

Through the Spirit

by John McGregor

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life and ministry, and how we can face the challenges of life by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 31:23

Scripture: Psalm 32:8, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 3:13-17, John 14:6, Acts 1:1-3, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 4:19

Topics: "Spirit Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the phrase 'through the Holy Spirit' and its significance in the teachings of Jesus. The speaker mentions how challenges are a common experience for everyone, regardless of age. The sermon then references Acts 1:1-3, which highlights Jesus giving instructions to the apostles through the Holy Spirit. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing that Jesus' actions and ministry were guided by the Holy Spirit throughout his life.

Transcript

Thank you, Brad. It's been a wonderful morning already, hasn't it? It's a tremendous thing to be where God is working, and it's a delight to be the senior pastor, or lead pastor, as we have now called it here at Glencairn. So we commence a different kind of journey in the days ahead, and I'm looking forward to that.

Some I know because we've attended here for so many years, some I know a little bit less, and I'd love to get to know everybody really well over the next while. We have two minutes, Brad said, and you know, I once asked a Salvation Army officer, what is the quickest gospel message you ever gave? And he responded, it was simply this, turn right, go straight. And of course, the essence of the gospel is certainly in there.

We want this morning for a few minutes just to pick up on the blessings that we've been receiving as the youth have shared, and their challenges are different than some of us who are a little bit older. And I want to just think for a moment or two, how are we going to overcome our challenges? Because I don't know anybody who doesn't face some of them. And this is a very simple and very short message, but I want to go to the Acts of the Apostles and the first three verses of that book, and then we'll walk through some other scriptures as we go.

Acts chapter 1 and verse 1 says, in the former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the

apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

And as we meet around the word this morning, I just want to think about one little phrase that Jesus uses here. It tells us that he spoke to them through having given instruction through the Holy Spirit. And for a few moments, let's just think about those words, through the Holy Spirit.

Now, I am dressed a little different than usual this morning, and that's because Roberta wore a nice African costume yesterday at John and Melissa's reception, and everybody said, what happened to you? How come you didn't wear a nice African shirt? So here's the nice African shirt this morning. It tells us in Hebrews 4 and verse 15 that Jesus was a man like you and me, but he had this difference. He was without sin.

And as we think about Jesus this morning, how did he overcome? He had to walk this earth in flesh and blood like you and me. He had to face the challenges that are still around today like you and me. So what are we to see from his life and from his ministry to help us and to teach us and to show us? And these words, through the Holy Spirit, really came to live in my heart just a few nights ago as I was thinking of coming back to the message I didn't finish two weeks ago.

But I believe that this is what the Lord would say to us this morning, and especially in light of the testimonies that we've heard. The Lord is speaking to his followers through the Holy Spirit. You notice in the life of Jesus that his conception is through the Holy Spirit, and you'll find that all through his life, the things and actions that he does are through the Holy Spirit.

And we want to just remind ourselves of some of these truths this morning and ask the Lord just to touch us afresh and anew through them. You just take your Bible and go back with me to Matthew's gospel and chapter 3 and verses 13 to 17. When you think about Jesus facing his baptism, it says in verse 13, then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

But John tried to deter him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? And Jesus replied, let it be so nigh. It is proper for us to do this, to fulfill all righteousness. And John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized and went up out of the water, at that moment, heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, this is my son, whom I love. With him, I am well pleased.

Here is this moment in the life of Jesus where he is baptized, and he's baptized in obedience to the Word of God. That's what he's saying. Let us fulfill all righteousness.

And I want to encourage you, if you're here this morning and you've never followed the Lord in baptism as an act of obedience, Jesus did it. And it's a great thing to do. And at that moment, we see that the Spirit of God is descending and resting upon him, poured out upon him.

And there are some people who say, you know, the Trinity isn't actually right. But here they are, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, all mentioned in the same verse. And you'll find it in other places in Scripture as well.

It is in the strength of the Spirit that the Lord Jesus goes forth to minister. It is in the strength of the Spirit that he faces the challenges of life. And if you look at John 3, 34, you'll see that it is said of him that, to him, I will give the Spirit without measure.

I love that verse. And I pray often, God, what would it be like to have the Spirit without measure? And I think that's what these young folk were experiencing last weekend, when God came into the middle of that whole assembly. And all of a sudden, the fun stuff didn't matter so much anymore.

It was about the living God. It was about what he was doing, and the hurts that he was healing, and the relationships that he was addressing. It was about the power of God descending from on high.

Did you sing it this morning? Angels descending, ring from above, echoes of mercy, whispers of love. Wow. Sorry, I get Irish once in a while.

You will see right through the life of Jesus that it is always through the Spirit that he is walking and ministering. And I know we have a tendency to say, yeah, but he's the Son of God. That's right.

He is. He's the perfect Son of God, and God the Son. But he's also perfect man, because as perfect man, he took on our frame, and he took on our sin on the cross as a perfect man, sinless sacrifice for you and me.

He knew all about temptations. Do you ever get tempted? In Luke chapter 4, let me just quickly read the first 14 verses here. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil.

He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil came to him, if you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. Jesus answered, it is written, man does not live on bread alone.

The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it'll all be yours. Jesus answered, it is written, worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. If you are the Son of God, he said, throw yourself down from here, for it's written, he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully. They will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus answered, it says, do not put the Lord your God to the test. And when the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time. Notice the temptation didn't finish here.

He was coming back at an opportune time. And if you're following Christ, you will face different temptations at different times in your life. But verse 14 says this, Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.

And I won't read any more of it than that. Simply to say, he went into the desert land by the Spirit, and he came out of the desert, and it says, he was in the power of the Spirit. How did Jesus face the challenges of life? It was all about the work of the Spirit of God in that flesh that is known as Jesus.

He returned full of the Spirit. It was the Spirit in him revealing the word in response to all the temptations that the devil was throwing at him. And we have learned, have we not, when there is temptation, it is great to say, ah, but the word of God says.

And when there's struggle to come and say, ah, but the word of God says. And when things don't look like they're working out, to be able to say, ah, but the promise of God in his word says. It is here that we see him at work.

Jesus made use of no power, but the power of the Spirit of God. I love that thought. And we need nothing more than the power and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Isn't it true? As we face the challenges of life, we need the Spirit of God. We need his power and strength, his courage, his touch, his victory in our lives. The Lord Jesus is victorious and in him, so are we.

It says in 1 John, as he is in this world, so we are. We need the Spirit of God. If you look at Jesus preaching in that same chapter, look for when it comes down to verse 18 and he's asked to speak in the synagogue that day, he says, the Spirit of the Lord is on me.

Where was the message going to come from? Education is a very important thing, and I'm glad, brother, that you're going. I'll pray for you day by day. But we still need the power of the Spirit of God to enforce those truths and to make them living and real and powerful and life-changing, just as we have seen in our youth this morning.

Glory to God, who can come into an assembly and say to those who are hurting or struggling or may be so full of themselves that they can't see anything but themselves, I am the Lord your God, and I have a purpose and a plan for you. In his preaching, he is speaking about the Spirit of God. That same Spirit filled the apostles at Pentecost, and we are part of the result of that even to this day.

It is the work and the power of the Spirit of God. What about the miracles that Jesus did? Flip back with me to Matthew chapter 12 and verse 28 for just a moment. Jesus is speaking, and he says, but if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come among you.

How did those things happen? By the power of the Spirit. You will find it all the way through, and for time's sake, I will hasten along. When it comes to his sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, this man, the Lord Jesus, where did it come, the courage, the strength to face all of that for you and me? In Hebrews chapter 9 and verse 14, I just want you to notice something again right here.

Hebrews 9 and verse 14. First, I got to find it. How much more then will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God? It is through the eternal Spirit that we see him come to that place of sacrifice.

And sometimes I talk to people and they say, you know, I hear Christians say, crucify the flesh, get rid of your own life, and live the Christ life. I couldn't do that. And I smile and say, I can't either.

But you see what Jesus is teaching us as you look at his life? He is teaching us that in surrender to the Spirit of God, you can lay it all done and never have a worry or a care about it. I remember Henry Teichrab saying in Revival in 1971, when they met the Lord so deeply, he came home and his son said to him the next day, can I have the car? He said, sure you can, but it's God's car now. He said, what do you mean it's

God's car? Are you serious? He said, yeah, we've given ourselves and everything that we have to God.

It's God's car. I'll bet you that young man drove that car a little differently that day. It is by means of the Spirit that he presents himself as the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot.

His sacrifices receive the value from his Godhead as God the Son, yet it is completed in the power of the Spirit of God. You see it in his instructions where I started off in Acts chapter 1. And with this we'll begin to draw things to a close so that the new pastor does not go over time. It says he spoke to his apostles through the Spirit.

The very last act, right from his conception, right through to the very last thing that he has to say before physically leaving this earth to sit on the right hand of the Father and intercede for you and me is performed high in the power and through the Spirit of God. Even after his resurrection, it still tells us just that. So he condescended to come and to take our form and to receive his strength and wisdom as we do through the Spirit of God.

Do you see his oneness with us? You wonder who could feel my pain this morning? Who could understand the burdens that I carry this morning? Jesus knows every one of them. He understands every one of them. And you know he invites you and I through the Spirit to come to know his forgiveness, his peace, his grace, and so much more than that, as Pastor Brad said.

See him full of the Spirit, dispensing grace in his Spirit to your heart and your life and mine this morning. This is the work of Jesus, and this is the victorious, finished work of Jesus. How will we face the challenges? Who can overcome the difficulties of relationships and of finances and of all the struggles and hurts and so on that we carry? There is only one person in his name.

You know it. Yeah. Say it right out loud.

That's his name. That's what makes us not a building but a body, not an organization but an organism. That's what makes us walk in the life that Jesus called us to and prepared for us.

So that we need not come behind in his gifts or graces. So then I ask you this morning as I close, are you filled with the Spirit of God? Do you know that strength, that courage that only comes from him to minister to the needs of your heart and your life? These young folk discovered it so powerfully last weekend, and I have prayed through the week, God, don't let us just come and sit as bumps on a log this Sunday and sing and praise, but, oh God, let us meet you at that same place, in that same heart attitude, knowing that same power from on high to come. And you say, because there are many theologians in our midst, John, there are conditions to be filled with the Spirit.

That's true. Here's the first. Be saved.

Come to Christ and ask him for his salvation. Here's a second. Have a right motive.

Sometimes people say to me, I'd love to be filled with the Spirit and do this and this and this and this. And you know it's all about how we would look. And the Spirit never comes when the motive is wrong.

But when we come in our humility and say to him, oh God, I need your fullness. I need your touch. He has said, if we will ask, he will give.

Have a deep desire to be filled. God doesn't work in half-heartedness or hard-heartedness either. Have a desire for his power to be at work in your life, just as our youth have experienced this week.

Oh, that it would be so in every one of us. Be obedient. In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 18, it says, be filled with the Spirit.

It's not an option. It's a command. God says, be filled.

We need to be obedient. Set the flesh aside, all the things that we would desire, and just come to one God wants in us and through us. And believe God that he can do what he says he will do.

And indeed he can. And I would just say, it's not about a manifestation of certain gifts, but as you come to God and ask him to fill you, you'll know. You'll know.

You'll just know that he has done exactly what he said. And he's given you his Spirit to equip you to face the challenges of life. I'm so grateful that God didn't ask me to walk the Christian life in my strength or power or all alone.

He didn't say to a 19-year-old terrorist in Northern Ireland, I'll save you and now you're on your own. But it's taken me a long time to learn that it's a journey he wants to walk deep in your heart and deep in mine. So let's stand together for a change of position and thank you for your patience this morning.

I want to do something that I don't do every Sunday. I often do on the road when we're preaching, but this morning I believe the Spirit of God has been speaking to us. And we know our own inadequacies and we know our struggles and we know our hurts and wounds and all of those things.

It may be that you're here this morning and you've never been saved and you would love to know this life of God that the young people spoke so well about. You can come to him this morning and he will save you. He'll make himself real in your heart in the power of his Holy Spirit.

And for many of us this morning, there's a need just to say to the Lord, Father, I need refreshment. Lord, I need to be filled again by your Spirit or to be filled for the first time by your Spirit. So I'm just going to pause and ask you as God has been speaking to our hearts, and as we have seen that Jesus took the challenges of life through the Holy Spirit, would you take a moment this morning and just come and gather at the front here as we would seek him together in prayer? And I'll just wait for a few moments as you come.

There's lots of space here. You don't have to be afraid. There won't be room.

There's all kinds of it. That's right. Are there still others? I know I'm over time, but we're on God's time.

The Lord's speaking to you this morning. Just as he broke through into that youth group to break into your heart this morning, come, and let's meet him here at the place of prayer. Pastor Brian, would you just come for a moment? I want to ask you, brother, to lead us in prayer.

Oh, Jesus. The weight of that word, Lord. God, I thank you that you are Lord of everything.

Of every hurt and every joy, every sadness and every happiness. God, as John has so eloquently said, you know everything about us, but it's in making you our Lord that your spirit comes to fix us, to transform us. But we truly, Lord, are weak.

We struggle with laying certain things down, hidden things, but God, nothing hides from you. In the darkness, in the deepest darkness, you are there with us. Help us, Lord, to let go of those things that we think we can control in our lives.

Those things that we think that are only in our darkness, Lord, that are hidden from everything. God, they are not hidden from you. Your spirit is bright.

God, I ask in Jesus' name that you would fill each one. Where there has been things let go, that you would fill that void, Lord. Jesus, that you would come in so strong and so bright that we wouldn't be able to contain you, God.

That you would just flood out of every pore, out of our eyes and our mouth and our ears, God. You would be our all, finally. Your Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness and he walked out in power.

Our example, our Lord, an example of what you want for us. That wasn't just for Jesus. He did that, Lord, to show us, God, the way.

There's only one way. There's only one way. I think God would say to us right now that I am the way, the truth and the light.

No one else comes to the Father except through me, Jesus Christ. Thank you, Jesus, for your spirit, Lord, that heals all things, all hurts, all pains, and is our joy in the morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

Well, friends, if you want private prayer, the elders and pastors will be here at the front. After we sing our closing song, you just come. We want to meet and pray and minister together.

We'll ask Matt to lead us in that song. And we thank you that you're the one who provides all our needs. Father, we ask that as we go from this place this morning, we might, like Jesus, go in the power of the Spirit, not fearful for what the week might bring, but resting in the one who holds us, and the one who helps us, and the one who enables us.

So, Father, continue to minister through these testimonies and through the scriptures to us, and continue to teach us the way in which we should go, and send us forth from here in the fullness of your Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen.

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