

# When the Spirit Falls

by Jim Cymbala

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*The Holy Spirit is the key to empowerment, ministry, and victory in the life of a believer, and should be sought after and relied upon in every aspect of the church.*

**Duration:** 24:07

**Scripture:** Acts 2:47, Acts 6:3-4, Acts 6:8, Acts 6:10, Acts 6:15, Acts 8:4, Acts 8:26-29

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and being controlled by Him. He uses examples from the Bible, such as the story of Philip, to illustrate how being filled with the Spirit can lead to revival and the ability to do miraculous things. The preacher also highlights the need for believers to prioritize spending time with God and studying His Word. He concludes the sermon by praying for God's blessings and protection for the congregation.

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## Transcript

How many have had a problem or two in your life? Could I please see your gentle little hand slip up? How many have a lot put up both hands? Okay, so we know about problems. We learned about the fact that one of the men who came on the scene happened this way. There was so many Christians multiplying and then the widows were being fed food because they were without, so they were doling out food because the people had a very sharing spirit in the early church and they would hand out food to the widows, but some widows were Hebrew speaking or Aramaic speaking widows, more Jewish in their culture.

Others had been Hellenized and were speaking Greek, Greek speaking widows, and a complaint came to the apostles goes to show nothing ever changes in churches. Wherever there's a church and you're dealing with people, there's gonna be a little problem to resolve now and then. So the problem was they felt there was discrimination that the Hellenized Greek speaking widows were getting less or not being taken care of adequately compared to the Jewish cultured widows.

So they brought that to the apostles and the apostles said, wait a minute, this is not right. It's not that we're too big for the job, but this is not right that we should be pulled away from what God called us to do, to take care of tables and handing out food, it's just not right. So choose out for yourself seven men who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom so that they can do this.

And it was mentioned there that notice the spiritual threshold that they were expecting from anyone, even just to wait on tables and represent the church and handing out food. You just couldn't pick any Tom, Dick, or Harry. You had to go get someone full of the Spirit and wisdom known to, obviously not every Christian is controlled by the person of the Holy Spirit, empowered by him, and although the Spirit lives in all of us as believers, but not everyone has come to a place of this empowerment and walk with the Lord where they can be trusted in leadership and to be known to have wisdom.

So those people started to hand out the food. And the apostles said, what we're gonna give ourselves is to the Word of God and prayer. We're gonna spend more time with God and we're gonna give ourselves to the Word of God, both studying it, meditating on it, and speaking it, preaching it.

So the church now, instead of being added to, like in Acts chapter two, now it says the church was multiplied because people were doing what God wanted them to do. But we learned that a man named Stephen, one of the seven, Stephen, he began to be mightily used by God. Through his speech, which nobody could gainsay and withstand, he had wisdom.

He started to pray for people and they were healed, miracles were done, and what struck us last Tuesday as we looked at it, it was totally unorganized. Nobody appointed him to do that that we know. No one said, now you go and get a ministry and start blessing people.

No, he started out doing what he was doing. But you see, you can't contain the Holy Spirit. You can't put God in a box.

And we limit things to church and to certain people, but that's not the way God intended it to be. One of the reasons why the church is in the shape it's in is the people are spectators and then the people up here are supposed to do the job or perform or do whatever, and then everybody just comes and then goes home and doesn't take responsibility and see the potential that they have in God. Well, Stephen did, and he became so mightily used by God that persecution came against him.

He ended up making one of the great sermons in the New Testament. He recounted the history of Israel and then very boldly, he rebuked the religious leaders and said, you know what? You always resist the Holy Spirit. It's possible to be religious and resist the Holy Spirit.

It's possible to have a Christian church, I've been in a number of them, where the Holy Spirit is resisted. He cannot have right of way. He cannot interrupt a service.

He cannot govern. But we learned last Tuesday that Jesus left the earth and he was in charge of the disciples, and when he left the earth, he sent the Holy Spirit to replace him and be in charge of the church. Jesus was in charge of the disciples.

They didn't ask him what he should do. They didn't tell him. They asked him, Master, what should we do? He was in charge.

But now when he left, who would be in charge? The Holy Spirit. He sent the Holy Spirit to be in charge. You would not know that in most churches in America.

The pastor's in charge, or the board's in charge, or political influences are in charge. And think how the Holy Spirit must be grieved when he sees the church of Jesus Christ being run without any consultation with him. He's the one who was supposed to be in charge of it.

He's supposed to govern it. He's supposed to lead the church. He's in charge.

So every decision, every service, we should be depending on him, open to him, asking for his direction, not setting up our own little script, and then saying, Holy Spirit, bless what I want to do. But that's what's evolved. So we saw that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit, and it goes to show, as I said last Tuesday, you can't keep a good man or woman down.

When God is on a man or a woman, the person's gift makes room for themselves. You don't need a platform, you don't need a title. You don't need to be called deacon.

You can be called just nothing, just I'm a Christian. And God, you can use you mightily. How many believe that with all their heart? Put your hands together, amen.

It seemed like in the early church, people would be gone to, like Philip, who we're gonna learn about, he had daughters who were prophetesses. Who made them prophetesses? God, the Holy Spirit, made them to prophesy. Nobody can put a gift on a person.

When you hear these ministers say, if I pray for you, I'll impart something to you. No, no, no, only God imparts. Sometimes it comes through someone praying, but only God imparts.

Nobody has the gift to just be imparting gifts. That's usually a gimmick to get money. So now we see Stephen gave this great sermon, and then they stoned him.

And after they killed him, he's the first martyr of the Christian church. After they stoned him, an interesting thing ensued. Some experts believe that God had to use this martyrdom to get accomplished what he wanted to get accomplished because the disciples were maybe a little slow.

Remember what Jesus said before he left. He said, go into all the world and preach in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. It doesn't seem like that was happening.

They were congregating in Jerusalem and all hanging out there, which wasn't what the Lord said. So maybe it's possible he shook things up this way. And Saul approved of their killing him, and that's, we're speaking of, that's a verse that shouldn't belong at the beginning of the chapter, but it's the way it is.

Those who had been scattered, that's the believers, preached the word wherever they went. Well, there's something totally revolutionary. The apostles didn't go out preaching the word.

The believers who got persecuted and had to get out of Jerusalem, everywhere they went, they proclaimed the word of God. How? Doesn't say. In their houses, in the streets, I don't know how they did it, but every place they went, the believers, the believers proclaimed the word of God.

The believers, not a professional clergy, not a priest, a group of priests, or ministers, the people. Now, Philip, he's one of the seven, remember? He's another name, along with Stephen. He went down to a city in Samaria.

He actually went north, but when you left Jerusalem, it always says you went down because of its elevation. So Philip, a deacon in the church, got caught up in the scattering because of the persecution. He went to Samaria, and he proclaimed the Messiah there.

And when the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all played close attention to what he said. I mean, here's a guy, he's a deacon in the church, and now he's shaking up a city. Oh, I love that about God.

You cannot put God in a box. You cannot say this is what God is gonna do. You have to be open because God can use anybody at any time.

And now he's using Philip in Samaria. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many through his praying for them and his word of authority, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Now, let's move on in the chapter. Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria, and when they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit had not yet come or fallen on any of them. They had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So let's get that straight. Philip would have never baptized anyone if they were not a Christian. You don't baptize unbelievers, correct? To be baptized, that means you had to confess you were a Christian, that you were born again.

If you were born again, you were born again by the Spirit, so the Spirit of God is living in you, or you don't get baptized. But yet in another sense, the word came to Jerusalem and they had heard, whoa, Samaria, we never thought of that. Jews hated Samaritans, Samaritans hated Jews.

Christianity at the very beginning was strictly a Jewish affair. Jesus was Jewish, all the apostles were Jewish. Started in Jerusalem, he died in Jerusalem.

They were baptized in the Spirit and empowered in Jerusalem in the prayer meeting. Now for the first time, they hear what, Samaritans? Samaritans are gonna be part of the same church we're in? Whoa, we gotta check this out. Peter and John go and see what's going on.

He went there and when they came there, they sensed somehow, you know what, there's another need here. We gotta pray for these people. There's an endowment of power or there's an element of the Holy Spirit's control in their life that's missing.

And they prayed for them because the Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them. They were Christians, but that had not happened. They had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Then Peter and John placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. And now we go to Acts 11 and Peter now, I'll explain this. Peter is speaking, he says, as I began to speak, now this is to the, his visit to the Roman, a Cornelius, a Roman soldier, Centurion's house.

He's telling the leaders in Jerusalem what happened when he went there, led by God. As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. And then I remembered what the Lord had said.

John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. So if God gave them the same gift he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way? See, the prejudice was so deep in the early church in the mentality of the general population that when the

Samaritans got saved, they had to look into this, like what's going on? Then when Peter was led by God, not Philip, Peter, when he was led by God to go to Cornelius' house, now you're talking Romans, you're talking Gentiles. You know, Jew is special, God's favorite people in their mind.

Samaritans are half-breeds, we don't have anything to do with them. What, they're getting saved? And now the word came, no, people have never been circumcised, who know nothing about the God of Israel, they're getting saved. Why did you baptize them, Peter? Why did you even go into their house? You know they're, see, this is the prejudice that's in us, is one kind or another.

And Peter gave this account and he said, listen, God sent me there and while I was preaching, right in, they interrupted my message. The Spirit came down on all of them and they began to speak in other tongues. We know from Acts 10 in Glossolalia, they yielded themselves to the Spirit and they began to have this utterance in their mouth, speaking in languages they didn't know.

And Peter said, how in the world could I not baptize them? Why are you mad at me that I baptized them? They received the Holy Spirit the same way we did. How could I not baptize them? If God received them and accepted them, who am I to say, no, you're not good enough? How many are happy the Holy Spirit brings us all on equal ground? So what do we learn from this? Let's go back to Philip, a deacon. We're reminded again that anyone who becomes available to God and receives gifts from God, they can begin to minister and be a blessing without title, education, Bible school, seminary, anything.

You can just do it. You just do it. I was just reading about a very famous lady as a devotional writer, Carrie Judd Montgomery, who lived in the late 1800s.

She was very, very, very, very, very, very, very sick. Very sick. She's one of my favorite devotional writers.

Not too many people know about her. But she had something that was printed in the early 1900s. I have copies of it that someone got me.

She's just a precious lady. She was very, very, very, very sick. Very sick.

She had some kind of disease that anything touching her caused pain like you took knives that were heated with fire and you stuck it in her. She went down to 85 pounds. She couldn't get out of bed for weeks at a time.

But it was worse than that. If you touched her, she would go off. If the cover would come on her a certain way, I mean, it was painful just reading.

I'm just working through on my iPad a biography about her. And they didn't know what to do, but she loved God. And she had this faith in God, but it seemed insurmountable.

And the doctors back then were forget it. They were still bleeding people to try to get them better. Like, we don't know what's wrong with you, so let's cut you up here and let you bleed for a day or two and see if that'll cure that little thing.

Just crazy, right? So she had no hope. From doctors, there was no hope. But she heard about an African American woman.

She would have said back then in the biography, a colored woman who was used by God to pray for the sick. So she got her family to write a letter to this lady, the lady was, I believe, in Philadelphia. And she

began to converse with the lady and tell her her problem.

Why was this lady known? Because when she prayed for people, something happened. No educational achievements, nothing. But God was with her.

Oh, brothers and sisters, this makes all the difference in the world. Now we're educating everybody and everyone has a PhD and ministers. Now you gotta see the requirements in some denominations.

For you to become a pastor or that, they say you have to have this or that. But the person could be empty inside. Education in the head doesn't mean Holy Spirit in the soul.

How many say amen to that? I'm not glorifying ignorance. I think you know me well enough that I wanna read and study as long as I'm breathing. But it's the knowledge of God and experience with God that really brings blessing.

And Carriage Montgomery was healed through this lady's ministry and became then a blessing to so many. And when no one was talking about God can heal the sick, 1870s, 1880s in this country, no one believed that God could heal the sick. That was not mentioned in any kind of church.

No church prayed for the sick. No one, no one, no one. Carriage Montgomery, among others, was used to bring that truth back, like let's have faith in God.

Let's believe God for the impossible. So this is what seems to happen to Philip. Philip just got full of God and ends up, because he's on the run, they're being persecuted, this vast persecution broke out, and all the believers are going out proclaiming the word of God.

And he ends up in Samaria. I don't know how it happened. Bible doesn't tell us.

But the next thing you know, there's a revival. Because the man is full, controlled by the Holy Spirit. Notice now, the Holy Spirit, later in his story, sends him out to a desert, to an Ethiopian official, and the Bible says, and the Spirit told him, go and join yourself to his chariot.

The Spirit told him. That means personality. It doesn't speak, he speaks.

The Holy Spirit is a person, as much a person as the son or the father. He told him. Now, this Philip is controlled, just like people who are demon-possessed are controlled by demons.

People who are carnal and fleshly are controlled by their flesh. People who are worldly are controlled by the world and its mentality. People who are controlled by the Spirit are led by the Spirit.

They get their orders from the Holy Spirit. They get power from the Holy Spirit. They get fruit from the Holy Spirit.

They get gifts from the Holy Spirit, because that's who's controlling them. Just like worldly people get what they get from the world, and people who live just in the realm of the flesh, which has other manifestations, that's where they get their orders from. I want you to notice, when someone has been touched by the Holy Spirit, demons not only show up, but they can be overcome.

Because it's said, with shrieks, people were set free. The history of the Christian church shows that demons most often demonstrate themselves and show up in meetings where people believe in the Holy

Spirit, are seeking the Holy Spirit, are filled with the Holy Spirit. Where there's a dead place, the devil doesn't even bother with it.

Let it just stay there. But notice what happened, he had authority. We have authority in Jesus' name, but we also have authority and power through the Holy Spirit.

You have to have both. You have to have the authority that's in Jesus' name, but you have to have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, because demons have power. We know this from the book of Acts, because certain people who weren't Christians, who saw Paul being used by the Lord to cast out evil spirits, they went to a man who was demon-possessed and insane, and they went and said to him, by the name of Jesus who Paul preaches, we say, get out of here.

And the man turned, you know the story, right? Man turned, beat the living daylights out of that guy, and they said, what? Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who in the world are you? When you're filled with the Spirit, even the devil knows your name. When you're used by God to come against his forces and his powers, and that's all it takes. Oh, that's so simplistic.

Yeah, but it's true. It's also simple that two and two is four, but that's true. Tomorrow is Wednesday.

That sounds very simple, but it's true. You can't change it. And it's true that when men and women are controlled and filled with the Holy Spirit, so when they prayed for the new converts, the Spirit fell on them.

When Peter said what happened at Quincy's house, he said, what could I do? While I was speaking, the Spirit fell on them. I don't know what that means theologically, but I want it. How many want the Holy Spirit to fall on you in a new way? Lift up your hand.

Fall on you in a new way. Fall on us in a new way, because with it is gonna come blessing and help to others and victory of every kind. Could you close your eyes with me? Every man in the building who wants the Holy Spirit to fall on you in a new way, to empower you, even though you're a Christian, the Spirit lives within you.

You want that empowerment, that gifting, according to God's plan for your life. None of us are gonna be Philip. No one's gonna be Stephen, but we can be who we're to be.

I can be the gym symbol that God wants me to be. Every man downstairs here and upstairs, hungry, just get out of your seat. Come on, run up here.

Stand in front of me. The ladies need God too, but they're gonna pray for where they are. Come on, men.

Men. Men, listen as you're coming. If God could raise up a Stephen, if he could raise up a Philip, he can raise us up.

He can empower us and make us the scourge of Satan. Lord, as Steve Rhodes goes up to Providence to do that state capital rally with Franklin Graham and call people to pray on the steps of the state capital in all 50 states, use him, bless him. Let a spirit of prayer be stirred up in Rhode Island, Lord, among the Christians there.

Be with him wherever he goes and help Franklin Graham in this effort to get people to pray, Christians to get back to depending on God. We pray for our pastor from Arkansas, his wife, his son, his daughter-in-law. Let them go back with the full blessing of Jesus on their lives, operating in everything that

you have for them.

Bless their church and make it a blessing. And now, Lord, as we leave this building and as we walk on the street and as we wake up tomorrow morning, should you give us another day? Help us to be like Philip and Stephen, ready to be used, ready to pray for someone, ready to cast out the devil out of some situation, Lord. Make us bold.

Make us bold as lions, harmless as doves. Give us faith, supernatural faith. See miracles done in the name of your Holy Son, Jesus.

Open doors that no one can shut. And there'll be adversaries, but we will overcome them in the name of Jesus Christ and in the power of God. Let nobody in this building think it's not for them.

We can never understand your amazing grace to all of us. Let your plans be fulfilled for all of us. Get us home safely.

Give us a good night's rest. Bless every visitor, we pray, in Jesus' name. And all the people said.

Men, turn around and hug about five or six men. Ladies, do the same with the ladies. God bless you, God bless you.

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