

The Gift of the Spirit

by Jon Courson

The gift of the Spirit is available to all believers, and it can be received by faith, simply believing that God has given it to you.

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Topics: "Gifts of the Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believers being witnesses and impacting the world with the power of the Holy Spirit. He highlights the joy and love that should radiate from the lives of believers, demonstrating the reality of Jesus. The speaker also contrasts genuine spiritual transformation with empty hype and manipulation. He uses the analogy of dry bones coming to life through the Spirit's work, emphasizing the need for believers to appropriate the power of the Spirit through faith. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging listeners to seek the Spirit's empowerment in their lives.

Transcript

Acts chapter 1, beginning at verse 4. And Jesus, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me, for John truly baptized with water. But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Verse 8, and you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Verse 13, and when they were come in, they went up into an upper room where abode both Peter and James and John and Andrew and Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren.

Verse 1 of chapter 2, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. That classic, sometimes crusty old preacher, Vance Havner, said something which I think is right on the money. And I quote him.

He said, we are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but only by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God. We are not going to change this world by criticism of it or conformity to it, but by being combustioned, ignited within it by the power of the Spirit upon our lives. Right on, Vance.

And these believers found that to be exactly so. Their world was radically altered. In fact, it was their enemies who said, these are they which have turned the world upside down.

The early Christians. These believers turned the world upside down. Now, since the world is always wrong side up, to turn it upside down is a good thing.

It gets it back right once more. And they turned the world upside down without a single media consultant. Without one church growth seminar.

Without any management strategy. Without programs or slick presentations. Hey, they impacted the whole Roman Empire, the whole world really.

They didn't have buildings or buses or budgets. Church growth specialists. But what they did have was the power of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

And they, even as the Lord promised in verse 8, became witnesses. Notice, please. Jesus didn't say, and you shall receive power to go out witnessing.

Jesus in verse 8 declared unto us, and you shall receive power dunamis. The word dynamic or dynamite. You'll receive power when the Holy Ghost comes upon you and you shall be My witnesses.

Not going out and witnessing necessarily. But you'll just be a witness. People will see your lives and how your world has been turned upside down, or should I say, turned right side up.

And when they see that happen, it will be a witness of My reality, Jesus would say, of My resurrection. Gang, it's not going out witnessing. It's being a witness wherever you go.

Just an example of what the Lord can do in a marriage, in a family. At your job or in your school or wherever you might be, you are a witness, you see. And these believers were just that.

They went about and had such joy in their hearts and such love from their lives that it was undeniable that something radical had happened that Jesus must be real. How exciting it is to see our world, the world in which we live, the place where you work, the school that you attend. How exciting it is to see our world impacted by the power of the Spirit upon our lives.

What a joy it's been to see this church grow without any strategy or demographic studies or slick programming or hype, but just watching the Holy Spirit do His beautiful work in a very simple way. And if you've been around here very long, you know that what we have had a chance to observe is not because of our clever strategizing or brilliant church planning. I got a book in the mail.

I was telling some guys yesterday by a very well-known author. In fact, it's the number one selling book for Christian leaders today. George Barna, a sociologist, a demographer, a public opinion poll taker, wrote a book that is now the best-selling book among Christian ministries.

It's called Marketing the Church. And I read through it. Quite frankly, I was greatly grieved by it.

For you see, in Zechariah, the Lord said, not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, sayeth the Lord. And these books and present trends to try to get us to be culturally relevant and demographic studies and target groups and advertising for our church ministry. All of this stuff, marketing the church, is the way of the world, not the way of the Lord.

He has a better way. It's not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit igniting individual people. And they will just be a witness of My reality and people will be drawn to Me like moths are to a fire.

That's the way it works in the book of Acts. No slick programming, folks. They never heard of the word marketing the church.

They were in love with Jesus Christ and they experienced the power of the Holy Ghost. And consequently, the world was permanently altered. And the farther we moved away from the power of the Spirit and relying upon our own prowess, the more the church has missed the mark and we've sort of made a mess.

I think back how the Lord blessed us 15 years ago this March. Before our first Sunday, a group of us gathered in the front room of a home just to pray and seek the Lord. And a prophecy, a vision was shared in that prayer meeting.

Don Means, great guy, now lives in Idaho. He spoke to us and said, the Lord has given me a vision. It's very, very real.

He has shown me that this little valley on a map being ignited by fire. And from that fire, sparks and fires all around it. And he goes, I believe that this means that the Lord is going to ignite our fellowship and from that fellowship will come many other fellowships.

At that time, I was 23. And I took in that prophecy and do what I do with a lot of those kinds of things. I just sort of file them away.

I write them down in a journal and file them away and say, well, let's see. Truly, it was my belief that the Lord might bless Applegate Christian Fellowship and that we might blossom to a group of 100 people. And that would be wonderful if God's grace was upon us.

And then the Lord began to move in ways that are completely unpredictable and totally unplanned. Totally unplanned. And so the fellowship here began to just grow and grow.

Not because of our strategy or slickness. Quite contraire. It was in spite of us.

And as we began to grow, then from here we began to start other fellowships round about. Grants Pass and Medford and different communities that are around this area. And then on up a little bit farther into Roseburg and Eugene and Poulsbo, Washington and Northern California, Mexico, Honduras, Jamaica.

And the Lord just began to multiply us. And I was reading that journal a while ago and was just sort of remembering that prophecy, that first prayer meeting before our first Sunday. And I thought, Lord, You did it.

Just like You said You would. And it's not by might nor by power, but by the simple, significant work of Your Spirit. Our hearts have just been touched and our lives are being changed and people can see Your reality.

Not our strategy. I remember that first Sunday after that prayer meeting, Grange Hall down on Little Applegate Road. Past Little Applegate Road.

And I was teaching. I don't even recall the message. It was long.

And at that time, Oregon and California had been in a significant drought. Many months without rain. We had gone through the winter months without any rain.

And as I was teaching, the rain began really pouring. And I think that perhaps the Grange Hall had a tin roof of that. I'm not sure.

But whatever, it was loud. And the congregation started laughing. The folks that were there that Sunday.

And I was kind of nervous or whatever and just kind of went on and on and on. And after we were done, I walked outside and grabbed Tom Patrick. Perhaps some of you might remember him.

He's been in Hawaii with YWAM for many years now. But I grabbed Tom Patrick and I said, Tom, what's going on? And Tom said, well, you don't know this, but before you moved up here, we were just getting together praying and preparing our hearts for what the Lord might want to do. A prophecy was given that He would rain upon us and pour out His Spirit upon this ministry, this group that's coming together.

And we would know it, for it would happen simultaneously with rain falling physically. So when you're teaching the Word on our first Sunday and it starts pouring, that's why we were laughing. And I just cracked up.

And shortly after that, a rainbow just formed as we were standing outside the Grange Hall just chatting. A rainbow formed. And we were just rejoicing.

You can say it's coincidental. You're welcome to that wrong opinion. I just wrote that down in the journal, filed it away, and I just could go on and on and on.

And you're saying, I know you could. About how in those earliest days, just prophecies given and visions shared that have come to pass by the power of the Spirit of God. Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.

And this group of believers, as we shall see reading through Acts and studying together on Wednesdays, I hope you can come. But this group of believers impacted the world in a greater way than any other group in history because they were ignited by the power of the Spirit. That was their simple key.

Your world. Maybe your kids. Maybe your marriage.

Maybe your business. Maybe your school. Whatever it might be.

Maybe your world is wrong side up or upside down. How's it going to be impacted? The same way the whole world has been impacted globally. By the power of the Holy Ghost upon your life.

By the power of the Holy Ghost upon your ministry. It's the power of the Spirit that will change you and your marriage and your family and your business and your service for Jesus Christ. It will change every aspect of your life.

It's the power of the Spirit. Not more programming. Not more fleshly striving.

Not more clever organizing. It's His power upon your life that will make things start happening. That's what they found.

Now keep in mind here, these disciples in Acts 1, they were already born again and had already received the indwelling of the Spirit. What do you mean? For you note takers, jot it down. For you others, think back.

John chapter 20. Jesus had been crucified on the cross, resurrected from the dead. The disciples there are meeting in the upper room with locked doors worried about, man, what if somebody discovers us? What does this mean? Where do we go? What do we do from here? And they were holed up in that upper room when suddenly in the midst of them without coming through the doors popped Jesus.

He popped in literally. Dropped in unexpectedly. And He says, peace.

And these guys are blown away. And then He breathes on them and says, receive ye the Holy Ghost. Now, if Jesus breathes on you and says receive the Holy Ghost, you're going to get the Holy Ghost.

No doubt about it. That's why John 20 is such a key chapter in understanding the dynamic of the Spirit. Now they're born again.

It couldn't have happened before that time for Jesus had not yet died. They followed Him, but were not yet regenerated or born again because Jesus first had to die for their sin and then rise again. So now He died for their sins.

He rose once more. He breathes on them. Boom! They're born again.

The Holy Spirit is in them. For you note takers and students, as the Holy Spirit came in them, at that moment they fulfilled the second of three relationships that Jesus taught could happen between a person and the Spirit. John 14 declares this.

In John 14, verse 17, Jesus said to those disciples before He had died, He says, the Holy Spirit is with you, but He shall be in you. Those prepositions are important. The Holy Spirit is with you.

The Greek word there is para, P-A-R-A. Now, the Holy Spirit is with a person when He begins to talk to that person about becoming a believer. You would have never been born again had the Holy Spirit not been with you whispering to you, it's true, God loves you, and you're a sinner, and Jesus died in place of you.

It's real. And perhaps you were in this meeting, or perhaps you were at a Billy Graham crusade or tuning in a radio or talking with a friend or a neighbor, but the Holy Spirit began to tug on the strings of your heart and you opened up your life. If the Holy Spirit was not with you, you could not be born again.

Do you realize that? There is none righteous, no, not one. None that seeketh after God, we are told by Paul in Romans. Jesus said being born again, not of the will of the flesh.

You can't just decide, hmm, I should get born again. The only way a person can be born again is if God sovereignly chooses you and then sends His Holy Spirit to come and work with you. Now, when you opened up your heart to Jesus, the Holy Spirit came in you.

That's the second relationship. The Holy Spirit is with you, Jesus said, and shall be in you. The Greek word in is in.

In. So, first Para, with you, and then when you open up your life, He comes in you. He indwells you.

You are born again. You are regenerated. He's in your life.

And in John chapter 20, those disciples now had the Spirit in them. And every one of you who's been born again, if you're a believer, the Holy Spirit has been with you and is now in you. You have the Holy Ghost.

But, the question is, does the Holy Ghost have you? That brings us to the third relationship. Jesus told those boys after He breathed on them. Why breathing? Breath.

In the Greek, pneuma is the word. It means breath, or wind, or spirit. The same word.

In the Hebrew, breath, wind, or spirit is the same word. Ruach. R-U-A-C-H.

Like roosh. One word. Ruach.

The Spirit. Coming in them. But now Jesus said, now wait.

You need to go now to Jerusalem and tarry ye there, Luke 24 tells us. Tarry ye there, or as Acts 1 declares, wait for the promise of the Father which you have heard of Me. That promise of the Father, Luke 24 defines it.

Jesus here reiterates it. Is the power of the Holy Spirit, verse 8, coming upon you. This is the third relationship.

He's with you when you're being convicted of your need to be saved. He's in you when you open up your heart and you're born again. The third relationship is for believers.

Now go and wait for the Spirit to come upon you. And the word there is a P-E-P-I in the Greek. The coming upon.

Just like in the Old Testament times when the Holy Ghost came upon Moses and upon David and upon Gideon and upon Ezekiel, empowering those Old Testament people for service. And when the Holy Ghost came upon Samson, man, the Philistines were in big trouble. And so was that lion whose jaws he ripped apart into two.

The power of the Spirit coming upon you. The dunamis. The power.

The dynamite. It's a blast. And Jesus said this, the Spirit's in you, but go and wait until the Spirit comes upon you.

And then, you're going to be witnesses. Not go out and witness. You're just going to be witnesses.

Not study demographics to figure out how to minister. You'll just be ministering. The Spirit will be upon you.

It's going to be happening. Inevitably. Upon you.

And so they did just that. These born-again disciples. 120 in number huddled together in that same upper room where they were previously when Jesus appeared unto them.

And for ten days there, they wait and pray. They're with one accord in one place when suddenly, chapter 2 tells us, the day of Pentecost had fully come. And there was the sound of a mighty rushing wind.

Why wind? Again, breath. Spirit. This blowing, this moving of the wind.

And these tons of fire sat upon, verse 3, each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And the world was never the same thereafter. The Spirit of God coming upon them.

Now, at that point, the Spirit of God is made available not just to work with you in becoming a Christian or to come in you once you open up your heart to Him, but He is now made available to come upon your life to empower you and see your world turned upside down. Made right side up. But understand this.

This is very, very important. That we no longer have to wait for the Spirit like they did. God gave the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to come upon the church or upon individual believers.

You no longer have to wait for the Spirit. It is a gift. And it's been given.

And it's available to you even as you sit there right now today. Mark this down again for you who are note takers and think it through and pray it in for you others. Our appropriation of Spirit comes by our simply believing.

How do you make it happen? How do you make the power of the Spirit reside upon your life and flow through your life? You say, well, I have the Holy Spirit. And I know you do if you're a believer. But you might be honest and say the Holy Spirit doesn't really have me.

Not like I read about in the book of Acts. He can come upon you in the same kind of dynamic. It's already available.

And the appropriation is exactly the same as when you became a Christian. How did you get saved? For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He gave just like He gives the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11.13 says, If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask? So God gave His Son. And John 1.10 says, And as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe on His name. God gave His Son, and you received His Son by faith.

You just believed. Now when some of you believed, man, tears rolled down your cheeks. And you felt this weight lift off your shoulders.

And you felt warm inside. And perhaps you went through this tremendous emotional wonderful experience. Others when you received said, okay, I prayed the prayer, now what? Is that all? So what? But if you're in that category, and I think most people are, you now at this point perhaps if you've walked with the Lord, look back.

And you say, now I see, so what? My life's been changed. At the time I just thought, okay, I prayed the prayer. I got dunked in the water.

Whatever. And now I see as I look back, I've never been the same since then. So too, in the appropriating of the Spirit, the gift has been given.

You receive it. Look what He says. You shall receive in verse 8 of chapter 1. You'll receive this power.

You'll receive it. Just like you received Christ Jesus by faith. Now, for some, when you receive the power of the Spirit by faith, simply believing, you know what happens? Things start cooking.

Some start speaking in tongues and prophesying. Some start just seeing visions. Others say, so what? Now what? You can't predict it.

Jesus said the Spirit is like the wind. The numa, the ruach. You don't know from whence it comes or where it goes.

You can't really see the wind, but you can see the effects of the wind. And when some people receive the Spirit by faith, they just have this glorious expression and experience. Others just say, so what? But then all of a sudden, they start noticing some real changes.

They're kind of blown away. For me, it was an incredible desire to read the Word. When the Spirit came upon my life, when I was a student at Biola College and going to Calvary Chapel, when the Spirit came upon my life, suddenly Bible study was no longer just a discipline or a drudgery.

It became my passion. And sharing it became just a joy, not an embarrassment and not an obligation. I didn't have a tremendous emotional experience.

The Lord did touch me, and I knew He impacted me at that moment. But as I went on my way, I began to see some real significant differences. My Christianity was not dry like it was previously.

Oh, I had the Holy Spirit for many, many years. But suddenly the Holy Spirit comes upon me and overflows from me. And I went through a radical change as now I look back and see what He's done in and through my life.

Now, if somebody came forward today to receive Christ, oh, I just want Jesus in my heart. I just want the Lord to be my Savior and my King. So we pray the sinner's prayer and say now, receive the Lord.

They pray that. The next day they come back, oh, I just want the Lord in my life. Please, please.

So we pray. And they come back the third day and the fifth day and the 18th day, and they come every time the doors are open. Please, I just want the Lord.

What would you tell that person? You would say to them, look, by grace are you saved through faith. It's a gift of God. You simply receive through faith that gift of salvation.

You don't need to keep begging or pleading or crying. You don't need to do that. Just embrace what He has already given.

Receive the gift of God. You are born again. Just believe it and receive it.

And they go, oh, yes. Upon what basis? Upon the basis of the Word of God. Just embrace it.

And yet, when it comes to the Spirit, people have a whole different wrong concept. They think, well, now, I need the power of the Spirit upon my life, so I'm just going to carry for it and I'm going to pray hard. And so we go into these meetings and we think we've got to really strive and prove that we're deserving of the Spirit.

And so we pray with intensity. People lay hands on you and some are saying, come on, brother, hold on, hold on. Don't give up.

Pray through. Hold on. And somebody else comes up an hour later and says, let go, brother, let go, let go.

And so you're holding on and letting go and you think, man, I give up. What's going on? And a lot of classic Pentecostalism has those kinds of subtleties in it where somehow you've got to prove yourself worthy to receive the power of the Spirit by your intensity or by your purity. And if you're intense enough or pure enough, then maybe, maybe the Holy Ghost will come upon you.

Wrong! Totally. In fact, in Acts chapter 8, Peter and John lay hands upon the believers there and they're empowered with the Holy Spirit and things are cooking, things are happening. In Acts chapter 8, Peter and John lay hands upon the believers there and they're empowered with the Holy Spirit and things are cooking, things are happening.

So Simon, who was a magician in that city, said, wow, that is a powerful trick. You lay hands on people and they start experiencing blessing. Hey, Peter, I'll buy that from you, as he reached for his wallet.

I'll buy that trick. Tell me the secret and let me purchase it. Marketing the Spirit.

And Peter looks at Simon, this sorcerer, this magician, and he says, your money perish with you, thinking that the gift of the Holy Ghost can be purchased. The gift of the Spirit cannot be purchased by your intensity or by your purity or by your money or by anything. It's a gift that you receive in faith by grace.

Thank you, Father. You promised it. You gave a promise to us, the promise of the Father.

I need it. Now, Lord, by faith I'm asking for it. Thank you, Lord, I receive it.

It's that simple. And right where you're sitting now, even at this moment, you can be a recipient of the power of the Holy Ghost upon your life if by faith you'll just say, thank you, Father, for the promise. Jesus, do that work which you said you would baptize me in the Spirit or with the Spirit.

Hey, wait. My Baptist background, I don't like this. Because doesn't 1 Corinthians 12, verse 13 say, for by one Spirit, we have all been baptized into one body.

So what's this about a second blessing or an empowering? How do you deal with that verse? Easy. For by one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body. The moment you open up your heart to Jesus Christ, the Spirit baptizes you, immerses you, plunges you into the body of Christ.

You don't need to go to church membership classes or sign up on a sheet. The moment you become a believer, you, the Spirit, baptizes you into the body of Christ. But that's a different baptism than Jesus baptizing you into the Spirit.

He's immersing you, plunging you in the Spirit. It's a different baptism altogether. In fact, get out your Strong's Concordance or your Young's Concordance or your Cruden's Concordance.

Three good concordances. Strong's for the strong, Young's for the young, and Cruden's for the crude. But get a good concordance.

And see the number of baptisms that are mentioned. There's the baptism of John, the baptism of regeneration, the baptism of suffering, the baptism into Moses. There are seven at least different baptisms.

And 1 Corinthians 12, 13 is one of those baptisms where you are baptized into the body. The Spirit baptizes you into the body. But this baptism, the promise of the Father, is when Jesus baptizes you into the Spirit.

And that's what the Baptist said earlier, didn't he, when he said, I baptize you with water, but there's one standing amongst you whom you know not. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit. He will baptize you with or in the Holy Spirit.

But doesn't Ephesians say there's one Lord and one baptism and one faith? Yes, it does. Speaking of the unity of the body, we're all baptized into one single body. Whatever denomination you're from or whatever affiliation you have, there's one baptism into one body.

You need to study these things through carefully before you build a theology on an isolated verse. Jesus here says to these boys who already were infilled, now go and wait and you'll be baptized with the Spirit coming upon your life and empowering you for ministry and service and to turn your world upside down. Please understand, nowhere are we told to wait for the Spirit.

From this point on, He is always there. He's just waiting for you to say thank you. I need it.

I believe in it. I receive it right now. I thank you for it by faith.

Luke 11.13 Why are you being so redundant on these verses? Because if you're not writing them down, I don't want you to forget them. It's the promise that's going to impact your life and change your ministry. How much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask? It's just asking.

Now having said that, you guys are so attentive and I really appreciate that. This is so important that it needs to be, I think, carefully developed and hopefully deeply received. Having said that, that the power of the Spirit is appropriated by simply believing.

I want to make one more comment here with several sub-comments. The power of the Spirit is appropriated by believing, but the preparation for the Spirit is by sometimes waiting. Didn't you just say, John, we don't have to wait for the Spirit anymore? It's already been given? Yes.

We don't wait for the Spirit, but we need to wait on the Spirit, and there's a big difference. And that's why as we see this model in Acts 1 and 2, these believers were told by Jesus, not receive right now the power of the Spirit. He could have done it that way, but He said no, you go for ten days and lock yourself in a room and wait.

Wait on Me that I might pour out that Spirit of promise upon thee. Why? Why would the Lord have these boys wait on Him? Why would He have you wait on Him? If it's available for us right now, and it is, then what's the reasoning? What's the purpose of waiting on Him? Several reasons. Number one, transition.

A lot of us came out of a Baptist dispensational with no fundamental background in which we were taught. There is no second blessing. There is no baptism with the Spirit.

There are no gifts of prophecy or healings or tongues or visions. Those are all things in the past and not available for us today. I was indoctrinated that way at the school I was attending, the college in which I was studying.

And yet, as I read the book of Acts and went to a church where these things were a part of the body life, I realized I've got a problem. How do I explain these things away really? So for almost two years actually, I studied the Scriptures. What does the Word say? Not what do my prophets say or what does that preacher say, but what do the Scriptures say? What does the book of Acts really model? And what do the epistles teach? Are these things not for today? Is every person equally and immediately empowered when they receive Christ? And is there no coming upon? What does the Word have to say? And so at Biola University, Biola College back then, sparring with Dr. Sturz, one of the main theologians and Greek teachers there, how do you get rid of these things so easily that are in the book of Acts and taught by Paul? We sparred and I questioned.

Went into Biola archives to do some research on the Holy Spirit and lo and behold, what did I find hidden in a far corner? And I appreciate Biola. Don't misunderstand me. But in this time at that particular junction, hidden in a corner was books that were written by the school's founder, famous teacher, compadre of D.L. Moody.

His name was R.A. Torrey. Started Biola. Wonderful teacher.

And he wrote many works on receiving the power of the Holy Ghost. And I went up to Dr. Sturz and said, this guy's a Pentecostal. And my professor said, well, you've got to understand that in his later years in ministry, he sort of got a fuzzy a little bit theologically and delved up.

And that was an explanation that was given. They didn't want that readily known by the students there that our founder, we have R.A. Torrey conference one week each year, was a charismatic. D.L. Moody.

We have a booklet or used to carry books in the bookstore. I hope we still do if they're still in print. How to Obtain the Fullness of Power by D.L. Moody.

The power of the Holy Ghost coming upon him. Charles Finney, the great evangelist. When he was asked by a journalist, Mr. Finney, what is the thing? How come so many thousands of people come and hear you preach this evangelist from generations ago? He said this.

It's very simple. I pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to ignite my heart and then invite people to come and watch me burn. When you study Finney, when you read D.L. Moody, when you pull out books of R.A. Torrey, you see that all of these men of God so powerfully used had an experience, a second blessing, a coming upon, a filling, whatever you want to call it.

I don't care about your terminology. I want you to experience it personally. But they had an encounter with the Holy Ghost that affected their lives, and it was no longer their striving or their energy.

Their ministries went on a radical change, of course, from that moment on. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. And so, for me, I had to go through a couple of years of transition.

Just sort of rethinking and unlearning before I came into the experience when I received that empowering with the laying on of hands. Transition. Remember what the psalmist wrote after many of his psalms? When it came to a profound point, he would say, Selah, which means stop.

And think about it. And when you're talking about the dynamic of the Spirit, the new song of the Holy Ghost, I suggest to you for some, it means that we've stopped and not just take somebody's word for it, but think about it. Waiting on the Lord as we study His Word.

Number two, not just transition, but protection quickly. You know what? These guys needed protection. The Spirit is now in them.

They're born again, but they need protection. What? The danger they were in was not from failing to do something, but the danger that they were in was not failure from trying to do something, but trying to do something. Period.

What happens? Check this out when you read this week. They're there praying in the upper room. And Peter suddenly says, hey, the Scriptures declare, the Scriptures say that somebody should take the place of Judas who's hung up and not here, and somebody should take his place.

Somebody should move into his office. And he quoted the appropriate Scriptures. So let's draw straws here between these two guys and let's see which one of them God wants to use in that office.

And so, Matthias drew the short straw or the long straw or whatever, and he was chosen. And it was a big goof. He's never again mentioned in the book of Acts.

Not once. Why? Because Peter was speaking before the empowering of the Spirit of chapter 2, and he was figuring out through logic, through clever analyzation, through church growth seminaring. And consequently, he said, we've got to replace this guy and here's how we'll do it.

And they picked Matthias when Paul the Apostle came on the scene shortly thereafter, and he was the one all the time intended to fill the office of Judas Iscariot. And God's... Our Father's so big. He's not going, oh no, I meant to use Paul and now I've got Matthias.

What am I going to do? I mean, the Lord doesn't panic in that way. He just says, this will be a great example for believers about what not to do. The danger of trying to make something happen, even scripturally fulfilling Scriptures supposedly, without waiting on Me.

Good example. And I'll use Paul anyway. I'll raise him up regardless of what they decide to do with their strategy and planning.

Love it. The bigness of our Father. But a lesson for you and me nonetheless.

So, wait on the Lord. Not wait for the Spirit, but wait on Him for transition, for protection, so you won't go half-cocked and try to do things on your own. Thirdly, vision.

Real quick. Jeremiah 33. Paul was, I'll read it to you, not in an upper room, but in a lower dungeon.

And while he's there shut up in prison, thus saith the Lord, verse 3, And I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knewest not. Jeremiah, while you're down here in prison, you can't go anywhere, you can't do anything, call on Me. And I'm going to show you things that you never would have

imagined.

Abraham, look up. What do you see? Stars. Innumerable stars.

That's how many your children are going to be. Wait on Me. Abraham got impatient, didn't he? And said, well, strategy suggests and studies conclude and physiological reports tell us that I'm not going to have a baby unless I do something with Hagar.

And we're still paying the price to this day for Abraham trying to figure out what to do to make it happen. Going into Hagar, conceiving a child that became the father of the Arab people and consequently when the promised son did come, Isaac, from that time on there would be a mess. Strife.

Even as there is as we speak today. Because he didn't wait on the Lord, but tried to make it happen strategically. Call unto Me while you're in prison, while you can't go anywhere, as you're waiting on Me.

Call and I'll show you great things. And then one more and then we're done. Not just transition.

That's why we need to wait on the Spirit and on the Lord. Not waiting for the Spirit, but waiting on Him. Because many of you are in transition right now.

Others of you need protection from going out and using your own skills and your own energy and not really being productive in light of eternity. Others, you don't even know yet what the Lord can do. There's no vision.

If you just wait on Him, He will show you what He can do in and through your life as He comes upon you and empowers you in a whole different dimension. One more. Evaluation.

If you want to, if you can turn there quickly to Ezekiel. It's a classic passage, a classic story. And maybe bunches of us can relate to Ezekiel's situation in chapter 37 of his book.

And the hand of the Lord was upon me. Okay, another example of the Spirit coming upon an Old Testament guy for empowerment, for service. Empowerment for effecting his own world that he lives in.

The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of a valley which was full of bones. And He caused me to pass by them round about and behold, there were very many in the open valley and they were very dry. And He said, Son of man, Ezekiel, can these bones live? And I answered, Oh, Lord God, Thou knowest.

In this valley, look at all these dry bones. Can they live? And the prophet, the preacher said, I don't have a clue. I felt that way preaching in some places.

Not here. Looking out into a valley of dry bones and thinking, can these people live? I've preached and been involved in some pretty dry places, believe you me. Man, it's brutal.

The valley of dry bones. I know it's the body of Christ, but it's dry bones presently. Can these dry bones live? And Ezekiel says, I don't know.

And then he said, verse 4, Unto me prophesy upon these bones and say, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you and bring up flesh upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you

shall live.

And you shall know that I am the Lord's soul. Verse 7, I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied upon the bones, check this out.

There was a noise. Behold, a shaking. The bones came together bone to bone.

And when I beheld low sinews and flesh came upon them and the skin covered over them, but there was no breath in them. As he prophesied upon the bones, preached to the bones, there was commotion. A shaking, a rattling, a rolling.

And the bones start connecting. You've heard the old spiritual. The heel bone connects to the leg bone and the leg bone connects to the backbone or whatever it is.

And there's this commotion going on. There's this shaking. There's this moving.

But, Ezekiel realized that although his preaching produced commotion, there was no creation. And gang, can I tell you this? Listen carefully. A lot of preaching can cause a whole lot of shaking and commoting and hyping.

We're going to go out and we're going to win the world for Jesus Christ, aren't we? Yay! And we're going to touch this world, right? Oh! And you know, ooh! And all this stuff, you know, and ooh, ooh! It reminds me of... And you hear a lot of shaking and commotion and a lot of hype. It's just plain hype. Prophesying upon dry bones.

The bones start shaking and moving. Oh, yeah? Go get them, Yost. The last of the big-time hype football coaches.

1938 Rose Bowl. Michigan State playing USC. Men, this is the most important game of your life.

When I count to three, I want you to head out those doors and I want you to go fight for Michigan State and play for your mothers and girlfriends and win for the glory of Michigan. And he gave this pep talk and the players are commoting, you know. Ooh! Okay, we're going to do it.

One, two, three! And they stand up and charge out the doors. True story. Go get them didn't know at that time that he pointed to the doors that led directly to the edge of the gymnasium pool.

And they bust out these doors. Thirteen of their starting players end up in the water. Had to postpone the Rose Bowl for a half hour.

A lot of preaching does that, kids. We're going to go out there, aren't we? We're going to go witness. Yeah, ooh, yeah, ooh! And boom! And you feel like a drip.

And it doesn't work. It's manipulation. It's hype.

It's not the power of the Spirit. It's just some hype. So there's this motion.

Oh, the bones are rattling and things are moving. But there's no life. It's not real.

Not yet. Then, watch this. Then, after this happened, he said, verse 9, unto me, Prophecy unto the wind or the Spirit.

As your margin reads it. The Ruach. The wind.

Prophesy unto the wind. Not prophesy to the people that they should get it together and start moving. Prophesy to the wind.

Intercession. Prayer. Prophesy unto the wind.

And say to the wind, thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied to the wind as He commanded me. And the breath came into them.

The Spirit. And they lived not just commotion, but creation. And they stood up on their feet and they became an exceedingly great army.

Not just bones rattling around, but an army standing strong and full of life. That's what happened in the book of Acts. Dry bones.

120 believers in an upper room wondering what to do and where to go. Peter stepping out trying to make something happen. A lot of commotion, but it was like go-get-'em-yos, the wrong door.

And then the wind comes. The wind. A mighty rushing wind.

The Spirit comes upon them. And suddenly, all of history changes. They move in a new dynamic.

They just become witnesses. And the world marvels. I leave you with this today.

I've taken time. You know that. I apologize partially, but I think that this is absolutely essential.

So before you fold up your Bibles and put away your pencils, right now, the Spirit is available for you to come upon your life. How? Appropriation by simply believing. I know this, though, that for some, you say, you know, I need to think this through.

Transition. I need to get a vision in my heart. Or I'm not even sure if I feel a need.

And you need to see the valley perhaps that you're in and the dryness of your bones within. You have the opportunity today to do something very practical. Not charge out that door and win the world, but to wait on the Lord.

To go for a walk. Down your street or in a park. To find a quiet spot in your house if possible or in your car if necessary.

And say, Lord, show me. Where am I at? I know I have You, Lord, but do You have me? I just do, Lord, as I wait upon You, feel that I am a dry bone and in a valley of depression. I've been like Peter trying to pull it out cleverly.

I'm tired of that routine and that hype. Lord, You promised the gift of the Spirit. Prepare me to receive it tonight.

Could I encourage you? I don't know if there will be ten people that will do this or a hundred or a thousand. I don't know. But some will who will really appropriate the power of the Spirit today by faith.

Perhaps going to a Koinonia meeting tonight where this will be the singular subject of the meetings. To lay hands on people and pray for people. Not to hype you up, but to prophesy to the wind.

To intercede to the Lord. Grant this brother, this sister, that Holy Spirit power tonight, Lord. We thank You for it.

And so, options are Yours. Receiving right now. If you're in that place.

Enjoying the afternoon. Preparing your heart. Waiting on Him.

And then tonight, perhaps going to a Koinonia meeting where we can really spend time in small groups laying on hands. It's not going to be weird or wild. The Holy Spirit is like a dove.

Not a vulture or a hawk. Like a dove. There's a gentle Spirit in which you can receive that this evening.

As we go our way, underneath the board outside where the pictures of the mission are and the mountaintop are, are a bunch of brown brochures that explain where the Koinonia groups are meeting tonight in case you don't know. And perhaps it would do you well to pick one up and just see what the Lord might want to do. Now listen, one last word.

John, you're pushing it. I know. There are some of you that were filled back in 1978 or 46 or 31.

Read the book of Acts. The power of the Spirit comes upon them over and over again. And maybe, maybe it's you who are sitting there saying, I know this.

I got it down. It's in my notes on page 43. Maybe it's you tonight who needs to go and wait on the Lord and be rekindled in your heart.

What a fabulous opportunity to just wait on the Lord and see how He might want to touch you and work through you in ways that are exceedingly abundantly above all that you could ask or even think. Take advantage of this service of this afternoon, of this evening, as we just wait on the Lord for His empowering together. Shall we stand? Father, I pray in Jesus' name that we might see that dynamic of Your Spirit flowing through this church, this fellowship, in even a richer and fuller way as we wait upon You and study the Scriptures together.

And now I ask, Father, for those that truly perhaps are in the valley of dry bones, that this might be the day in which by faith they would receive that empowering of Your Spirit upon their lives and may their world be turned upside down. In Jesus' name, thank You, Father, for that promise. And thank You, Jesus, for what You're now doing.

Amen.

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