

The Holy Spirit in Action (Part 2)

by J.B. Rowell

J.B. Rowell emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in personal evangelism and encourages believers to actively share their faith with others.

Duration: 29:11

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 8:30, Acts 8:35

Topics: "Evangelism", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing the message of Jesus Christ with others. He shares personal experiences of distributing gospel tracts in various languages and encourages the audience to take action in spreading the gospel. The speaker also highlights the need to overcome fear and hesitation when approaching people with the message. He urges young men and women to dedicate their lives to reaching others for Christ and emphasizes the urgency of the task at hand. The speaker also mentions the potential challenges and restrictions faced by missionaries in certain parts of the world, emphasizing the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities available to share the gospel.

Transcript

It isn't very long ago that I was on the platform at St Anne de Beaupre. My wife and I were there, we were on our way to Quebec, and while we were waiting for the train, I saw a Roman Catholic priest pacing up and down, walking up and down. I thought, well, there is another opportunity.

So I was soon walking up and down with him. And I began to talk to him about the Lord Jesus Christ. No, I didn't begin to argue about the doctrine of transubstantiation or purgatory, or anything of the kind.

I began to talk to him about the Lord Jesus Christ, and I said, you know, if there's one thing that the hundreds of thousands of people in Quebec need, they need the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. And he assented to that. And then I went on and I told him what the Lord Jesus Christ meant to me.

How that on the 25th of August 1907, at about 25 minutes after 11 in the morning, God called me by his matchless grace. I told him the scripture that the Holy Spirit of God used, and the scripture is this, then he is gracious unto him and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. I never had anyone listen with closer attention than that Roman Catholic professor of Greek in the local school.

I gave him my tracts, the train came in, he went to one end of the coach, my wife and I at the other end of the coach. But as that train pulled into Quebec, that priest got up from his seat at one end of the coach and walked right down the centre, he put out his hand to me, he said, I want to thank you for talking to me. He said, I'll never forget anything you've told me, and I'm going to read all that you've given to me.

And he looked as sincere as anyone you could expect to be sincere. I've often felt that I'm going to meet that man in heaven. You know, if you do not give that gospel tract out, it can't do any good.

Keep it in your pocket. It'll just stay there. But if you just are determined to do this ministry, God is going to use you mightily to his own glory.

Now, I've got a subject here which is almost endless. But I want to think you have asked you to think of verse 28. And in verse 28, it says that this Ethiopian treasurer was returning and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet.

Well, there is the Holy Spirit preparation in the mind of this man. You see, if the Holy Spirit of God prepares a man for you to talk to him, then you can feel free to go and talk to him. And the Lord knows how to do these things.

I just don't know. I never try any hard and fast rule in giving out gospel tracts myself. I just seem to fit into the occasion as it arises.

And here you find this Ethiopian treasurer, his heart is being molded and prepared for the man who is on his way, Philip the evangelist. And maybe there's someone somewhere just waiting for your message. And I say this quickly just now, for anyone who is a shut-in, here's a ministry for you, sit down and write a letter to someone.

Enclose a gospel tract, put it in the mail and let it go. The Holy Spirit of God knows how to use that. Pick up your newspaper from Calgary, Winnipeg or anywhere, there's usually some catastrophe, someone has been left bereaved, write them a letter.

And God knows how to use that. I could keep you here a long time dealing with that one thought. And it can be a work which is marked by Holy Spirit prosperity and success as you do it all to the glory of God.

Well, you go a step further and that is the Holy Spirit's specific directions. You see, the Lord doesn't start you out on a certain course and then leave you. No, he will be with you right to the end until the meeting takes place and the ministry has been accomplished.

But here you find in verse 29 it says, then the Spirit said unto Philip, go near and join thyself to this chariot. Well, that was just what Philip needed, because likely there was a caravan there with many chariots. And Philip would not know which chariot to go to, but the Holy Spirit had started Philip out on this mission and now he's going to see him through.

And he said, now Philip, there's the chariot. I've brought you all this way to go to that one chariot. And so you find Philip is being directed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Are you willing to put your life in the hand of the Holy Spirit and say, Lord, I don't know to whom I should go, when suddenly some name will come into your mind. You'll be going down the street and you'll say, I don't know whether I should give a track to this one or that one. Well, give them to both then.

You see, the thing is this, how much of definite purposes are in my soul or your soul? Is this business of a great concern to me? If it was of sufficient concern for the Holy Spirit to give us this remarkable account, then it is of sufficient concern to command the attention and the decision of every believer in this auditorium this afternoon. What about the young woman who started out from her home to give out gospel tracts? Did it day by day. One morning she was determined that she would catch a certain streetcar and go down into the city.

Before the streetcar was to leave, the neighbor next door asked her to go in and help her. She went in to help her, but she missed the streetcar. Well, she caught the next.

And there is proof that the Holy Spirit of God was even in that. Because when she got into that streetcar, she was sitting opposite to a Roman Catholic priest. And out from her pocket or her basket or purse or whatever it was, it was one of the three anyway.

She took a tract and that tract was called, I'm not going to a Christless grave, are you? And she handed it to the priest, but he indignantly refused it. He refused it and he said, I suppose you belong to those people who think you know you're saved. However, the streetcar stopped and they had to change cars and she stood next to him on the platform just before they got up.

And she had been praying all the time. Usually any one of us might have felt rather snubbed for a priest to treat you like that in the presence of all these people in the bus or streetcar, whichever it was. But she prayed about it.

And then when she stood next to him, she said, but you will accept this, won't you? And he took it. And she said, pardon me for saying this, but you said you thought I belong to people who think they know they're saved. I said, no.

She said, no, I belong to the people who say I know whom I have believed. And I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. And they parted.

Two years later, she was in the Roman Catholic hospital giving out gospel tracts and she would put them behind pictures. She knew they'd fall down sometime. Or she would put them under the pillow in an empty room where there was no patient or she'd give them out personally.

But this day she was on her way out when the mother superior said, I'd like to see you in my office. She thought now she was going to be rebuked. But once she got into the office, the mother superior said, no, I'm not going to rebuke you for giving out your papers.

But she said, do you remember giving one to a Roman Catholic priest about two years ago who was traveling between so-and-so and so-and-so? She thought back. She said, yes, I remember. Well, she said, that priest is my brother and he's in the hospital and he is dying and he has been asking to see you.

Are you willing to go and see him? She said, yes. The time was arranged and she had to put on a nun's black gown before she could go. But when the door opened, the priest had been told that she was coming.

And when the door opened and she was admitted, that priest was lying in a bed in the corner and he rose up. Ah, I've been waiting to see you. His face was beaming and he said, now I can say I know whom I have believed and I'm persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

There was that priest gloriously saved because of the persistency on the part of that young woman not to be defeated. I ask you, young men and women, have you got like courage with that? Are you determined that you're going right on in this great work? God is calling us in these crucial days to give our lives to him. Don't wait until you get abroad on some foreign mission field.

Start right at home. What about the man who was dying and his wife said, we'll send to the neighbor next door. He's a Christian.

He'll come and talk to you and comfort you. He said, no, I don't want to see him. But the man got worse.

And then the wife said, do let me send for Mr. So-and-so. No, she said, I don't want to see him. She said, well, why? Why, he said, we've been going down to the city on the same bus every morning for 15 years.

You call him a Christian? He's never said one word to me about it. Are you meeting people day by day who are really hoping that you would talk to them? Oh, I could keep you here a long time on this business. It's serious business because thousands of Christians are missing vital opportunities to reach the lust for Christ.

We can pray in a prayer meeting room for the unsaved, but what are we doing about going after them? We must do that because you're meeting them all the time. When we started on our tour to England last April, I was very happy to see the Roman Catholic Bishop get on the same plane, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Victoria. Well, I kept my eye on him, watching for my opportunity.

But you know, my opportunity didn't come until I reached Ottawa. I went there for special meetings, anniversary services. And as he was walking down the platform, I'd been waiting for this opportunity.

I advanced to him. I said, Bishop Derua, believe? He said, yes. He said, your name? I said, my name is Roel.

I dare say you've seen it in the newspapers in Victoria. I knew he had too. Because that was just at the time when we were dealing with this question of ecumenicity and the Ecumenical Council and the Second Vatican Council and all that, and I'd had my letters in the paper.

However, I gave him one of my little booklets called Love Radiant and a Gospel Tract. Now, I wish you'd remember some of these things in prayer. He proposed that we might get together sometime in Victoria.

Well, maybe we'll be able to do that. I hope we may. But now here, when we think of this case before us, the Spirit's direction, then the Spirit said, go join thyself to this chariot.

What is Philip going to do about it? Is he going to dilly-dally and wait around? No, sir. It says there, verse 30, and Philip ran thither. I love this story.

There's something so practical in it. And Philip ran thither. He didn't wait around.

And when he ran thither in that way, it meant that he recognized he was still under the call and under the constraint of the Holy Spirit. And he went straight to the point. He didn't dilly-dally and say, what kind of a trip did you have across the desert? He didn't say that.

He said, understand this thou what thou readest. Understand this thou what thou readest. There's the question.

And when we come to deal with men and women, we need to pray the Holy Spirit. You can do everything in a guarded way as under the direction of the Lord. He can give you the right word.

And what did this man say? He said something which is very vital for everyone here, if you're a soul winner at all. And this is what he said. Understand this thou what thou readest.

And he said, how can I except some man should guide me? Why, men and brethren, that's just what people are asking today. There are people who do not know anything about this Bible, but they're wishing that you would pull alongside of them and begin to explain something about it. You can do it lovingly.

You can do it kindly. You can do it graciously. You can do it in a winsome manner.

You don't have to just barge in on people, but you can approach them gradually, but get there. And the Holy Spirit of God will enable you to do this. How can I, he said.

Why, I believe that's the anxious longing in the hearts of men and women around us. They need someone to have some understanding sympathy toward them. Now, what did Philip find? Philip was asked to go from busy Samaria, that wonderful piece of work.

But here out on the desert, he found a man eager to read the Word of God. He found a man who was eager to have it explained. And then he found a man who was eager to heed the Word of God, to accept the Word of God.

And you know the rest of the story, how the Holy Spirit of God dealt with his heart. I must emphasize this, that all this business of tremendous and eternal importance revolves about a person, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. You must never leave him out, and Philip didn't.

In verse 35 it says, Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him, Jesus. You see, Jesus Christ is the Savior, and Philip emphasized the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what every one of us must do.

He preached unto him, Jesus. And then you have the rest of the story. And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water, and the eunuch said unto Philip, See, here is water.

What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Then commanded he the chariot to stand still.

And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and they baptized him. And coming up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing.

Surely this then is a message for our hearts today, and for you young people. Oh, I covet for you the precious experience of winning souls for Christ. There's nothing more heart moving, heart stirring, to bring satisfaction into your soul than to know that the Holy Spirit of God has used you to bring a lost one to Christ.

You will find some of them very difficult to understand. I recall in Central Church one Sunday night, a group of sailors came into the church, and our young people entertained them in the upper room. And one of these sailor boys drifted my way rather late, and I began to talk to him about his soul salvation.

And he edged and dodged, and sought to avoid the issue altogether. Then finally said, I must be going. I'd given him just about all the gospel texts that I could, with the thought of reaching him.

And he said, I must be going. And he moved towards the door. But just before that, I said to him, I said, before you leave this room, and before you go through that door, you will either have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, or you will have rejected him.

And he said deliberately, looking me right in the eye, he said, I reject him. Well, you know, that was somewhat baffling. But as he moved further towards the door, I called after him.

I said, I'm going to pray the Lord to cause your own words to bring you to Jesus Christ. The Monday went by. The Tuesday went by.

The Wednesday went by. Thursday, someone came to me in the upper room, and they said, there's a young man downstairs who wants to see you. I went down, and there was this sailor boy, almost trembling.

He said, I had to come back to tell you that I've accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. He said, not only that, I wanted to tell you that all the time you were talking to me, I knew what I ought to do. But he said, I was scared to go back on board ship that night and declare myself a Christian.

He was really acting the coward. But after that, he became an outstanding witness for Jesus Christ. Now, I'm going to leave that message with you.

But to me, it is heart-stirring, and I thank the Lord that he ever gave me the privilege of talking to anyone at all about the Lord Jesus Christ. But my thought in the matter today is this, what are you going to do about it? Are we going to leave this tremendous business until some other convenient time? Or are we willing to go to the book room and ask for gospel tracts? Millions of mine have already gone out in about 15 to 18 different languages, and they're still going out. I count it one of the best pieces of work that the Lord ever gave me to do.

And I've had the joy of putting these gospel messages into the hands of people on trains, on board ship, in most unlikely places, and I try and never miss an opportunity. Are you willing to do that? Don't you think we're responsible for this tremendous message? There are people who will never darken a church, never come inside a church. Who's going to reach them, I ask you, if you do not reach them? And you know there may be people here well on in life.

You may have passed the 40, 50, 60, 70 mark. I ask you as you look back over your life, how many of you reached for Christ? How many? What are you going to do when you stand at the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of your witness in the world? Only one life to live, and that soon passed, and only what's done for Christ will last. Are you just satisfied to be a Christian, a believer, sure of heaven? But what about those who are not sure of heaven? Are you willing for them to be sure of hell? Are you willing to do nothing at all? Why, if you have never done a thing, start now.

And I believe that God in these days, and I earnestly believe that we're rapidly ending the approaching the end of this dispensation. I believe that the indications in the world today are cataclysmic. I believe that we can see before us tremendous happenings, and the liberties we have now may not be ours much longer.

Mission fields are closing down, turning missionaries out. When I was in Bournemouth, England, I met a group of missionaries, home from Africa, and they said, told me that they were taken to the plane at the point of a bayonet, were not even given time to go and take any of their possessions, driven right out of the country. Others were even killed.

The opportunities are dwindling, but what about the opportunities we have here? What are you going to do about sending that written note, that written letter to someone who is in hospital, someone who is there, someone somewhere else? And God can use this ministry, but God requires you to put your whole soul into it. This is not cheap work. It is not easily done.

Don't think that it's easy to go to people. I was on a train in England. I saw a lady, austere-looking, well-dressed, a lady in every sense of the word, and, you know, I somewhat hesitated giving her the tract.

She seemed unapproachable. When suddenly the Lord shot this word into my mind, be not afraid of their faces. So, up I jumped, across I went, gave her the gospel tract, and you'd be surprised how graciously she received it.

I believe that we have to be alert for every occasion of reaching these people. Now, young men and women, this morning, in response to the word of God and that dedication of your lives to him, for a life God-glorifying, I ask you now, what about this essential piece of work, this practical piece of work, reaching, reaching, reaching the lost for Christ? And if you don't talk to that person over there, no one will ever reach that person in all likelihood. It's your privilege.

It's your responsibility. It is your opportunity. I ask you, do you young people feel prepared to dedicate your life to this ministry, personal evangelism, to reach the unsaved for Christ? If you do, I'm going to ask you to do again, and that is to rise to your feet and say, here am I. Lord, send me, send me, send me.

That's the ministry of today, and there are enough young people in this auditorium to change Western Canada as sure as that God has ever changed any area in past history. As I look over this vast assembly this afternoon and see you stand to your feet, declaring your allegiance to Christ, your loyalty to him, your determination to serve him, to see in mankind the opportunity to do the work of the Holy Spirit in reaching them and winning them to the Savior. Our heavenly Father, we are conscious of our own great need of thee.

Deepen this consciousness, we pray thee, in the hearts of all these young people and older people, Lord. Those who have in the past have neglected the opportunity of this great ministry. Our Father, visit them this afternoon in a new way.

Cause them to realize that they should humble themselves before God and pray God to forgive their neglect in the past, but not to be buried in the past, to come right into the present moment and dedicate, rededicate their lives to the glory of God, that their lives shall be lived to thy praise. We know, heavenly Father, that we have not been guaranteed the next moment, and we're not sure just how long we're going to live, but as long as we do live, we want to live to thy praise. Our Father, we pray that thou would accept each of these young men and women.

Enfold them, heavenly Father, to thine own loving heart, O Lord. Amen. O Lord, break in upon us.

Amen. And do thou we beseech thee grant that we shall be satisfied with nothing less than the mighty infilling of thy Holy Spirit, that we may go out with a holy determination that our lives shall surely and

certainly show forth thy praise. Help each of these young people to realize, heavenly Father, that what they bring to thee, in presenting themselves to thee, in surrendering themselves to thee, thou dost accept the gift made.

And what thou dost accept, thou wilt fill, thou wilt give a fresh anointing of thy Holy Spirit, and that thou wilt send them out as commissioned and recommissioned in the service of the Most High God, that Jesus Christ may be lived out in their lives, and glory shall be won to the name of our God, because thou hast wrought wonders here in this Prairie Bible Institute auditorium today. Have thy way, O Lord, to thy glory. Amen.

And bless them, everyone. In the name of the Lord Jesus we ask it. Amen.

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