

# Facing Every Challenge

by Jim Cymbala

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*The Holy Spirit is our power source, guiding us in our ministry and daily lives, and we can be filled with Him continually through prayer, surrender, and yielding to His will.*

**Duration:** 22:32

**Scripture:** Acts 13:1-2, Acts 13:4-12, Acts 13:42-43, Acts 13:48

**Topics:** "Challenge"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by praying for the Spirit of God to fall on the children and for everyone to have a safe journey home. The sermon then focuses on the story of Barnabas and Saul encountering Sergius Paulus, the governor, who wanted to hear the word of God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of being open to God's leading and seizing opportunities to share the gospel. The sermon also highlights the significance of ministering to the Lord through praise, worship, and surrender, and how the Holy Spirit can speak to believers through spiritual gifts.

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## Transcript

The Holy Spirit was sent to empower believers. The power is always related to the Holy Spirit. His ministry is to distribute power, gifts, grace, help of every kind to those who belong to Christ.

This is our power source. Not finances, not smart people, not talented people. That's the way the world builds their organizations.

But the church is supposed to be built by the power of the Holy Spirit, glorifying Christ through the lives of simple people, or educated people, or uneducated people, doesn't matter, who are available to God. The early church started, of course, with that only formula that they knew for the Lord. You'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

So, I wanna just blend together the verse I read, and then read on to a few more verses in Acts 13, the church in Antioch, where Saul, and Barnabas, and a bunch of other people have been leading, teaching, ministering for about a year. And great things are happening. And that's the first congregation where Jews and Gentiles are meeting together.

It's integrated. So, we read this from the New American Standard. Now, there was at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, seemed to

be, that means black, and he probably was from Africa, and Lucius of Cyrene, another from Africa, and Manan, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul, who had been a persecutor of the church, but now was a believer.

While they were ministering to the Lord, ministering to the Lord, most times we come to church, we only want something from the Lord, but how about giving some ministry to the Lord, amen? How must they have done that? Through praise and worship, yieldedness, surrender, thanksgiving, adoration. As they were doing that and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, we don't know how, we don't know was definitely not an audible voice somewhere in the auditorium or house where they were, but through the gifts of the Spirit, listed in 1 Corinthians 12, the Spirit spoke and said, set apart for me, you notice there that the Spirit is a personality. He has a will, he's as much a him as Jesus, and the Father are him.

He's not an it, he's not a ghost, he's not a force, he's not a power, he is God, the Holy Spirit. Set apart for me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I call them, and I mentioned before, they were already working for the Lord, so this was a transfer of the work, governed by the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, we don't wanna be moving unless the Holy Spirit is leading us.

We don't wanna be stepping out unless he says step out. When he says step out, step out. Otherwise, be faithful in what you're doing, but don't go by what people say or some whim or fancy, go by what the Spirit says, and once the Spirit says it, don't be afraid of any discouragement or any anxiety that might try to come upon you.

The Spirit is gonna help you, amen? Then when they had fasted and prayed, the congregation and the other elders, they laid their hands on them and they sent them away, so being sent out by the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit said, now he's sending them out. Notice the double reference here.

They sent them away, the church, the elders, the leaders, but then they were sent out by the Holy Spirit. Notice, both are happening. When the Holy Spirit is doing something in your life, other people who are in tune will be giving you the yay and amen.

The church sent them out, but the Holy Spirit sent them out. The Holy Spirit sent them out, but the church confirmed that and said, go to the word God called you. They went to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean.

When they reached Salamis, they began to proclaim the word of God, i.e. the gospel, in the synagogues of the Jews, and they also had John as their helper. That's John Mark, not James and John, who wrote 1st, 2nd, 3rd John and Revelation, and the Gospel of John. When they had gone through the whole island on this part of Paphos, and they seem, notice, to be moving here, doesn't say what happened, but they're preaching, they're sharing, they're in the synagogues, and it seems this was their modus operandi.

They moved until God gave them an open door, a leading, a miracle, something. They're just moving about, sharing, trying to figure out the whole plan of God. They found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the pro-council, that's the Roman official on the island, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence.

This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. Sergius Paulus is the governor, and what an open door. He's now getting the word to them.

Hey, I hear this teaching about this Jesus. You come and tell me about it, I wanna hear it. You're talking about an open door.

That's an open door, right? But associated with him is this brujo, brujita, whatever it is in Spanish, a witch or a magician, a man possessed, used by Satan, who is named Simon Bar-Jesus. But Elimus, that's another name for him, the magician, so his name was translated, was opposing them, seeking to turn the pro-council, Sergius Paulus, away from the faith. Boy, you talk about a battle between light and darkness, between Jesus and Satan.

It is on. The fight is on. But Saul, who is also known as Paul, this is the first place where his name is given, his name changes in this chapter, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him and said, you are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness.

Will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? Now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time. And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. He's now blind.

Then the pro-council, Sergius Paulus, believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of the Lord, because it came not only in word, but in power. So I just want you to notice this, as we just identify the Holy Spirit in this passage, and then we're gonna wait and pray. So we see first the Holy Spirit as they were ministering to Jesus, praising, worshiping, always do that, we need to always do that.

It was then that the Spirit spoke and said, separate me these two men to this new work that I've called them. I know they've been here teaching, working for a year. I got something else I have for them to do.

And the church knew it was God and sent them out. So the Spirit calls people to ministry. The Spirit knows the timing when to go out.

He didn't say in six months. He didn't say in six years. He said, right now I'm calling you to this other work.

The Spirit calls people and sends them out, and the timing is perfect. And then we learn that as they're moving around, they get an open door, and they got a chance to tell Sergius Paulus, a man of influence, about Jesus. But as happens with most open doors, there is a block, an enemy.

Most of us, too many of us, think simplistically that if there's a problem, God must not be in it. That is not the truth. Sometimes when it's the biggest problem, God is the most in it.

Amen? So here's an open door, but here's this guy who, as the man, I picture him on his throne or his seat of authority. This Elimus is on his side saying, don't listen. These guys are hoaxes.

They're a joke. They're probably after your money or whatever his evil words were. So now here you have a problem.

You got an open door, but he's telling him, don't believe it. Elimus is saying, don't believe it. He tried to turn him away from the faith.

Our goal is to get people to trust in Jesus. Amen? Here was a person turning the man away from the faith. And then these important words, which I want us to better comprehend as I close.

And then Saul, who is also called Paul, full of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in every believer, but God wants us to live filled with the Holy Spirit. The sign that someone's a Christian is that the Holy Spirit now lives inside of them.

They've been born again. But notice these words have significance, but now Paul, full of the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that while people were baptized at some moment or filled with the Holy Spirit, after that, there were continual fillings of the Holy Spirit.

There wasn't one experience. I grew up in a little sect of Protestantism, Pentecostalism, where people just try to get everybody to be filled with the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. And once that happened, the teaching was basically that I heard all my childhood was that's it.

You're saved, you've been baptized correctly in the name of Jesus, which is what they taught. And now you're filled with the Holy Spirit. So I would hear people get up in testimony at church, just little, six, seven, eight, nine, they would get up.

I wanna thank God that he saved me, that I'm sanctified and baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. When did that happen? Oh, about 24 years ago that happened. And what's been happening since? Not much, but I was filled one day.

The New Testament teaches constant infillings. If you wanna study this, all the apostles, 120 including the apostles, were filled in Acts chapter two with the Holy Spirit. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave utterance.

But then just two chapters later when the church is persecuted, they gather together and they lift up their voices in prayer like we were. Never be nervous of noise, people lifting their voices. It's very biblical.

And as they were praying, the Bible says, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Well, if you were filled once, how could you be filled again? We need to be filled again and again and again and again and again. What does that filled mean? It meant Paul at that moment, totally controlled.

Since the Holy Spirit is not a liquid, water is mostly filling this bottle. He's not a liquid, so you can't use filled that way. Although sometimes it's filled to overflowing.

But what does it mean since he's a person? A person doesn't fill you. A liquid fills you, a solid fills you. Gas fills a vessel.

No, what it means there, it means Paul totally taken over by the Holy Spirit. Oh, I want that in my life. How many want that in your life? Listen, his mind, his lips, his heart, every sensitivity quickened by the Holy Spirit, his body totally now, he's like people are full of the devil, he's full of the Holy Spirit.

When people are full of the devil, what are the manifestations? They're under the control of the demon. I'm just going over the story of Diana Berrios, who might be here tonight, who works here. All those years ago, when she came to the church on a Tuesday night like this, I not knowing she was filled with the evil spirits, and they called her forward.

I just knew she was on drugs or just messed up. But I didn't know that some aunt or some brujita, for sure in this case, was bathing her with incense and lighting candles, santeria and all this stuff. No one told me that.

But she came up for those who way go way back. She was there, and when she got five feet within me, the evil spirits took over, and she leaped on me, pushed me against the then platform that was in that building, and ripped my, I had a shirt like this, she ripped this collar off like it was tissue paper, and she's not even five foot tall. And suddenly, screaming out her voice was, leave her alone, leave her alone.

She's ours, get out of here. Oh yes, that happened. God set her free, because the name of Jesus is stronger than any evil spirit, any evil power.

What was she? She was under the control of evil spirit, control. You could say full, but under control. Paul, now, full of the Holy Spirit.

His mind, every part of him. Not just the spirit lives inside of me, but there's a yieldedness, and there's now an anointing, call it what you will, he's on point now. And notice what he knows.

When you're filled with the spirit, and the spirit is really helping you, you see to the bottom of the situation. He didn't say, well, Elymas, let's talk. I know you believe differently than I do, but could we just discuss this? No, the spirit made him see what was happening in the spirit realm.

You son of the devil, you man full of evil deceit. Will you always pervert the way of God? I mean, who would give anybody the authority and the insight to say that to another human being? The Holy Spirit can. He can give you discernment, that you know what you're dealing with.

Not everything is innocent in life. Sometimes things are very sinister and evil, and only the Holy Spirit can show you. People that come up into your life, how do you think these human traffickers work? You think they come up and tell people, oh, I'm gonna destroy your life? No, but they're full of cunning, and people don't see what spirit they're operating in.

So they go, oh, they seem like nice people, and then boom, it's too late. Here, the spirit helps him to see to the bottom, and then shows him what to do. And that's the point today.

In this case, he knew that God was gonna blind this man temporarily. That never happened again in the New Testament. Don't go around trying to make everybody blind in your neighborhood.

That never happened again. But for that moment, notice, the spirit showed him what to do. I want us to be so spirit-filled that no matter what the devil throws at us, we'll always know what to do.

How to stand on God. Can we put our hands together and say amen? Always know what to do. Sometimes it's to be quiet.

Sometimes it's to pray. Sometimes it's to speak a word. Sometimes it's to pray for someone.

Sometimes it's to call someone. Sometimes it's a prompting to do something you've never done before. But no matter what the enemy throws at us, the Holy Spirit is greater.

He that is in us is greater than he that's in the world. And one of the ways we win the victory is he always shows us what to do. But we don't have the money.

How are we gonna get through and how are we gonna pay our bills? God will show us what to do. He'll show us what to say. He'll show us what to give.

He'll show us how to pray. He'll show us who to call. He always knows what exactly to do.

You gotta believe that. How many believe that? Lift up a hand. Lift it up and wave it at me.

The Holy Spirit, oh God, fill us with the Holy Spirit. I don't want a little touch of the Holy Spirit. I was, when I was growing up and they would be praying for me and they would always be yelling in my ear, God, give them a touch.

Give them a touch. I didn't even know what that meant. Give them a touch.

That's not even in the Bible. I don't want a touch. I wanna be filled.

How many wanna be filled to overflowing under the control of the Holy Spirit? And did you know what? When we're filled with the Holy Spirit, every conversation you have during the day, you never know what the Spirit could turn that into. There are no down moments when the Spirit is controlling you because when you don't turn off God and the Holy Spirit is controlling you, you don't know what could happen, what might be said, where this thing might lead, what's going on, what's the enemy trying to do, what does God want us to say? Everything becomes exciting when you're filled with the Holy Spirit because you're not looking any longer with natural eyes. You're looking with spiritual eyes.

When God comes, it's just so wonderful. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit, when a church gets filled with the Holy Spirit, when a room gets full of the Holy Spirit, under his control. I haven't thought about this.

So I was in college dating Carol. God was dealing with my life. I'm supposed to go back to school to Rhode Island, basketball practice, all this stuff.

Had a car then, drove out to where she lived in New Jersey and there was a man of God staying at the house. I went there. So at the kitchen table was her mother, Carol, me, and this man.

And as we're just talking, the conversation got to the things of God. Now I'm 20 and as we're sitting at the table, the man just says a sentence. I don't remember what it was.

But he just says something. And it was like Paul, full of the Holy Spirit. And we automatically, when he said it, became aware, God has just come into this kitchen in some different way.

No one moved. No one got more food. No one did, the dishes were on the table.

And did you know two hours later we were still there, weeping, being filled by God? Oh, I remember how I drove back to school. I knew God was alive. I knew God is real.

How many know he's real? He's not just something we're studying, he's real. See, those are moments that I'll never forget. No one can steal those from me, ever.

No one can. No one could ever convince me, oh God, this is all a joke. God's not, no, I remember it.

I remember that day, oh my goodness. Let's close our eyes. If you're here today and you wanna pray with me up here in the front, and if you wanna come here and sit or kneel or stand, and you just wanna wait on God and say one thing only, don't pray for your family, don't pray for this, that, the other thing.

Just God, fill me with the Holy Spirit. I'm a Christian. I know your spirit lives inside me, I know that.

But I wanna be controlled. I wanna be a fanatic. I wanna be under the dominion of the living Holy Spirit who speaks, who has a plan, who makes Jesus so real.

If you're here tonight and you just, if you have to leave, you can leave, it's early. But if you want to come and just stand and, or kneel or sit and say, Lord, I wanna wait, I wanna tarry like they did in the upper room. I was once filled, but now I feel my need, I need to be filled again.

I had a great experience with God back in Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Puerto Rico, wherever it was, or in my church in New York, but now it's different. I need something new from God. I need something fresh, fresh wind, fresh fire.

Just come up. You can just stand if you want, you can kneel, stand, whatever you want. Everybody with your eyes closed, very respectfully, with your hand on someone's shoulder, very respectfully, or touching their hand or their arm gently, respectfully.

Let's begin to pray for one another that we might be as never before, starting with me and my need, filled with the Holy Spirit. Lift your voice up and begin to pray. Brother, pray for me, pray for me, Stephen.

Lord, I pray as we close that you'll fill our musicians with the Holy Spirit, our sound people, every deacon, deaconess, all the pastors, especially me, every teen, every youth, every 20-something, all the seniors, all the women, all the men, all the children. Spirit of God, fall on the BT kids. Fall on the seven-year-olds and the five-year-olds and the nine-year-olds because with you, nothing is impossible.

We thank you for a beautiful evening. Thank you for hearing our prayers and now we know that we're gonna receive that which we've asked from the Lord. Help us, Lord, now to get home safely, no accidents, muggings, robberies, nothing.

Help us to go to bed tonight happy in Jesus. Amen. Give us a little verse maybe before we go to bed.

But keep our minds on you for we pray it in Jesus' name and everyone said. Amen. Turn around, hug somebody.

Good night, God bless you.

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