

Are You Qualified? (Part 11)

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon highlights the essential qualifications of being full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom for effective service in the church.

Duration: 29:40

Scripture: Matthew 9:37, John 3:16, Acts 6:4-5, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Submission"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the book of Acts and the importance of the Holy Spirit descending upon the church in Acts chapter 2. Despite facing persecution, the church remains strong and continues to spread the good news of the gospel. The preacher emphasizes the need for more pastors, deacons, and prayer warriors to care for the growing number of people coming into the church. He encourages the congregation to be actively engaged and to seek the Holy Spirit's control in their lives for wisdom and guidance.

Transcript

We started a series on the book of Acts, and we're just doing little tidbits of it now on Tuesday to help us pray. And this is an important part of the book of Acts. So the Spirit descended in Acts chapter two, and Peter preaches the first sermon, the second sermon that we know of, and oh my goodness, even though there's persecution of the church, the church is going ahead.

Remember now, we're back in Jerusalem, where Jesus had been crucified, but the church is brave and strong and telling people the good news of the gospel, that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And now, the church faces a problem because of the blessing that's on the church. There are problems that happen in life because of our mistakes, there's problems sometimes that come because of a lack, but sometimes problems come because of blessing and disputes that arise because of just a lot of things going on at once.

Now in the early church, there were widows that had to be looked after, and the widows, there's no social security, no safety net, there were widows, and there were two kinds of Jewish widows in the church. There were the ones who were from Jerusalem and from Israel who were Hebrew, Hebraic women, spoke Hebrew and were Aramaic, and were, shall we say, super Jewish, and then there were widows who were more Greek-oriented and maybe had lived somewhere in the dispersion of the Jewish people and were

Greek-speaking, and you know, any difference between people, folks start to discriminate. You just give any little separation, it can be the same people from the same nation in Africa, but if they're of two different tribes, you're gonna have trouble.

Two people from the same Caribbean, both love Jesus, from different islands, watch out, they're gonna be problem, they're gonna talk about which island is better and all of that, right? So this is what happens, humans are humans, and there was a problem that developed in the church, let's look at it, okay? So, Acts 6, in those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. They felt there was favoritism, and the more Jewish women widows were getting better treatment than the other women, the Grecian Jewish widows. So the 12, who would the 12 be? That's the apostles, right? So the 12, remember, Judas has been replaced, rightly or wrongly, by a man by the name of Matthias, and the 12 gathered all the disciples together and said, it would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

In other words, what they're saying is, does this sound right to you, that we should give up preaching and ministering the word and what God called us to do, so that we're talking about who gets what amount of food? Does that sound right to you? In other words, there are different things that have to get done, but there's different callings on people, and our calling is not to distribute food. We're not too big for that, we'll distribute food, but that's not the calling on our life. So, brothers, choose seven men, some people think this is the origin of deacons, servants, helpers, choose seven from among you who are known, they're known to be full of the spirit and wisdom, and that would read this way, they're known to be full of the spirit and full of wisdom.

We will turn this responsibility over to them, and here's Acts 6.4, and we will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. The main calling on ministers is not to be CEOs or construction managers, but we pastors, we're supposed to give ourselves to the ministry of the word in preaching, teaching, counseling, and to prayer so that we'll stay close to God so we have something that can feed the people. All in favor, say aye.

Aye. This proposal pleased the whole group, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith. Now, he's not just full of wisdom and full of the Holy Spirit, he's full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.

Also, Philip, Philip's gonna be an evangelist later on, even though he just starts as someone waiting on tables. Oh, God is amazing, isn't he? If you just serve people and do what you're asked to do, promotion comes from the Lord. You don't have to push yourself forward and say, I can do this, I can do that.

The Lord will make a way for you. How many say amen to that? So, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles who prayed and laid their hands on them.

So, the word of God spread. What's the word of God? The gospel. The gospel spread even more, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

That would be like Muslims getting saved. These were the priests who were the religious establishment. Maybe some of them who were in that Sanhedrin or were part of that mob.

Crucify him, crucify him. Now, they were getting saved. So, the apostles were doing their work, believers were doing their work, and the thing was working like a well-oiled spiritual machine, but full of the Holy Spirit, everybody working, loving, doing it, not without problems.

Whenever you have humans, you're gonna have problems. So, they didn't throw up their hands, and what do you mean? What are you fighting about food? I don't believe you're saved. No, they were saved, but saved people fuss with each other.

Do I get a witness here or here? Come on, you and I have all fussed with somebody over something that wasn't worth a hill of beans, and we fussed over it. But what they did was they solved the problem by delegating responsibility. But I want you to notice this part.

Who did they delegate responsibility to? They said, choose out seven men. But here are the qualifications. We don't want their resume.

We don't care where they've worked in business. They don't have to be CPAs. They don't have to be accountants.

They don't have to be good with numbers. They don't have to be butchers and good with food. They don't have to be bakers.

Here's what they have to be known to. They have to be known. What would that look like, to be known? They have to be known to be full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, and now we learn that Stephen, who later is gonna become the first Christian martyr in just another two chapters or so, he was not only full of wisdom and full of the Spirit, he was full of faith.

Notice the measurement here, full of, full of the Holy Spirit. Now this is one of the proofs that while all Christians have the Holy Spirit living in them, not all Christians are full of the Holy Spirit. That's obvious, or else it wouldn't have been a qualification.

He would have said, just pick out anybody because everyone's full of the Holy Spirit. No, he said, they have to be known to be full of the Holy Spirit. Now what does that mean, full of the Holy Spirit? It means they have to be known to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Everybody in this building is controlled during the day, more or less, there's two competing forces. There's the flesh, mixed with the world that tries to influence and control our thinking, our actions, this is how Christians can sin. They're drawn away from their walk with God and their desires, our desires get us in trouble.

We were talking about that on Sunday, right? So the Bible says, if you're led by the Spirit, you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. If you're controlled by the Spirit, you won't be controlled by the flesh. I can't be controlled by two things at once.

So people who have bad tempers, bad habits, bad whatever, they can fight against that habit all they want, the only way to kill it and deaden it is by the Holy Spirit doing it. Mortify those things that are in your flesh, the Bible says in the book of Colossians. Mortify that, put to death those works of the flesh, that temper you have, put it to death.

Oh, how can I do it, do I get a gun, do I get a knife? No, the only one who can kill that is the Holy Spirit. And he kills it not by you fighting to kill it and stepping on it, he kills it by taking over your life and when he's controlling, those things become dormant and dead in our lives. And when he's not controlling, something will control.

You know the old saying, something will always fill a vacuum. When someone says there's a church there, they're not without a pastor, they've been without a pastor two years. I said, well, who's in charge? Nobody's in charge, I said, listen, somebody's in charge.

When there's no pastor for two years, trust me, somebody's in charge. They might be waiting for a pastor, but nothing runs without leadership, everything. So every one of us is being led, being controlled by something.

And the secret of the victorious Christian life is to be controlled moment by moment by the Holy Spirit. Don't you want that? That's what I want, do you want that with me? To be controlled by the Holy Spirit. If I'm controlled by the Holy Spirit, i.e. full of the Holy Spirit, then all kinds of incredible things can happen.

First of all, controlled by the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be produced in my life without even me trying. I'll start loving people and I'll be patient, I'll be kind. I won't even be trying to be patient or kind.

It'll be the Holy Spirit making me patient and kind because he's in control. So a lot of times we struggle to change ourselves, but can a leopard change his spots? But you change by yielding to a new control. Because every day, every hour, I'm controlled by something.

And Romans 8 tells us that whatever controls you shapes your thoughts. Those that live according to the Spirit have their thoughts, way myths translation, have their thoughts shaped by the Holy Spirit. Those who live by the flesh have their thoughts shaped by the Holy Spirit.

This is why people get angry thoughts, because the flesh is shaping their thoughts. When the Spirit is shaping your thoughts, you will not get angry thoughts, you will not get pornographic thoughts, you will not get lustful thoughts, because the Spirit doesn't produce that. So whoever controls me is gonna control my thoughts and shape my thoughts.

Oh, isn't God wonderful? For it is God who works in you both to will and to do. How does he do that? By the Holy Spirit working in us. Full of the Holy Spirit.

So to be, to hand, wait a minute. To hand out food, not to preach? To hand out food, you had to be known to be full of the Holy Spirit. You had to have a reputation in the church, that boy is filled with the Holy Spirit.

The way he reacts, the way he moves, the fruit of his life, the stuff that just comes out of him, he's just known. You can depend on that guy, he's full of the Holy Spirit. What is he in himself? Nothing, all of us are nothing in ourselves.

But when a man is controlled by the Holy Spirit, full of the Holy Spirit, now that's a person who can help other people. He had to be known to be full of wisdom. This is handing out food, they had to be known to be full of wisdom.

Why? Because some believers are known not to be full of wisdom. Some women don't have any wisdom, some men have no wisdom. They talk, they blab, they're always in controversies, always in fighting, he

said, she said, always doing things that are so unwise, always making unwise decisions.

How are you gonna trust them to do anything and help anyone when they can hardly navigate themselves through life? They're not full of wisdom. What kind of wisdom? Not school wisdom, not going to seminary or college, wisdom from the Holy Spirit. Didn't James tell us if anybody lacks wisdom, let them ask of God who gives liberally and then turn anybody away.

If you and I wanna be used by God, you mean we can't come to God tonight and say, God, fill me with the Holy Spirit? I wanna be more controlled. I wanna be known to be full of wisdom so that the leadership can trust me to help other people. So where are we gonna find people that are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom? Not nice people who love the Lord and they have a good spirit, that's important.

But this was to hand out food. Think of what we, across America, the positions people are given, full of the Holy Spirit, full of wisdom. No, that's not even thought about.

It's, let me see his resume. Ooh, she's smart. She has a master's somewhere.

You can have a master's and not have the wisdom of a slug. Am I correct? Come on, am I correct? We need wisdom from God. So, and a master's is a good thing and a PhD is a good thing, but I'm just saying that doesn't equate to wisdom and being full of the Holy Spirit.

And then as I close, one of the people was named Stephen. He's gonna become famous because he's gonna start to do all kinds of things. The next passage says, and Stephen was full of power.

He's not only full of wisdom and the spirit, he's not only full of faith, he's now full of power. And with nobody licensing him or anything, he just starts praying for people and they're healed and he's off to the races. And he has such wisdom that when he preaches, the Jewish leaders could not refute what he was saying.

Nobody told him to do it, but see, when you're full of the Holy Spirit and God is working, it's not all organized, it's just happening and it's not confusing because God's not the author of confusion, but it's happening. So he was known also, Stephen, to be full of faith. Not had a little faith, full of faith.

Not a little wisdom, full of wisdom. Not a little trickle, a little stream of the Holy Spirit, whoo, just rivers flowing out of him. So then when the apostles saw these kind of men to do feeding people, feeding widows, just feeding widows, these were the qualifications.

Think of where the church has slipped from that day. So they gave them that job, they got to what they were supposed to do. They wouldn't have to worry about people squabbling They could trust people to do things in a godly, spiritual, wise way.

You know, if you put an unwise person to solve a problem, the problem would be bigger than before they went to solve the problem. Unwise people, they just say the wrong thing, they make trouble, then they gossip, then they talk. I've seen that my whole time in the ministry.

I just like, do not let her help anybody anymore. Do not let her help anyone. Do not let him help.

But they loved the Lord. I know they loved the Lord, but they don't have any wisdom. They're not full of the Spirit.

Because the fruit is, Jesus said you'll know a tree by what? It's fruit, there's no wisdom, there's no. These are qualifications. We're saved by grace.

But there are people who open themselves up to God and believe God and ask God for masi mas, more and more. Wouldn't that be a good thing to pray about? Because I said to the staff, I felt overwhelmed. And the verse that came to me, because I preached three times, very long day, and my brain, I wasn't getting aggravated or fatigued like I was collapsed, but my brain, I had a hard time getting my brain to focus on everything everyone was saying to me.

And I thought of that verse. The fields are ripe unto harvest, but the laborers are few. I need, I told them, did I not tell the staff, Pastor Johnson, did I not tell the staff, I need pastors, I need more deacons, I need more people, I need folks who know how to pray, I need folks who know how to care for people, who will make wise decisions, who will make the problem worse, who are quick in thinking, wise, full of the Spirit, full of life.

Oh my goodness, who's gonna take care of all the people God is gonna send into our church? He's already sending them in. But they come with baggage. Because of the breakdown of the family, especially, they're coming with baggage, with baggage.

Oh, do we need wisdom from God? Come on, if you know that today, like never before, we need wisdom, lift up your hand, we need wisdom. No, but I love God, I know, love God is great, but how about getting some wisdom too? If anyone lacks it, we can ask, and God said, I'll give it. We need to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, because have you noticed, folks who serve the devil don't have a little devil in them, they're full of the devil.

Am I right or wrong? They're full of the devil. They're full of the devil. They're brazen, they're cunning, they're sly, they're full of the devil.

So how is the church gonna stand if people who serve Satan are full of the devil, how can we be not full of the Holy Spirit? I know the verse, as greater is he that's in us than he that's in the world, I know, but you better be full of the one who's greater than he that's in you, not have a little trickle. Trickles aren't doing. That's why 1,500 ministers are leaving the ministry every month, Missionary Alliance ministers, Assembly of God, Southern Baptist, Convention, 1,500 a month, because in many cases, from my judgment, my perspective, they're trying to do church without being full of the Holy Spirit.

We're trying to have church without being full of wisdom and full of faith. You know, the devil attacks you if you're not full of faith. He'll run over you like a tractor.

Am I right or wrong here, ladies? I mean, we have to be full of faith, putting up the shield of faith, full of faith, not a little faith, and listen, my last thing. Some of you who I know God wants to use and you have wanted to be used by God, here's one of the signs that you're really chosen by God to be used. The devil will attack you like there's no tomorrow, because when God puts his hand on somebody and that person says, yes, Lord, I wanna be used by you in whatever way you see fit.

I'll hand out food to widows, I'll do whatever, because remember, promotion comes from the Lord. Don't think you're too good to do anything. I love that Pastor Ware.

Pastor Ware and I were once back at 543 Atlantic Avenue and there was a jam, something backed up in the toilets in the basement, and he and I were there and something was nasty, blocked up, right? So

Pastor Ware looked at me and I looked at him and I said, Pastor Ware, what are we gonna do? He said, you know what we're gonna do? We took off our jackets, we're gonna go down there, put some gloves on, and fix that toilet. Pastor Simba, you would fix the toilet? Well, who's gonna fix the toilet if I don't fix the toilet? There's nobody in my church. There's nobody coming to the church.

We couldn't afford a plumber. But don't you think God sees that? If you're willing to clean the toilet, God will promote you to whatever you need to do. Come on, let's put our hands together.

We have to revamp our family ministry here. The problems are too deep because of molestation, cutting. I don't have the answer right now, but I know one thing.

Someone needs to be full of the Spirit. Someone needs to be full of wisdom and full of faith so when it looks bad, it doesn't matter how it looks. When you're full of faith, it's I don't care how it looks.

God is gonna come through. Come on, say amen with me. That's what full of faith does.

Otherwise, we become pobresitos, pobresitas. It's oh, I don't know, it's so hard and people are going. Who's that gonna help? We need somebody full of faith.

Let's get this on, God is greater. Come on, we're gonna believe him! Full of wisdom, know what to do.

Full of the Holy Spirit. So I'm making a plea personally for you as a pastor because really, the work of the ministry is supposed to be carried on by the congregation, not by the pastor. We read this morning in the staff meeting, First Thessalonians first chapter, the reading.

I thank God every time I think of you in my prayers when I remember the work coming from your faith, the labor coming from your love and the endurance you have inspired by your hope in Jesus Christ. The labor coming from your love, your work coming from faith, your endurance. And this wasn't the pastors, this was the church.

Do most American people who sit in the pew think of, oh, God's called me to labor? No, it's like I go to church. I go to church and I watch and I hope the meeting's good. Then I go home and I come back next week.

But labor, fight for 16-year-olds? Full of faith, full of wisdom? And then we see the statistics and what's happening now. So I'm talking to you like I would my own family, right? You're my family, aren't you? Are we one family together? God knit us together, right? I'd rather be here tonight than anywhere. I don't want to meet the president, the White House, the Buckingham Palace, I don't want to meet anybody.

I want to meet Jesus in a new way. I want to be with you. So let's close our eyes, let's close our eyes.

You have to ask yourself that question. Am I known to be full of the Spirit? I'd ask you if you're a believer. I know you're a believer.

But am I known to be full of the Holy Spirit? God, am I known, do I have a reputation to be full of wisdom? Am I full of faith or am I half depressed most of the time? God, you can change it. You saved me, you washed away my sins, you made me a vessel that you want to fill. But God, I want to go deeper.

I want mas y mas y mas. I want more. I thank you for what you've done in the past, but it is not sufficient for the day I live in.

The pastors of the church, the congregation I'm a part of, the calling I sense on my life, I need a new encounter with you, Lord, where you impart and there's a greater control of your Spirit in my life, there's an impartation of wisdom from you, and that you bless me with a faith like I've never had before. Oh, my Jesus, we love you tonight. Lord, we read this about dividing food for widows and the way the early church thought, known to be full of the Spirit, known to be full of wisdom, known to be full of faith.

And we aspire, there's something in us that we want that, Lord. So, Lord, we're gonna spend some time waiting before you, talking to you. If there's anything in our lives that's blocking a deeper control of the Spirit, an impartation of wisdom, if there's something grieving, if there's some disobedience, if there's some idol, if there's some unsundered part of our lives, God, would you come and work starting with me? Would you work and identify it and then break it down, take it from us? Because time is short.

We know how long we're gonna live. This is it. Someday we're gonna be in heaven looking back to the days on Smith Street with the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

And we don't wanna look back and say, my goodness, I wasn't totally engaged, I wasn't giving my all, I was just, thinking of myself and just struggling through eking out a spiritual existence. Anybody here just so hungry to be used by God? I don't care how old you are, just wanna be used by God. Pastor, that was for me, I want more of the Holy Spirit's control in my life.

I want every area submitted to him. I want more wisdom, I'm lacking wisdom. I need something from heaven.

Holy Spirit, come. Come upon all the women in a new way, Lord. All the men.

Help us to live lives controlled by the Holy Spirit, Lord. Teach us how to walk in the Spirit. Show us how to put to death the works of the sinful nature, not by our own struggles, but by the power of the Holy Spirit, Lord.

Give us revelation that when you are leading us, we don't have to worry about anything. We're safe in your arms. Let it begin in me, Lord.

Fill me with the Holy Spirit, Lord. Fill me with wisdom, Lord. Fill me with faith.

Give me supernatural faith, Lord. Come on, everyone, just pray out to God now. Just lift your voice up to God.

Ask him for what you want. I gotta pray for myself. God, give me the spirit fullness, Lord, controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Let there be life coming out of me, Lord. Not death, but life. Lead me when I preach.

Anoint me when I preach. Let my preaching be with a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. Change us, Lord.

Come on, call out to God. Call out to God. He's rich in mercy to everyone who calls out to him.

We bless you, Lord. Baptize us afresh with the Holy Spirit and power, Lord, and life and wisdom and joy. Grant us wisdom, Lord.

Shake us, break us, rearrange us, Lord. Lord, thank you for your word to us tonight. Thank you for your spirit confirming the word.

And, Lord, we're not ending anything. Tonight's just the beginning of a new seeking after you, a new openness. Wake us up in the night.

Keep us awake. Talk to us during the day. But we're not gonna let go of you until you fill us with wisdom, with faith, with power, and that we live lives controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus, we thank you for the blood that cleanses us from all of our sins. We thank you for the cross. We thank you for the empty tomb that because you live, we live today.

Let there be just a great peace in our souls as we return to our homes and keep us close to you, Lord. Every moment of every day, make us conscious of you. Give us thoughts shaped by the Holy Spirit and desires shaped by your spirit.

For we ask this in Jesus' name and everyone said. Amen.

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