

God's Provision for Personal Power

by J. Oswald Sanders

God's provision for personal power is through the Holy Spirit, and we must come to the Lord and confess our sins and weaknesses to receive it.

Duration: 51:49

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 20:19, Romans 10:9

Topics: "Personal Power"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the destructive power of fire and hurricanes, emphasizing that these natural disasters should not be sentimentalized. The speaker then shares a personal experience of leading an evangelistic campaign in a Presbyterian church where he faced challenges due to the lack of preparation by the minister. However, through his preaching and the working of the Holy Spirit, several individuals, including the minister's son, responded and accepted Christ. The sermon then transitions to discussing God's provision for personal power, focusing on the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection and breathing the Holy Spirit upon them. The speaker highlights the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit and the authority to forgive sins.

Transcript

This evening I want to speak about God's provision for personal power. Now I'd like you to read with me from John's Gospel, chapter 20. John's Gospel, chapter 20, verse 19.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. After he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. And with that he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. If you try to envisage this situation, you can remember how the disciples were missing the Lord.

All their hopes had collapsed. They were left like sheep in the midst of wolves. The authorities were against them.

They were scared of the Jews. And there they are, cowering behind closed doors. And this, after all that Jesus had said and all that they'd learned of him during these years, we might feel rather critical of them, but I wonder how we would have fared had we been in their place.

I doubt if we'd have done much better. And then suddenly, Jesus comes in the midst. And twice over, he said to them, Peace be with you.

It was peace they needed above everything else. They were afraid. Their hopes were dashed.

Their spirits were absolutely discouraged. And then suddenly, Jesus said, Peace be with you. You know, peace is not the absence of trouble.

Peace is the presence of Christ. And here he is now, and he says, Peace be with you. Peace be with you.

Can you imagine the way in which fear began to evaporate and faith began to be born again? And then he commissioned them. He said, As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. I'm not so disappointed at your reactions that I'm going to lay you aside.

I am sending you as my representatives. And then he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. It's rather striking that although the apostles had enjoyed three years of uninterrupted teaching at the feet of the peerless teacher of all ages, yet their lives were characterized more by weakness and failure than they were by power and success.

They didn't make much of a stir before Pentecost. They manifested the weaknesses that are common to humanity. They weren't a very perfect bunch.

And yet, it was to these people that our Lord gave this promise. You shall receive power, Acts 1.8. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you shall be my witnesses. Pentecost was going to change everything, and the defect that was present was going to be removed and instead of being weak and failing, they were going to be powerful and spiritually fruitful.

Now, a craving for power is inherent in human nature. We've all got it. We all like to have authority in our own sphere, even in the kitchen.

It's part of our human nature. It's not necessarily wrong. Otherwise, Jesus wouldn't have promised them power.

But of course, power can be used by evil men. Hitler had power. He was granted absolute power, and he involved the whole world in a holocaust of pain and terror.

Yes, evil men can exercise power, and the devil has got power. He's got great power. Luther put it in his hymn, his craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate on earth is not his equal.

That's quite true. He's got tremendous power. But you see, because he had neither purity nor humility, the devil is what he is and does what he does.

He exercises power. Of course, it's not absolute power. It's delegated power.

But he exercises it for an evil purpose. Jesus said, I am going to give you power, and you're going to exercise it for a beneficent purpose. You're going to be witnesses to me.

And the power that the apostles received came direct from the throne of God by the hand of the Saviour. You shall receive power. And they did receive power on that day.

I like those words, there came from heaven. You know, it's inherent in our nature, too, to try to work things up. But when God sends blessing, it comes straight from heaven.

We don't have to work things up. If we are fulfilling the laws of spiritual power, blessing will come from heaven, from the throne of God. Now, before Pentecost, they weren't very, very successful.

They weren't power-filled men. And yet after Pentecost, it was quite different. It says they were full of power.

There was something about them. They had the authority that Christ delegated, and they had the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit, so that they had that double endowment. And after Pentecost, what a change.

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also. That was quite different from the defeated bunch who came to the Lord. They hadn't been able even to cast out a demon out of a boy, and they said, Lord, why could we not cast him out? That was lack of power, wasn't it? But you see, they did the right thing.

They went to the right source to discover the reason for their lack of power. Why could not we? And if we are conscious of power, lack of power, then we need to go to the same source. And something happened.

Their speech began to be with terrific incisiveness. Listen to what it says. They were all pricked to the heart and said, what shall we do? A. W. Tozer, in one of his usual pungent sentences, says this.

There is a difference in the penetrating power of words. The same words spoken by one man can put you under conviction, but spoken by another, they can leave you completely cold. That is the difference made by the unction of the Spirit.

And isn't it true? There are some people who can say the same words as others, and one seems to have an incisiveness, and the other seems to be flat. And the Holy Spirit is the difference. Dr. Wilbur Chapman, J. Wilbur Chapman, probably this generation doesn't know J. Wilbur Chapman, but I heard him in 1913.

I know the text he preached from. I can remember. It was one of the first Americans I heard, and the American, of course, the Americans haven't got a normal accent.

And I heard this, and the iron did swim. He had a marvelous voice. Incidentally, he said that he had to watch his voice.

He said, I can move people to tears just by the way I move my, use my voice. But he went around the world, and he had, he brought touches of revival wherever he went, and both my wife and I heard him when we were young. I think I was about 11.

But he made a tremendous impression on both of us, and we named our son John Wilbur after Wilbur Chapman. But one day, Dr. F. B. Meyer, who was one of the greats of the early part of this century, came to Wilbur Chapman, and he said to him, Chapman, why is it I'm so dry and powerless and often overtaken by sin? I seem to be so empty. Have you, then Meyer waited a while, and then he said, Chapman, have you ever tried breathing out three times and breathing in once? That's all he said.

Have you ever tried breathing out three times and breathing in once? That was the answer to Chapman's problem. And maybe it may be the answer to our problem. We are breathing out all the time.

We are giving out, breathing out, breathing out. And that's right, provided we breathe in the same number of times. But if we breathe out three times and breathe in only twice, you know what's going to happen, don't you? You become dry and you become powerless.

And maybe that's something the Lord wants to say to us. You see, Dr. Meyer had a scriptural background for his prescription, and it's in this passage we've read together. When Jesus breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit, it was a symbolic act.

I know there are different interpretations of this. Some, I think, Martin Lloyd-Jones thinks that this was when the church was instituted and so on. But that's all right.

But I think whatever else it means, it was a symbolic act that's got a real message for us. As you know, in both Hebrew and Greek, there is the same word for wind and breath. And on the day of Pentecost, you'll remember that there was the sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, a rushing, mighty breath.

And breathing, what is breathing? Breathing is just exhaling bad air and inhaling fresh air. It's almost automatic, although it's not exactly automatic that there's got to be the exercise of the will in it, even although it may be very nearly automatic. But I believe that our Lord was saying to these disciples, he was giving them a preview of what was going to take place on the day of Pentecost.

It was a graphic illustration. He imparted and they received. He exhaled, they were to inhale.

And Leon Morris says that the words on them are not in most of the manuscripts. It doesn't say he breathed on them, but he says it can be translated, he expelled a deep breath. Jesus expelled a deep breath.

And then he said, I am going to impart the Holy Spirit. You breathe in, you take in what I breathe out. And I think this is a very good picture of what should be our attitude, not only in the initial, but a continuing attitude.

In Philippians, we're told about the supply of the Spirit. My wife, we'd studied this one time, and it was a great blessing to her. And every morning when she began the day, she used to use that thought about breathing out and breathing in.

And she'd start the day, Lord, I breathe in all that the Holy Spirit can mean to me and can do through me today. And it was a personal appropriation of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in her life. At Pentecost, God breathed out and the disciples breathed in.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Coggan, who was an evangelical, was referring to the day of Pentecost, and he made a very graphic statement. I'd like to read it to you because it's got something to say. He said, how very alarming, he was referring to the cloven tongues like as a fire and the sound as of a rushing mighty wind.

He said, how very alarming, nature's two most devastating agents. Have you ever seen a beautiful structure raised by fire? Have you ever been in the path of a hurricane? If you have, you will not easily sentimentalize about these elements. And maybe you will think again before you sing, and here's the

gentle voice we hear, soft as the breath of even.

Soft, it was a gale. Gentle, it was a gale. Soft, it blew to pieces their old and most cherished patterns of life.

They found themselves blown into a veritable vortex of problems, and the fire, while it warmed the chill, had an awesome way of burning the dross. If you are playing for safety, don't play with fire. These were the symbols that were used on the day of Pentecost to illustrate the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Now, what is implied in exhaling? I think it refers to our coming to the Lord and confessing anything we know, anything that he's dealt with us about, anything that we know is hindering the full manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's a simple law of nature that nature abhors a vacuum. And you know how wind will force its way through any little crack.

Well, when we come to the Lord, and as far as we know afresh, we examine our lives, and we come and confess to him and forsake anything that he's dealt with us about. It creates a vacuum, and the Holy Spirit is just waiting to come in and fill that vacuum. And as we do that, the Spirit is able to come and impart the power that our sin or whatever our weakness had deprived us of.

He will fill with power. It's interesting, too, that in this passage, in the Greek, it doesn't say, receive the Holy Spirit. There is no definite article.

It just says, receive Holy Spirit. Now, what's the significance of that? In Luke 11, 13, it says this, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Well, that's a lovely verse. And yet, for many years, to me, it was valueless for this reason.

We read in Romans 8, 9, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Well, I have the Spirit of Christ. Well, what's the point in asking for it? Jesus said those words not long before the day of Pentecost, and it wasn't recorded until perhaps 20 years after he died.

What's the point of that verse? And it seemed to have no significance at all, even although it sounds a lovely verse. And then one day I was reading a book by H. B. Sweet, who was a great theologian and expositor, and he pointed out that in the New Testament, the phrase the Holy Spirit occurs 88 times in the English New Testament. But in the Greek, 54 of those times, it is the Holy Spirit with the definite article.

And 34 times, there is no definite article, it's just Holy Spirit. And then he made this statement which threw light upon Luke 11, 13. He said where the definite article is present, the Holy Spirit, it is referring to the Holy Spirit as a person.

But where there is no definite article and it's just Holy Spirit, it is not referring to the Holy Spirit as a person, but referring to his operations, his gifts, his manifestations. And when I read that, I thought here is the solution to Luke 11, 13 if there is no definite article. I looked it up, there is no definite article.

And so here is a verse that can be of tremendous value to us if we lay hold on it. What is the operation of the Spirit that you need in your ministry? Is it spiritual power? Well, if you being evil now know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give that operation of the Spirit? To whom? To those who deserve it, to those who ask. And I believe that can be a very formative thing in our lives if we make use of what our Lord said.

Now in this passage we read in John 20, it's just as though Jesus said, if I, the risen Christ, have exhaled, if I have breathed out, if I have imparted the Holy Spirit in all the fullness of his operations, it is for you to breathe in and appropriate. And that's what our Lord said in that passage. You're to ask and receive.

You're to appropriate in his fullness the Holy Spirit for all your daily needs and for all your continuing ministry. We all experience in the course of our ministry the exhaustion of our spiritual resources, don't we? We've got to keep constantly renewing them, going to the one who can renew them. We also lose our spiritual, physical resources sometimes, and they need to be renewed, and God is willing to do that.

It seems as though in Acts 4, where the disciples had been going through a difficult period, you remember all that had happened, and Peter and John were brought before the authorities, and they were told to preach no more in this name. You think of the tremendous stress that they'd gone through, the crucifixion, and then the time afterwards, and then in their ministry they were constantly meeting opposition. You could imagine how spent they must have felt.

Burn out, of course, that this new disease wasn't known of then, but John Bunyan put it this way. He was speaking of Christians in that kind of situation, and he said they had used up their spending money, and it's so easy for us to do that in our Christian work, and we become spent. But here is a continuing daily possibility that I can every day inhale.

I can every day appropriate afresh. I don't need to ask for the person of the Holy Spirit. He is dwelling in my heart, but I can ask for those operations of the Spirit which I need to make me effective in the service to which God has called me.

With regard to the physical depletion of resources, about 45 years ago I came as near as possible to, we used to call it a nervous breakdown then, but it's burnout now. And I had the stupidity to keep on going when I should have stopped. And I was going on a lecture tour in my country, and I came to one town, and a doctor friend who knew me very well, he saw me.

He said, what have you been doing? I lost 56 pounds of weight, I didn't have that much to lose. I said, oh, I'm just feeling a bit off colour. He said, off colour? He said, what are you doing now? I said, I'm on a lecture tour.

He said, you're cancelling all those meetings. I said, I am not. I can't.

There are some I can't. He said, you're cancelling all those meetings. I said, well, there are one or two I must keep.

He said, you've got to cancel every one of them. He says, if you don't, I will. We were very close friends.

Well, I did stop. And I didn't go right over the edge. But the thing he said to me I believe is very, very important.

He said, when you are overspent, there is only one thing will make it up. And that is rest and sleep. Well, of course, oftentimes, it's what you can't do.

But I took his advice and it worked. It took a while. But I believe that is true.

When Elijah had overspent his nervous, spiritual, physical forces, what did God do? He gave him a meal from heaven's kitchen and put him to sleep, gave him a sleeping tablet. And then he did that twice. And

then he was able to get Elijah's ear.

Well, I'm just saying that as advice because I've been through it. And I know how easy it is to overspend and then not stop because it's the last thing you want to do when you've overspent. You just keep on going even though the motions aren't achieving very much.

When Charles Finney, that great revivalist, had those wonderful experiences he had. And if you've never read his autobiography and his lectures on revival of religion, you've missed something. But when he was absolutely spent, he would stop and he would go away and he would have a special several days in which he just quietly waited on God and had rest and refreshment and allowed God to renew his spiritual resources.

And then he was able to start out again. He got a fresh supply from God. And this is something we can get to.

Now, after the Pentecostal experience, there was a discernible change in those disciples. It was very discernible. The ten waiting days were very important.

Remember the Lord had said to them, you're to wait in the city until you are endued with power from on high. And those ten waiting days would be very crucial. I'm quite certain that their minds would review the events of the past few days.

I don't think Peter would have been very happy about his performance. And, of course, the others all ran away too. And I don't think they'd be very happy about that.

But you can imagine how during those ten days the Holy Spirit would be bringing before them certain things. It would be done in a positive way because when the Holy Spirit is dealing with us, he doesn't beat us down. He does it in such a way that he encourages us.

But I'm sure that a tremendous vacuum was created in their hearts. They had the promise of the Lord, you will be endued, you will receive power, not many days hence. That was the promise.

And so they had that under their feet. And they were looking forward with tremendous anticipation. They didn't know what was going to happen or how it was going to take place.

But there was the vacuum created, hunger and thirst after righteousness. And, of course, the promise is that they would be absolutely satiated. And so they were on the day of Pentecost.

When the Holy Spirit came, it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. There was no selectiveness in the Holy Spirit's coming upon them. Everyone there had a heart that was yearning for the promised gift.

And also, being very conscious of their own previous weakness, they were longing for the power so that they could be effective witnesses for Christ. And so the Holy Spirit came and very wonderfully filled the vacuum. They were all filled.

The word filled there doesn't mean something poured into one. The word filled means to be possessed by, to be controlled by. Thayer, in his lexicon, says that which possesses the mind is said to fill it.

Well, on that day, their hearts were longing. They were there in a receptive attitude. Jesus had said to them, receive the Holy Spirit.

And there was that act of appropriation. They received the Holy Spirit. And he came and took possession of their lives with their consent.

The disciples knew that something had happened. Why? What a change there was. They were different men and women.

They spoke the word of God with boldness. They ate their food with gladness. There was a new joy.

There was a new confidence. There was a new aggressiveness about them. They knew something had happened.

And the people around knew something had happened too. You see, something like took place, something like what took place on the day of Pentecost requires some explanation. The only thing they could think about is why these men are intoxicated with new wine.

Well, they were nearer the point than they realized. But the intoxication came from a different kind of spirit. They were intoxicated not with the devil's stimulant, but with the divine stimulus.

Why do people take to alcohol? I think one of the great reasons is they resort to it because of a sense of inadequacy to meet the demands life makes upon them. You've got to face a crisis. What do you do? You go and have a drink to buck you up.

And that is the devil's answer to a sense of inadequacy. But God's answer is not the devil's stimulant, but the divine stimulus of the Holy Spirit. And what happened to these men? When people take a sufficient quantity of wine or alcohol, a change takes place.

You find the stingy man giving away money. You find the person who's very quiet and they suddenly become voluble. And there they are, jabbering away.

And so on. There comes a tremendous change when their personality is controlled by the spirit of alcohol. The same thing took place with these men.

When the Holy Spirit came and took possession of their minds, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And immediately their fear, not long before they were behind closed doors with fear, now they go out and they'll confront the king. Doesn't matter who it is.

Here are their enemies that are going to kill them. They didn't fear the headman's axe. They just went on.

Peter and John said, you're not to preach in this name. And did they pay any attention to that? No. They knew what happened to James.

It happened to them. But still they went and they preached the word. And one of the remarkable things that happened was that Jesus became vividly real to them.

They'd lost him. He'd gone. His physical presence was removed.

But now, through the Holy Spirit, who is there as Christ's representative, it seems as though Jesus is right at their very elbow when they're preaching. You read those chapters in Acts and it's just as though the Lord is there. He was so vividly real to them.

And they were able to make him vividly real to others. That was one of the remarkable things. The people knew Jesus became vividly real.

And then something else happened. They got a new insight into Scripture. Peter is quoting from Joel chapter 2. And it's as though some light dawned on him.

And you go, oh, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. Why? We're seeing this happening. And this is what Joel meant.

And he got a new insight. And you find him in this chapter linking passages of Scripture that he never dreamed with any connection. And here they were being fulfilled.

And he was able to link them up together. Now, Peter was the first navigator. I didn't know if you knew that.

He used to have his navigator pack of Old Testament Scriptures. And he used to go around learning them. You say, how do you know? Because his sermon on the day of Pentecost was nearly half quotations of Scripture.

And the Holy Spirit can't recall to your mind that which you haven't committed to memory. So here is Peter whose mind has been filled with the Scriptures. And the Holy Spirit takes them and gives them a new setting altogether.

And he's able to speak that word with tremendous authority now. He got a new light upon the Scriptures. Samuel Chadwick said that when he was filled with the Spirit, he didn't get a new brain, but he got a new mentality.

That's worth thinking over. He didn't get a new brain. He got a new mentality.

I was speaking at a conference in Papua New Guinea some years ago. And at the close, there was a very beautiful Indian lady, a very able lady. She came up to me and she said, these meetings have meant a tremendous amount to me.

She said, they have entirely changed my mode of thinking. They have entirely changed my mode of thinking. She didn't get a new brain, but when she yielded to the Lord and the Holy Spirit took control of her life, she got a new mentality.

And she approached things and saw things in a way she had never done before. And that's one of the gracious things the Holy Spirit does. He illumines the Scriptures so that we see them in new connections that we had never thought of before.

Samuel Chadwick said, I didn't get a new dictionary, but I got a new Bible. Well, the same words, there they were, but now they became vividly real to him. I had exactly the same experience as a young fellow when I fully yielded my life to the Lord and allowed the Spirit to take control.

Overnight, He kindled in my heart a desire and love for the Bible that I hadn't got before. And I started to read it. It was a new book.

It was a new Bible to me. Same truths, but yet illumined by the Holy Spirit. He said, I didn't get a new vocabulary, but I got a new effectiveness in speech.

Not only that's what the power of the Holy Spirit does. We say the same words perhaps, but yet there's something that makes a difference. A new effectiveness of speech, able to present truth in a way that grips the heart and grips the mind.

They got a new incisiveness of utterance. Notice what happened. They were cut to the heart.

Here in words that brought conviction, they were spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit. More than 50 years ago, there was a man from America. He was with the Christian Missionary Alliance.

His name was MacArthur. I think he was the father of MacArthur the comedian, but he was a remarkable man. But we were told that he was coming and I was asked to go down to the boat to meet him.

And he was to come up to our college and lecture the students. Well, I didn't know what he looked like or anything about it. And he was a big boat load of people.

So I went down and I stood at the bottom of the gangway and I looked for him. He looked like an American preacher and they came streaming down. Until all of a sudden, I saw Uncle Sam walk down the gangway.

He didn't have stars and stripes, but he had everything else. There he was. And I thought, this is the man.

So I went up, are you Dr. MacArthur? Yes, yes, yes. So I took him away. Well, he was a great man and he spoke to the students on power.

And he was a very fascinating speaker. I don't remember all that he said, but I do remember one thing that has stuck in my mind ever since. And it's this.

He said, when words are spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit, they will leave saving impressions on the minds of men. When words are spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit, they will leave saving impressions on the minds of men. It may not bring them right into salvation at once, but there will be something done.

There will be an impression made that is lasting. I think that's something that we should cover. I was asked to take an evangelistic campaign in a Presbyterian church in Australia.

I was living in Melbourne. It was in a town about 50 miles away. I used to do my office work and take the train down there for the evening.

When I got there, I found that the minister had no idea what an evangelistic campaign was. He had made no preparation whatever. And I started a hundred yards behind scratch.

And I preached my heart out and day went by, day after day went by, and nothing happened. And when it came to Sunday, I was really very, very exercised in heart and very extraordinarily dependent on the Lord. And the evening I was preaching on Romans 10 or 9, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

And I was preaching on this text, and I got halfway through, and I asked a rhetorical question. I didn't expect any answer, of course, but I just said, is there anyone here who in their heart they believe that Christ died for their sins and was buried and rose again the third day for their justification, and they're prepared to confess him as Lord and Savior? The young man in the choir said, yes, I will, Mr. Sanders. And a young man in the back of the congregation said, I will.

And the girl in the choir said, I will. And somebody else in the congregation said, I will, and went backwards and forwards, choir and congregation. Spoilt the whole sermon.

The first young man who responded was the son of the minister. He's a medical missionary in the New Hebrides today. But there was the working of the Holy Spirit.

He took the word. I was extraordinarily dependent on the Lord because I was just about desperate. And the Lord came in, and in that way he used the spoken word to bring these people to himself.

I went afterwards to have a drink in the manse, and the minister's wife took me aside. God had spoken to her, and she was very moved that her son had accepted Christ. She said, I have been backsliding in the manse for 20 years.

But she said, tonight I've come back to the Lord. Well, that was a tremendous encouragement to me. But it was an illustration of the way in which when the word is spoken in the power of the Spirit, it leaves saving impressions on the minds of men.

Paul said that he didn't speak, use excellency of speech, but with the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. He was not dependent on his oratory, because he must have been a good orator. But he was dependent on the Holy Spirit, and he expected the Holy Spirit to demonstrate his presence and his power as he preached the word.

And I think we can expect the same. Another thing that marked them after this experience was that they were fearless in their witness. With great boldness, it says.

With great confidence, they spoke the word. What a contrast between hiding behind the doors for fear of the Jews, and now with great boldness. They had confidence as they preached the word.

And when you've got confidence, you speak the word with authority. And that's what people are waiting to hear today. They want authority.

Not the authority of the personality, but the authority that comes from God. And when we know we've got the word of God under our feet, we can speak with authority. And then their message produced awe in the hearers.

Listen to what it says in chapter 2 and verse 43. Everyone was filled with awe. And that's something that is lacking today.

How often is there a sense of awe? The sense of God's presence is so real that everybody is awed. It's something that seems to have departed. And yet, when God does manifest his presence, there is a sense of awe, a sense of the fear of the Lord in the true sense of the word.

Peter was a man who, he spoke the truth with great conviction. He didn't speak any smooth platitudes. He said, you have crucified and slain.

He spoke very straightly, and the Holy Spirit bore witness as he spoke. And then one last thing. There was reaping as well as sowing.

On the day of Pentecost, you remember, there were 3,000 who turned to the Lord. One grain of corn fell into the ground on Calvary, and 3,000 sprang up on the day of Pentecost. And that began the movement

of which we are part.

And in chapter 2, verse 47, it says, the Lord added daily to their numbers those who were being saved. It was a daily addition. My, isn't that encouraging? There was reaping as well as sowing.

I received a bulletin from China this week, and there's a person who wrote saying, I have, three years ago, I couldn't find anybody who could tell me anything about the true God. But the person said that they had met someone, and they'd found the Savior, and he said there were two of us who were Christians. And he said, we began witnessing, and he said, today there are 200.

He said, and every day the Lord is adding those who are being saved. Two to 200. And he said, they're only a new Christian.

He said, I am the only one who is responsible to lead them on. We've only one Bible for the, for all of us. And yet here is the same, a repetition, the very words that were used here, the Lord was adding daily those who are being saved.

And they're saying, this is our experience. The Lord is adding daily to us. It's something that is not peculiar to the day of Pentecost.

It's going on today. And why not in our areas? Why is it that it happened there in China? Because, is it because every, all the circumstances are so favorable? No, not that. And yet, wonderfully, it is going on.

I said that was my last point, but it's not. It's the second last. One of the very wonderful things that happened after the descent of the on the day of Pentecost was that there was among the disciples a willingness to submerge themselves in teamwork.

You remember what had happened before? James and John said, I want to be number one. I want to be number two. And the other 10 were mad at them because they also wanted it.

And James and John had beaten them to the punch. So there they were, teamwork, fine teamwork. Not one of them was willing to wash the Lord's feet.

None of them said when there was no slave on duty, oh Lord, could I have the privilege of washing your feet? No fear. Teamwork. But now after Pentecost, what a change.

There they are, working together. No rugged individualists in the team. They pulled together.

And Dr. A. B. Simpson put it very beautifully. And I think it's something that is a good note to close on. He said this, not many rivers run into the sea.

Most rivers run into other rivers. The best workers are not those who demand a separate sphere of influence and prestige for themselves, but those who are content to empty the stream of their lives into other rivers. Isn't that a beautiful concept? We don't need to demand a separate sphere of influence for ourselves.

There are only a few rivers run into the sea. Let us be content to pour our little stream into the great river, which eventually will reach the sea. And after all, that's the important thing, isn't it? The important thing is that God is glorified, no matter what part we have to play for it, whether it's prominent or hidden.

So long as Christ is glorified, let me pour my little stream into the larger stream of somebody else's life. Shall we bow in prayer? Shall we just quietly talk to the Lord for a few moments?

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