in the supernatural. Oh, no, we've got it all figured out. We know what's what, and so everything is natural.

And I think that that's a reason that it's kind of in the church a little bit, that people go, oh, we don't need anything supernatural. There are bad teachers. I'm sure that Brother Tom will touch on this, on the bad and the ugly.

Sometimes there are just some bad teachers that claim stuff of the Holy Spirit that has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit and has nothing to do with the Word of God. And people say, ah, see, I don't want anything to do with anyone talking about the Holy Spirit and it being, you know, this supernatural stuff. No, in theory, okay, you can talk about the Holy Spirit, but let's not get any more than just basic cold theory.

We know the Antichrist if we know our Bible. We know the Antichrist is going to come with false signs and wonders. So there's a reason for us.

We step back and we say, yeah, I just kind of, you know, got to be careful with anything of that nature. Our whole society is founded on materialism. You think about this tonight.

We're all, I mean, we're so caught up in this world and especially in this country. Everything is about what we see, what we touch. Everything is about the temporal.

And yet we're to have our eyes on those things that are not the temporal but the eternal. And certainly carrying out the message is about that. And then certainly, again, we could talk about the occult and the problems and all the issues with the occult.

And people, again, they step back and they say, I don't want anything to do with talk of the Holy Spirit if it's going to be anything other than standard stuff. And so, folks, these are problems because Jesus told us I'm sending the Holy Spirit. And so in spite of all those things, we're commanded to wait and be filled with the Spirit before we go out.

So how and why can we possibly change that up? Does anyone here have the authority to say, you know what? I know Jesus said that for them, but now we're changing it up. We don't need that anymore. Do we have the right to do that? Of course we don't.

And it doesn't matter if people abuse or there are missteps or there is everything else. And you know what? I'll tell you this. If I never saw another healing, and thank the Lord, we've actually got people here.

We've seen healings here, legitimate healings, and God is so good and people can give testimony. If I never saw another healing in this world, I'm not going to stop believing in healings because the Bible still talks about it. And because my God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, by the way.

He doesn't change. Amen. He doesn't.

And there's nothing in the Word that tells us that He's going to stop doing these things in spite of what some people are trying to tell us. It's very clear. It's not in there.

If I never see another miracle happen, I'm not going to stop believing in miracles. See, some of these people, they say, well, this stuff is not around because they say, well, I haven't seen it. Well, then all of a sudden, you're no longer soul of scriptura, only the scriptures.

You're soul of your experience. Well, my experience. So, well, wait a minute.

Do we believe the Bible or do we not? Do we believe the Bible or do we not? Now, certainly, we know. I mean, Lord, help us. We're going to see people saved.

But if you never saw another person come to Jesus, is that going to change you from believing? Well, I guess God doesn't save today. I guess no one's being born again today. I guess it's not real.

I guess it's just not real. Are you kidding? Who are we to use our experience and place that over the Bible? We can't do it, can we, church? Our God doesn't lie. In fact, there's another verse here in verse 4 that I think is so important.

He says, I've commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had what? Promised. That's another word that jumps out to me. This is something that God has promised for the believer.

Does our God lie? Our God doesn't lie. Jesus told the disciples this over and over. Can I give you a couple of examples? Matthew 10, 20.

For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Luke 12, 2. For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say. John 7, 39.

But this he spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive. For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. John 14, 6. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, another Helper, that he may be with you forever.

John 15, 26. But when the Comforter comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me. And Luke 11, 13.

And this is, I think, powerful. Jesus says, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, and this is evil in comparison to God, right? If you can give good gifts to your children, and none of us are good like God, then listen to this. How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? It can't get any clearer than that, can it? This is a promise from the Lord.

And so, we've got to, those things leap out to me. Verse 5. Look what it says. The promise is very specifically described.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. So this is the promise, that God will baptize us with the Spirit. This is not the same thing as salvation.

If it is the same thing as salvation, then there's some questions you've got to answer for me. Why did the same disciples, who were filled with the Spirit in Acts 2, why did, just a short time later in Acts chapter 4, these same people gather in the room after they had been told and threatened, hey, you better not preach in Jesus' name anymore, and they prayed in Acts chapter 4, and it says that the Spirit came upon them again, the Spirit was poured out again, and they spoke the word with boldness. They went out, the whole place was shaken, and they went out and spoke the word with boldness.

Same people, and they were filled again. So you've got to answer that for me. You have to answer for me, what was Philip thinking? If Holy Spirit baptism is the same thing as salvation, if it's one and the same, which many of these guys teach that tell us that God's not doing stuff today, He's not healing miracles, all that's ceased.

If that's true, and salvation and Holy Spirit baptism are the same thing, then what was Philip doing, who by the way, one of the original deacons, right, in Acts chapter 6, and he goes out, and he preaches in Samaria, and he preaches to the whole group there, and people come to the Lord, and they are baptized in water. But what are we told in Acts chapter 8, that the Holy Spirit, they called for Peter and John from Jerusalem, right, why? Because the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them, they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, baptized in water. If salvation and Holy Spirit baptism are the same thing, then what in the world is Philip doing baptizing people in water before they're even saved? I mean, that's crazy.

Seriously, that's crazy. You're going to tell Philip that that's what he's doing? Of course not. So salvation and being filled with the Spirit for power, for service, are two different things.

Amen? Are you with me on that? Very, very clear. You would have to answer another testimony, or another question. All of the countless testimonies of great men and women of God down through history that have testified to being filled with the Spirit after being saved.

And I'm not one of those great men, but you would have to call me a liar. I'm deluded. Brother Anton is deluded.

Many of you, well, you're all just deluded. You're crazy. And so are men like D.L. Moody and Oswald Chambers and Charles Finney and Andrew Murray and Amy Carmichael and A.W. Tozer, all these people.

So all these people just got it wrong. They thought that they were filled with the Spirit, but since God's not really doing that today, then they got it wrong. That's crazy.

The New Testament is clear that God's people should be filled with the Spirit and that we must not dismiss the gifts of the Spirit. And this is what concerns me. I'll just give you three verses, for instance.

And when I hear guys come together and do a strange fire conference and belittle everything of the Spirit, these three scriptures jump out to me. The first one is 1 Thessalonians 5. We're told this, Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies or prophetic utterances.

Examine everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from every appearance of evil.

But it says, Do not despise prophecies or prophetic utterances. And yet these guys are saying, Oh, no, that's nothing. That's just somebody who just ate pizza late at night or whatever.

I mean, seriously, folks. This is serious stuff. We have to be so careful.

So careful. And I know that my brothers agree with me on this. To say, Well, you may say that's of God, but I'm saying that's of the devil.

We better really be careful and know what we're talking about. Now, sometimes we have the Word of God on our side, but we better be really careful with that type of mentality. Amen? To just wipe out whole gigantic groups of people and say, You're all wrong.

We just have to be so careful with that. And again, there's a place for correct discernment. But I'm just warning you on that.

1 Corinthians 14 is another one. If anyone thinks he's a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize the things which I, Paul's talking, write to you there of the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.

Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues, but let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner. But he says, Don't forbid the speaking in tongues. And yet we've got people doing that very thing.

Across the board. Just across the board. It's not for today.

Well, boy, Paul should have, as Brother Anton, I think, said, Boy, Paul should have put a disclaimer there for us after Corinth, right? That are living now. He should have said, In parenthesis, and by the way, this is only for the first century, but afterwards, you guys that are reading this, just know this is not for you anymore. Come on.

What about 2 Timothy 3? There are those that have a form of godliness, but deny what? The power thereof. So there is something to this thing of being saved and of being filled with the Spirit. All of this, the kingdom of God, there's, you know, this is the power of the Spirit.

And it's real, and we have to understand that. And there's not one scripture. Not one that states that these things have been overruled or done away with.

Not one. In fact, they're to continue until Jesus comes. Brother Anton used this verse, but I'm going to use it again tonight.

1 Corinthians chapter 1, starting about verse 6, but verse 7 is the key. Paul says, I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you fall short or come short in no gift. And the word there is charismata in the Greek.

And that's the spiritual gifts. He says that you would not fall short or come short in any gift. And then he goes on to say, eagerly awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The gifts do not cease until we are with our Lord face to face. Then, okay, they're not necessary. When I'm in heaven and Jesus is there, okay, I don't need someone to bring a message in tongues or a word of wisdom or discerning of spirits.

I'm in touch with Jesus. I'm okay. I'm good.

I'm not there right now. We're not there right now. God has poured out gifts.

He wants us to function in reliance of his spirit. Amen. We have to get that and understand that.

And so, again, those that teach these things have ceased. If they were to be true to the text here in 1 Corinthians 1, 7, they would have to say that Jesus has already returned. Because those gifts are still continuing.

And there's no way to deny it. But they would have to say, well, I guess Jesus returned. And actually, some of them do have a kind of a weird preterist teaching on that, but I won't get off on that.

But, yeah, that's what you would have to say. Because Paul told the Corinthians to expect this should continue until the Lord returns. Acts chapter 2. Peter on the day of Pentecost.

In the last days. Again, this was brought out this morning. When did the last days start? On the day of Pentecost.

We say we're in the last days. Well, yeah, but it's been 2,000 years. So we say, well, I'm in the last of the last days.

Well, maybe so. It looks like it, certainly by the signs of the times. But the last days.

And in those last days, what are some things that are happening? Well, number one, God, the spirit of the Lord is poured forth upon all flesh. Amen. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy.

Old men will see dreams. All this kind of stuff. Young men visions.

All this. Or whichever way it is. Backwards maybe.

I got it. But anyhow, that's what we're supposed to wait for until the coming of our Lord. Amen.

These are the things that are to continue because God has not changed the way that he wants the message to get out. And he's certainly not changed the way that he wants us as believers to work together and to worship and to do all the things that he wants us to do. That hasn't changed.

I like what A.W. Tozer had to say. And he said it in his book, *I Talk Back to the Devil*. Let me tell you what, this is a great quote from Tozer.

He says, In view of much of today's dispensational teaching about Bible interpretation, the apostles, miracles of God, and the fullness of the spirit, I must remind you that the Lord Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. That allows me to tell you something blessed and heartening, which I have found to be true and which I will stand by until the end of time. This is my finding.

There is nothing that Jesus has ever done for any of his disciples that he will not do for any other of his disciples. Where did the dividers of the word of truth get their teaching that all the gifts of the spirit ended when the last apostle died? They have never furnished chapter and verse for that. When some men beat the cover off their Bible to demonstrate how they stand by the word of God, they should be reminded that they are only standing by their own interpretation of the word.

I find nothing in the Bible that says the Lord has changed. He has the same love, the same grace, the same mercy, the same power, the same desires for the blessings of his children. You will have to prove it to me if you take the position that Jesus Christ refuses to do for you something that he did for any other of his disciples.

He is just the same towards everyone and everything. His attitude toward the proud is unchanged. In the Bible record, the proud men who came to Jesus got uniform treatment.

Somehow they were never able to discover that side of Jesus which is gentle and loving, kind and merciful. The proud always came up on the wrong side of Jesus, and they got that which the proud will always get from Jesus, justice and judgment, rebuke, warning and woe. It was the same with the self-righteous, the insincere, the hypocrites.

They all came up on the wrong side of Jesus. He goes on, it's about time that the modern artists who paint pictures of Jesus should be told that he was not a pretty, curly-haired weakling. They should be told the truth, that he is the Christ of God and that he will come riding through the skies on a white horse with a sword at his side.

He will judge the world, he will call all men to their feet and they will honor him for his majesty, his power, his purity and for creation itself. He is the same Jesus, he will always be the same. He is always the same to the meek, the mourner, the broken-hearted, the penitent sinner.

His attitude is always the same towards those who love him, the honest, hard-hearted person. These are the people who come up to Jesus on the right side, he never turns them away, he is ready with forgiveness, he is ready with comfort, he is ready with blessing. And I just say a big amen to all of that.

Don't you wish you could talk like A.W. Tozer or write like him? It would take me 20 minutes to say what he could say in 30 seconds. He just had that gift, but he's absolutely right on. There's nothing in the script, Jesus is the same.

He hasn't changed, God's plan has not changed. Verse 6 in Acts chapter 1, just real quickly, the disciples we know, they started asking, Lord, is this the time you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? And the same thing happens today all too often. I won't get off on that, but we know how people are, and they get all, oh, and they're going to start doing all these things.

You know, sometimes I think, and this has been a part of those that, and there's not a hard, fast rule here, but many of those that say the gifts have ceased, they also oftentimes tend to be Calvinist. It's not always, and it's not a hard and fast rule, but oftentimes this goes together, and if you look back at the history of Calvinism, by the way, you'll find a desire to set up an earthly kingdom. They seem to never get away from that same mindset of the Roman Catholics who had that same earthly type of mindset of let's set up a kingdom and kind of push the kingdom of God on everyone.

The reformers, that was one area that some of them, I don't think they ever fully got away from. You can study John Calvin and Geneva and all that stuff, and you'll see that oftentimes there's a desire. But you know what? When God's people are filled with His Spirit, we realize it's not about this world, and that the kingdom of God is not about this present age, amen, and that it's all about just saving souls, people being born again, brought into His kingdom.

Our citizenship is in heaven. It's not of this earth, and we've got to get that, and I think that when we're filled with the Spirit, this helps us. It reminds us of these things.

Again, we get our eyes off of the temporal and onto the eternal. But I oftentimes find that cessationists, there's something to that, and can any of my brothers, I'm not looking for bobbleheads, but do you see that, Brother Anton? Do you see that, Brother Tom? That there seems to be a thing of this world. And so are you going to restore the kingdom at this time? Are we ready now? Because we're going to sit on your right and on your left, you know, all this kind of stuff.

But that's not the answer. And, of course, Jesus replies in verse 7, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons, the epics. The Father has fixed those in His own authority.

And so don't try and figure out the date. We know that. Can't be done.

All the signs tell us is that it's closer, but there's no way we can do an actual date. Every 10 or so years, somebody tries to tell us this is the date. Silliness, and we know that.

And so we don't have to worry about that. Verse 8, though, is the key. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

I want you to note this. There are not three things mentioned here. There are not two things mentioned here.

There's one thing and one thing only that they will receive. Or better yet, it's not even a what, it's a who, the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

Amen? Because the Holy Spirit is that power. The power is a byproduct. And it's the reason that we're baptized in the Spirit, but it's the Holy Spirit that we seek and not the power.

Amen? Now, we've got to be careful with that, too, and I think that will be brought out as the conference moves on. If you're seeking to try and use God as, who was it, Simon the Sorcerer, right, with Philip and

Samaria, and you're trying to just use God for some personal power thing, forget it. God doesn't share his power with anyone.

And I'm going to tell you right now, I am so tired. I've gone through this thing for the last 20, 25 years with big TV personalities in the Christian world, and we've seen them fall one after another after another, and they may not fall in sin, but they may say something goofy or silly, and there's all kinds of stuff that goes on. And I'm just tired of the cult of the personality of the man of God or the woman of God.

Jesus is who it's all about. We reflect and glorify Jesus Christ, and he's the only one. This is not about me.

It's not about you. We don't seek to be filled with the Spirit so we can run around and say, now I can tell someone, and they're going to drop dead, or they're going to, come on. Come on.

We should know better than that, amen? The disciples had that attitude, and Jesus, you don't know what spirit you're of. You're not calling down fire from the, come on. And so this is about the Holy Spirit.

I'm reminded of the one brother, and I don't know who it was. This goes back 100 or 200 years ago, but I read about it. I think David Wilkerson documented it, that in one church, I want to say in Scotland, but I'm not sure, Brother Tom, so if it's not, forgive me.

But a man asked his congregation. He preached on power in terms of the Holy Spirit and purity. And he said, I want you to line up.

If your main thing is power, line up over here. If your main thing is purity, over here. And he said they lined up, and you would guess it, ten to one for what? For power.

In spite of the fact that Proverbs tells us that the righteous are as bold as the line. And that the Holy Spirit is just that. He's the Holy Spirit.

And there should be a purity in our lives. And so this baptism is necessary because Jesus then renews the commission in verse 8. After the Holy Spirit has come upon us, then the commission continues. Now you're going to go out, and you're going to be witnesses to me.

And really, this just goes back to Isaiah 49.6. It was given centuries ago to Israel before Jesus said it here. In Isaiah 49.6, he says, Is it too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel? I will also make you a light of the nations or a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach out to the ends of the earth. That's always been God's plan.

His plan is to use us. To work through us. But we can't do it on our own.

When is the church going to understand this? When are we going to get away from people thinking that, well, the statistics say people or the young people are leaving the churches, this is happening, that's happening. We've got to have a gimmick. We've got to have something to pull people in.

And I've told my people this, but maybe some here, you haven't heard this before. It's even getting now to where people are coming into the pulpit and they're dropping the F-bomb in a sermon. Because, oh, I want to show that I'm relevant.

I want to show you just how, man, I'm down with you. I get it. And so they'll drop that kind of, in fact, it was over on the west coast, one of these guys, and I can't remember if it's Washington or Oregon, but over

there, and this guy, he went to Texas.

This is a true story. He went to Texas, and the pastor there said, look, we're glad that you came before the service, but he says, this is Texas. You don't go dropping those kind of words here because we're conservative and just don't do that.

And so he says, the guy, the first thing, first sentence when he gets up behind the pulpit, he drops the F-bomb. Just to be defiant. And this is the kind of stuff that we are resorting to.

Can you imagine? Seriously, I'm not trying to be blasphemous or anything. Can you imagine Peter or Paul or someone resorting to that, to, oh, we've got to wow the crowd. We've got to show these people in Thessalonica how it is.

We've got to do something really radical here. Come on. Again, they didn't have all these things.

They didn't have not even any New Testaments. How in the world did they get the message out? I mean, word of mouth, right? And they had the old, we know, we had the old, but they didn't have all the things that we have, but somehow the hand of the Lord was with them. And they turned the world upside down because they were sold out to the Lord, because the Lord filled them with His Spirit.

You know, folks, when are we going to get this and understand that's the commission? But no, no, we're not going to make disciples. We're not going to see people come into the kingdom. We're going to just have a social club.

And so how many churches, really, they're just turning into a social club. And we're just going to have, you know, donuts, and I mean, they don't even get Krispy Kreme donuts. If you're going to do it, at least get Krispy Kreme donuts.

But, you know, none of that stuff. And yet we're doing all of this. I remember this goes back over 25 years ago, a large Assembly of God church in Springfield, Missouri, where I went to Bible college.

And the pastor's message was just a short little devotional, but he had a projector, and they played a clip of the movie Top Gun with Tom Cruise. Now, I don't know. I've never seen the movie, and I really don't know all that much about Tom Cruise, but I know he's some famous guy.

He's a Scientologist, too, I think, but that's beyond the point. Anyhow, so the guy shows this clip of a movie to, you know, that gets everybody. Ooh, ooh, yeah, that's Top Gun.

Oh, that's cool. You know, and all this, and yet the word doesn't go out. And again, there's no personal transformation.

That's a supernatural thing. You and I can't change anyone's heart. We can't change our own heart.

God has to do that work. We can't do any of that, and yet Jesus said, I want you to be my witnesses. I want you to go out, and that's been his design of his people in every generation, to be witnesses to that generation.

Do you know that word, witnesses? It's interesting. It appeared five times in Matthew, two times in Mark, three times in Luke, two times in John. You get to the book of Acts, it explodes 18 times.

They're witnesses. That's powerful to me. And, of course, a witness is someone who sees an event, someone that reports what happened.

Well, if it hasn't happened in our life, there's no way we're going to adequately report it to someone else, are we? We can only speak of what we know, and as the Holy Spirit works in our lives. And that's the only way it can happen. And, of course, this word witness, it's where we get our word for martyr.

And we know what a martyr is. A martyr is someone that makes a solemn statement under oath concerning their beliefs, and it results in their death. We just had.

This is what these posters are up here for on prayer. We observed the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church just last weekend. And they're those that are giving their very life for Jesus Christ.

And here we are, and, oh, they don't serve coffee at that church? No, I'm not going to go there. You know, oh, they don't have a special program for the six-year-olds. Not just, you know, but specifically, because my child has to be only with other six-year-olds.

They can't be with five-year-olds or seven-year-olds. And we've got to, you know, and all this kind of stuff. And we're into all of this.

And people are giving their lives for the Lord all over the world. Witnesses, martyrs. And you don't teach someone that.

That only comes from God, doesn't it? Some ministers, I heard this story personally from them, were in Bangladesh recently. And someone came up, and they were sitting around a cafe or something, and someone came up and said, you need to meet this guy. And this guy comes up, and his face is all mangled, all messed up.

And, well, what's the deal? What happened here? And they tell him that this man had been out in the village, in his village. He was a Christian preaching the gospel. And a lady there, and by the way, Bangladesh, it's, I don't know, 90-something percent Muslim.

I mean, it's heavy-duty stuff. And this lady gave her heart to the Lord. And she went home and told her husband.

And her husband was like, oh, really? You're turning to Jesus? Let's see. And he said, show me this guy. And goes out with a gun and shoots the guy in the face.

The guy survives that, but his face is all mangled because of that. And he goes to the hospital. He survives.

He gets healed up. And what does he do? Does he go into hiding? Oh, oh, I better not do that again. No, he's right back out there on the streets preaching Jesus again.

Do you teach that to someone? Is that something that we just take them through a class and we can teach them to risk their lives for Jesus like that? It doesn't work like that. That's just the Spirit of God is moving in our lives, amen, and working through us to be witnesses for Him. And it's always about souls, always.

The Lord wants to use us to reach others. One generation of Christians, again, reaching their generation of souls. And that's what we're responsible for.

But it can only be accomplished as God empowers us. And that empowerment is being filled with His Spirit. And it's God's gift.

It's God's gift. Can I just read to you? I just want to take a minute and read to you the personal testimony from D.L. Moody concerning just what happened to him and how God just did a great work in his life. And it's going to take me just a minute, but I want to read this to you.

He talks about the great Chicago fire, he says, on the evening of that memorable night in 1871 when one-third of the city was laid in ashes and thousands were left homeless. This is not Moody, but we're getting to quotes from Moody in a second. Dwight L. Moody had preached in Farewell Hall.

With the institutions with which he had founded in ruins, Moody went east to appeal for funds. But this is what he said, quote from Dwight L. Moody, My heart was not in the work of begging. I could not appeal.

I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York, oh, what a day! I cannot describe it. I seldom refer to it.

It's almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he didn't speak for 14 years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me and that I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand.

I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths.

And yet hundreds were now converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience. If you should give me all the world, it would be as the small dust of the balance.

So again, the sermons weren't different. But he prayed and he asked God to fill him with His Spirit. And God did this great work.

And he doesn't even go into great detail of what it meant. But he knew he was filled with God's Spirit. And something changed in his life.

Now people were coming by the hundreds. We say, well, it was just Dwight. And you know what's really sad? That Dwight L. Moody, and now there's an entire Moody Institute.

And I'm not trying to be mean about this. But I've seen a shift over the last five or so years. Moody Radio and stuff.

And they're shifting away from anything of Spirit-filled. And they're shifting towards. They're interviewing the people that are cessationists.

Some of the programs that are on there. It's just almost nonstop Calvinist cessationists. And that breaks my heart.

Because I guarantee you from reading Dwight L. Moody, he wouldn't be for that. He had an experience with God. A reality of what the Bible talks about.

And I want to close with this. A.W. Tozer, I think, summed it up best in Born After Midnight. He's quoting, of course, from Matthew 5-6.

And he just makes a couple of statements. Matthew 5-6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

For they shall be filled. He says, hunger and thirst are physical sensations. Which, in their acute stages, may become real pain.

It has been the experience of countless seekers after God. That when their desires become a pain, they were suddenly and wonderfully filled. The problem is not to persuade God to fill us.

But to want God sufficiently to permit him to do so. The average Christian is so cold and so contented with his wretched condition. That there is no vacuum of desire into which the Blessed Spirit can rush in with satisfying fullness.

And then he quotes. I don't know if it's a hymn or a poem. But it sounds like it ought to be a hymn to me.

Child of the kingdom, be filled with the Spirit. Nothing but fullness thy longing can meet. Tis the endowment for life and for service.

Thine is the promise, so certain, so sweet. I will pour water on him who is thirsty. I will pour floods upon the dry ground.

Open your heart for the gift I am bringing. While you are seeking me, I will be found. Church, I'm not teaching and none of our brothers this weekend are teaching some denominational thing.

It has nothing to do with that. We just, and I hope you do too, want what the Bible says. I was saved in a church that didn't, that basically was pretty much a cessationist type church.

A lot of them believed in the five point Calvinism and there was nothing ever said of being filled with the Spirit. But as I read through the Bible myself, as a teenager, and as I read through the book of Acts, I saw where people were being filled with the Spirit. And it was very clear to me it wasn't salvation.

Very clear it was something separate. And I said, Lord, all I know is I just want everything you have for me. I knew the passage in Luke that if we, being parents that are evil, if we know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more will our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him.

And I said, Lord, I'm not worried about anything bad. There's no need to worry about that. Can you imagine a child, your child, every time you offered him lunch that you've prepared, Mom, for that child to say, oh, I hope this doesn't have poison in it.

No, I'm serious. I hope, no, listen to me, because a lot of people, this is where they get held up. And I'm finished right here, but I want to say this.

Can you imagine how that would hurt you to say, don't you know I love you? I'm not going to give you something that's going to hurt you. I'm not going to give you something that's going to bite back and poison you. I love you.

I want to give you that which nourishes and strengthens you and helps you to move forward. And yet we worry, oh, oh, but I don't want to get, listen, God knows your heart. You know you're seeking God.

You're crying out to God for just more of him. And I saw that in his word, and I said, Lord, I just want all that you have for me. That's all I want.

Nothing more and nothing less. But, Lord, more of you, more of you. I've had all, but what I need is more of you.

Of things I've had my fill, and yet I hunger still. Empty and bare, Lord, hear my prayer for more of you. And if that's your heart's desire, God will fill.

I'm going to ask us if we can bow our heads, and maybe Sister Ann can come. Just as she's led of the Lord. Heavenly Father, Lord, your word makes it so clear.

You want us to be filled with your spirit. Lord, we're not looking for some particular gift or some just particular thing. We just want what you have for us.

And we know from your word that we can't carry out the commission apart from the working of your spirit. Because this is a supernatural commission. We're talking about, Lord, people being saved, and we know that, and so help us to not rely on ourselves.

To not think that we can reason someone into the kingdom. We can't do that. Reason is fine, but we need your spirit.

We need your spirit, and so I pray that you would stir up within every single heart here a greater desire for more of you. A desire to be filled to overflowing with your Holy Spirit. Just your promise.

It is your promise, your gift to your children. An endowment for power, for service. To see people saved.

Lord, I ask in Jesus' name that you would do this even right now. As people have come in, and we are hungry, and you know our hearts better than we know ourselves. I pray, Father, that you would fill us.

Fill us even tonight. Even tonight, fill us with your Holy Spirit. That we might be used of you.

That we might be used of you to see other souls come into the kingdom. That's all that counts. That's what it's about, Lord.

And so we just love you, and we thank you, and I'm believing you that you'll do this work of stirring us up. Maybe creating an appetite, a hunger, and a thirst for you, for righteousness. And we shall be filled.

That's your promise. Do this, Lord. In Jesus' name, I ask that you would do this.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

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