

Preaching the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven

by Mike Attwood

This sermon emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, drawing insights from 1 Peter 1:8-12 and D.L. Moody's experience. It highlights the impact of prayer, the need for discernment of spiritual powerlessness, and the transformative effect of encountering the fullness of the Holy Spirit in ministry.

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:12, Ephesians 3:19, Acts 2:1, Isaiah 6:8, James 5:16

Topics: "Power of the Holy Spirit", "Importance of Prayer in Ministry"

Description

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Transcript

Okay, if we could turn, please, in the Bible to the book of 1 Peter, 1 Peter chapter 1, and I'm going to read just to get the flow from verse 8 down to verse 12, but I really just want to focus on one part of verse 12, really, in our thoughts this evening. But just to get the connection and the flow, verse 8 of chapter 1 of 1 Peter, it simply says this, whom having not seen ye love, in whom though now you see him not yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into. God will bless that reading of his word to us this evening, and the simple thought that I want to bring before our minds this evening is the end part of there, verse 12, where it speaks about people that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. I want to think about that verse, and then I want to also tie it in with a little excerpt from the life of D.L. Moody, just kind of drawing a lesson out of his life, and we're going to pull these thoughts together hopefully well this evening. We were

exalted this morning, and I think quite rightly so, that we need to get back to the preaching of the gospel, that we've drifted in many assemblies from our primary calling, which is to preach Christ and him crucified, and it can be a period of weeks sometimes in assemblies that you can go and not hear a clear presentation of the gospel, and that's a very tragic thing.

But what I want to suggest is that it's not just gospel preaching we need. It's gospel preaching, it says, having preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. And I want to suggest to you that what we do need is gospel preaching, but we need that preaching to be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I don't know what Peter was thinking as he was writing this, but I'm sure immediately lots of thoughts flooded his mind when he even mentioned that, having preached the gospel to you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Because I don't know if I was Peter, immediately my thoughts would go back to Acts chapter 2. And on that glorious day, Peter had the privilege of preaching the gospel to his own countrymen, to a great crowd that were gathered on the day of Pentecost. And he preached with unusual power, the Holy Spirit power, so much so that the results were quite tremendous.

3,000 people converted in a single day. Now, I don't know about you, but I don't know how Peter slept that night. You'd have to pull me off the ceiling.

I would be so excited preaching the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and actually seeing 3,000 people come to Christ. That would be an event you would never forget all the days of your life. And here he talks about preaching the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

The Holy Spirit empowered gospel preaching. That's what had brought these believers who that Peter's writing to. This is what's brought them into the inheritance.

This is what's caused them to love someone they've never seen with their physical eyes, but yet he tells us they love him. Why do they love him? Well, because the gospel was preached to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. And I suspect it was preached so clearly and in such a real way that it was almost like they were there at the cross, witnessing it for themselves and having to make a decision concerning the one on the center cross.

And so this would certainly have had an effect upon their minds. Now, when you keep all that in mind, we're going to come back to this passage in a moment. I want to read a testimony from D.L. Moody himself.

This is in his own words. So I'm not, this is not what some author said about the events. This is D.L. Moody's own words.

And this is what he says. He says, I remember two holy women who used to come to my meetings. It was delightful to see them in the congregation.

When I began to preach, I could tell by the expression on their faces that they were praying for me. At the close of the Sunday evening service, they would say to me, we've been praying for you. I said, why don't you pray for the people? It was pray for souls to get saved.

They answered, you need power. I need power? I said to myself, why? I thought I had power. I had a large Sunday school and the largest congregation in Chicago.

There were some conversions at this time. I was in a sense satisfied, but right along these two godly women kept praying for me. And their earnest talk about being anointed for special service set me thinking.

I asked them to come and talk with me and we got down on our knees. They poured out their hearts that I might receive the anointing from the Holy Spirit. And there came a great hunger into my soul.

I didn't, I didn't know what it was. I began to pray as I never did before. I really felt that I did not want to live if I could not have this power for service.

The hunger increased. I was praying all the time that God would fill me with the Holy Spirit. Well, one day in the city of New York, oh, what a day.

I cannot describe it. I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name.

Paul had an experience of which he never spoke of for 14 years. I can only say that God revealed himself to me. And I had such an experience of his love that I asked him to stay his hand.

I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths and yet hundreds were converted.

I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience. If you gave me all Glasgow, it would be as the small dust of the balance. Now that's Mr. Moody's testimony.

I want to draw for us five practical lessons from this passage and also from Mr. Moody's experience. The first thing I want to stress is the value of the prayers of godly sisters. We're glad that we've got this group of men praying together, but brethren, we've got to get the sisters praying.

We really need it desperately. It seems to me that the Hannahs have always been there when revival is needed most. The prayers of godly sisters.

Secondly, often sisters can discern what we cannot discern in our busyness for the Lord. That is that we're often powerless. You see, we're working.

Messages are being preached. And yes, occasionally, very occasionally, souls are being saved and we can be smugly satisfied because as men, we're activity driven. And if we're busy and if we're working, we feel like we're doing what we should be doing.

And yet sisters can see through all that activity and all that haze of activity and they can see it's powerless. And so often, brethren, that's us. That's our work.

That's our service. It's powerless service for the Lord. We need to yearn for the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives so much so that we cannot bear the thought of going on as we are.

Moody called it a hunger in his soul. Lord, give us that hunger in our souls for divine power upon our lives in service. That's what he had.

He had this hunger and he couldn't just go back to the way it was. Moody's encounter with the Lord was to change his ministry forever. Yet he's far from unique.

Many a preacher has had similar encounters. Lloyd Jones, very used of God in London, twice in his ministry, he had those encounters where he felt like the presence of God was so real, he had to ask him to stay his hand. And he preached with unusual power as a result of these things.

Men like Jock Troop from Scotland, Douglas Brown from London, WP Nicholson from Northern Ireland, some of the men that we've enjoyed considering together on these Saturday evenings, good men, men that were greatly used in the gospel. But they were men who experienced a crisis in their lives, a crisis of powerlessness, a crisis of just sensing that there was lots of activity, but very little unction, very little, very little evidence of divine power. Now, what do we call this? How do we describe it? Men have had difficulty with this.

Some call it a baptism of power for service or even incorrectly call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some call it the anointing. I feel it's a bit like the manna.

Every time we say, what is it? But we know it's there. It's when somebody has it, you can tell it. And it really is a wonderful thing.

What we might say is this, it seems to be Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3.19 realized in an individual life. Remember he prayed for the Christians at Ephesus that they might be filled with all the fullness of God. And it seems to me that these crisis moments, these men experience the fullness of God like they've never known before.

And it changes their preaching. There's a new stamp of power and authority on the preacher. And notice the results in Moody's ministry.

He said, I went back to preaching again. The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths and yet hundreds were converted.

He's not saying I learned any new techniques. He's not saying I had a new message or I adopted new gimmicks or I read a new bestseller. What was the difference? I want to suggest to you, the difference was between preaching the gospel and preaching the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

I believe that that is the difference. And so as we pray together this evening, it's the eve of the Lord's day. Some of us are going to have the responsibility to preach.

What kind of preaching is it going to be? Is it just filling a busy schedule? Is it another meeting in a full calendar? Is it a meeting where maybe discerning sisters will see there's great busyness, but there's no power? Or is it a day when we will not be satisfied until we see something of preaching the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Now I know, and please don't, as it were, disdain what I'm saying, because I know that every believer has the Holy Spirit. I know that. But I do know this, that there's a lot of lack of power in many of us in our personal ministries.

And it would tell us something. We have all the Holy Spirit, but the real question is, does he have all of us? Are we truly experiencing his fullness in every respect? And if we're not, then tonight would be good to pray, Lord, we don't want to go on. We don't want to go on with barrenness and powerlessness.

We want to preach the gospel. And it was said this morning, but Lord, we want tokens of blessing. We want to see souls saved.

And Father, we desperately need you to do something. So that's my thoughts this evening. It's nothing profound, very simple message really.

But I hope it will stimulate us to seek the face of God together. And again, to pray about some of these things. Lord, we do need some godly sisters who will pray for us.

We need some godly sisters who will be discerning enough to tell us, Mike, you're busy, but you're powerless. That would be hard to hear, but it may be the best thing I could ever hear. All of these things are things that I want to just share to challenge us this evening.

Yes, we desperately need the gospel. But Peter says, by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the holy ghost sent down from heaven. Then he says this, which things angels desire to look into.

It has the curiosity of angels. May God encourage us with these thoughts. Amen.

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