

The Spirit Filled Believer - Part 2

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having the power of the presence of God manifested among his people, and explores the significance of the day of Pentecost and the upper room in God's program for his religious calendar.

Duration: 1:03:37

Scripture: Acts 2:1

Topics: "Presence of God", "Spirit-Filled Church"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of being a spirit-filled assembly, distinguishing between merely gathering as a church and experiencing the true presence and power of God among His people. He highlights that a church can appear to be a New Testament assembly yet be spiritually dead, stressing the necessity of a living encounter with God for genuine evangelism. Brandon draws from Acts 2 to illustrate how the Holy Spirit filled the early believers, enabling them to speak in tongues and effectively spread the gospel, and he calls for a return to first love and the authentic power of the Spirit in today's churches. He warns against materialism and the loss of spiritual fervor, urging believers to seek the presence of God and the manifestation of His power in their gatherings.

Transcript

Now tonight we're going to take a step further and speak on the subject, the spirit-filled assembly. Now I'm not going to take up the subject of the New Testament assembly, but the spirit-filled assembly. Now it's possible to be a New Testament assembly in shape and size, but to be spiritually dead.

Now we've seen that over and over again. What I want to emphasize tonight is not so much the fact of gathering in the correct way, but to have in our midst the power of the presence of God manifested among his people. So that is the subject tonight.

On tomorrow night, I want to look at the subject, not New Testament evangelism, we shall touch on that, but spirit-filled evangelism. That evangelism that's really touched by the power of the spirit. Now there is a difference between just preaching the gospel and preaching the gospel in the power of the spirit.

Souls are not only saved by the preaching of the gospel, they are saved in an atmosphere where God is. Can I repeat that? They are saved in an atmosphere where God is. So that the person who sits in those seats will say, God is in you of a truth.

You see the presence of God is being manifested. If it's just being acquainted with the doctrine of the gospel, and that's vital, don't misunderstand doctrine, it's the bone structure of the whole of the Christian faith, we must have doctrine. But if I'm just taken up with doctrine, I can be taken up with verses and facts.

When a person is saved, please note this, it's a living, vital encounter with God, and a personal reception of Christ as saviour and Lord. And this is so vital when it comes to evangelism, but we shall discuss that tonight. If you want a real good workable outline on the New Testament church, everyone should get the notes of Mr. Hill that he gave us yesterday morning.

Now I do not want any flattery, as you know that's a sin, but it was one of the best analysis that I've yet heard. And if you haven't got those notes, I think you ought to get them, they were really excellent. Now we're going to turn to Acts two, and we shall read from verse one.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, please note those two words, 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. Note please there the word suddenly, and it filled all the house. Notice that word house, because that's quite important.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as a fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues or languages as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now please note, I won't repeat this in the message, but the house was filled with the wind or the sound of the wind, and each believer was filled with the Holy Ghost. So the wind is a collective symbol of the presence of the Spirit, and the cloven tongues of fire, the individual aspect of being filled with the Spirit.

Verse six or five, and there was dwelling up Jerusalem, Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised or rumoured abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language. So that is very clear, they actually spoke languages that the people could understand, and it's a beautiful picture how that God wanted the gospel to go to the four quarters of the earth, and he had a cosmopolitan people in that area, and he's showing to us the extent of the gospel.

And they were all amazed and marvelled saying one to another, behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? Now I must say a word about the Galileans, Edersheim, the great Hebrew historian, tells us that the Galileans, now note this, were the Cockneys of the East. Now when I read that, I was none too pleased with him, because I'm a Cockney, and Cockneys are bad speakers. In fact, a broad Cockney would be very hard for some of you people to understand him.

Now these Galileans were called the Cockneys of the East, can you see the force? And yet here they were speaking fluently in foreign languages that the people could understand. Now that's a living miracle, in contrast with the Tower of Babel, where he confused their languages because of their exalted position. And now the same thing is happening, but through the gospel of Christ, people are being united in the Savior.

Let's go on. Parthians and Medes and Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia and in Judea and Cappadocia in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia in Egypt and in all parts of Libya about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes, Arabians, we do hear them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed and were in doubt saying one to another, what

meaneth this? Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine.

But Peter standing up with the 11, lifted up his voice and said unto them, ye men of Judea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words. And so we are introduced now to the first gospel message. But we are major on the first four verses.

Every movement of the spirit begins with the church of God getting back to the upper room. And if you study the great movements of revival, it always begins with God's people seeking to have restored to them the early principles of Christianity. And if there's ever a time when we should be getting back to the upper room, it's today.

It's possible to be a New Testament assembly and meeting correctly, but be devoid of the presence and the power of God. For instance, if you read of the church at Ephesus, the Lord gave a wonderful commendation. In fact, there's a sevenfold commendation there that would cause most local assemblies to purr with delight if it was read out to us.

But he had one thing against them. They had left, not lost, left their first love. And therefore he says, remember from whence thou art fallen and repent and do thy first works or else I will come quickly and remove the candlestick.

Now note the difference. A believer can never lose the sealing of the spirit. If a believer could lose the sealing of the spirit, he could be lost forever.

So a believer cannot lose the Holy Spirit. Now note the difference. But a church, if it grieves and quenches the spirit, can lose the functional presence of God among his people.

And that was the danger of Ephesus. And that is why all of us in these last days must check up, have I left my first love? Or even more, have I ever known what it is to move in the realm of first love? Now that's not my subject, but I would love to speak on the characteristics of first love. When we come to the last church, the assembly at Laodicea, you will find that there are no errors in that local church stated.

For instance, you don't read of the doctoring of the Nicolaitans. You do not read of the seduction of Jezebel. You don't read of the doctoring of Balaam.

You don't read of the synagogue of Satan. And therefore we take from those omissions that doctrinally they were correct. But what was wrong? They were rich and increased with goods and had need of nothing.

In other words, to put it crudely, they were going in for the material more than the spiritual. And the whole church became obnoxious to God. In fact, their worship was sickening to him.

Now what was happening? They were meeting week by week and probably it was quite a large assembly, but the Lord wasn't there. They were actually playing at being a gathering. He was outside.

In fact, he says, behold, I stand at the door and knock. And he's suddenly knocking there for salvation. No, no, no.

He's knocking for a life of communion. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and sat with him. Now let's make this clear.

Individually, you cannot lose the presence of the Holy Spirit. You can grieve him, of course. But collectively, the moment we move into a state of losing first love, or perhaps I should use a better word, leaving the state of first love, and the moment we become materialistic, so the material things become more essential than the spiritual, the presence of God is outside of the local assembly.

Now, by that, we can see that we can have shape and form, but we need something more than that. We need the very presence of God among us, and we need the presidencies of the Lord, and we need the power of the Spirit. These are the essentials in a local church.

Having said that, let's look at this narrative. Now, first of all, I want you to note the time of his coming. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and we must major on that just for a few moments.

Then I want you to look at the venue of his coming, filled all the house where they were sitting. Now, that is a remarkable statement that would cause a Jew's mind to almost boggle with unbelief that God's presence should now be in a common house, probably the upper room. Then thirdly, I want you to note the conditions that prevailed prior to his coming.

And then we shall get right down to the study, the presence of the rushing mighty wind, or the sound of the rushing mighty wind, and the cloven tongues of fire. The cloven tongues of fire I shall major on tomorrow night because we have to deal with evangelists. The day of Pentecost, fully come.

Now, it's impossible really to understand what that means until we understand God's program for his religious calendar. And that's why all of us should seek to understand the offerings, and especially Leviticus 23. We are the losers, you know, in not rereading and propounding the offerings that are mentioned in Leviticus 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The truth there is amazing and most beautiful.

But in Leviticus 23, the feasts of Jehovah, it begins with a Sabbath. Now, isn't that strange? The real meaning of Sabbath was not that which was linked with Judaism, for it was a Judaistic day, but the real meaning of Sabbath is seen in Romans 8, where the whole of creation will have a glorious rest. Now, you see what God is doing.

Before he starts with his religious program, he's going to show us the complete thing right at the beginning. Then the second feast is the Feast of Passover that was fulfilled at the cross for 1 Corinthians 5 teaches emphatically, as you all know, Christ our Passover. Then following the Feast of Passover, there was the Feast of Firstfruits.

And the Lord Jesus is our firstfruits and 1 Corinthians 15 tells us quite clearly that Christ, the risen Christ, is the firstfruits of all his people. In other words, he was the first one to be raised from among the dead in the power of an endless life. He was the first one, as the firstborn, to go into heaven.

And forgive my excitement, hallelujah, there's a man in the glory. And because there's one there, there's going to be millions. And that basically is the meaning of the firstfruits, the resurrected Christ.

Now note this, then seven Sabbaths after the Feast of Firstfruits, beginning on the following day that was a Sunday, the Feast of Pentecost began. Now what was the significant thing about Pentecost? There were seven lambs offered for a burnt offering. There was one bullock for a burnt offering, two rams for a burnt offering.

And all these animals were offered with something that was really special. Also there was the peace offering that comprised of two lambs. And then lastly, there was a sin offering that was the kid of the goat.

And then what made that offering really significant was this two wave loaves. I wish I had two of them in models, it would help us. They weren't small loaves that we have.

I wish you could see them. And these two loaves were baked with flour, but note the difference with leaven. Now if you go through all the meal offerings in scripture, you will see that leaven had to be excluded.

But in these two meal offerings, they're called meat offerings in my authorized version, they were bacon with leaven. Now why? When the Holy Spirit came upon the Lord Jesus, you remember he came upon him in the form of a dove. Now why? There was nothing in that life that was inconsistent with the holiness of God.

Please note, when God looked upon the sun, he never looked to see if there would be sin there. He only wanted to see there that which correspond with his own glory and he always found it. And it was a wonderful moment for the Almighty God when he said to the Lord Jesus, as he was coming from the waters of Jordan, this is my beloved son in whom I find all my delights.

A dove came upon him, the symbol of purity. But when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, he did not come upon them with a dove. Note the difference, a clove and tongue of fire.

Now why? The fire was there to expose the presence of the flesh. The fire was there to not only expose the presence of the flesh, but to show that he had been condemned through the sin offering. And the fire was there to give them the power to crucify the flesh.

There's one thing that you will never be able to do, improve your flesh life. There's only one thing you can do with it and that's what God did with it. On the cross, the Lord Jesus condemned it and he expects you in the power of the Spirit to crucify it.

And that means to say, would you mind if I said it with a loud voice? No. Every time it raises its head? No. And every time the sweet word of the Lord comes through the Spirit, say yes, yes.

And you'll live a victorious life. So can you see those loaves were baked with leaven to show that the flesh was in us to be judged in the power of the Spirit. But then you say two loaves.

Well, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and brought the Jewish believers into the one body and linked them up with the head. And then in Acts chapter 10, he came upon the Gentiles and brought them into the body and linked them up with the head so that there are no barriers at all. There is in God's sight an expression of that one body and every local church should express that one body in its locality.

So we can thank God for the day of Pentecost. It was fully come. And it's lovely to know it came at the end of the Sabbath.

And Mr. Newberry very beautifully puts the word in the plural as it's in the Greek. And it means the end of the old economy that started on Friday evening and finished on Saturday evening. As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week and the word week there is in the plural, it was a new age, a new dispensation, a new society, a new head.

Lovely to meet Sunday morning and remember the Lord on that new day that represents the new age. Well, let's have a look now at the 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.

Now, as far as I can tell in the Old Testament, I may be wrong. If someone can correct me, would you please do that after the meeting? There's only two occasions when the ark of God was found in a house. And that was mainly because of apostasy and disobedience.

In the Old Testament, there are pages on God's building program. First of all, in the tabernacle and the temple. And then you will note with God's building programs in the Old Testament, the place of meeting was divided into two.

There was the holy place and the holiest of all. And there was that mystical curtain called the veil to show that the way into his holy presence was not really open. It must have been a nail biting experience on the day of atonement when the high priest went in with his living garments, first of all, for his sins and the sins of the people.

And then he went in for the sins of the people in general, his own family. But now you will notice there is something here that's very strange. About roughly, I would say, 150 yards from this upper room, if I've got my geography right, there would be the outer wall of Herod's temple.

It would be the masterpiece of the world as far as building was concerned. There were seven buildings that they believe were masterpieces and one was Herod's temple. There would be the priest ministering in the holy place.

There would be the curtain that already had been split by God. But now it had been repaired, I wonder who repaired it. And when that Holy Spirit came, please note this, he missed all the confines of Judaism and he missed all the confines of Herod's temple.

And he came in a simple upper room. But was it simple? Why do you think it was called an upper room? The saints no doubt were gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus. It wasn't a meeting.

They were being drawn to the Lord Jesus in his absence. Why? Because they knew he was at God's right hand. And they were now waiting for the Holy Spirit to come to reveal all the glory of that heavenly temple.

You see, according to Hebrews, when the Lord Jesus went back to heaven, he pitched a tabernacle in heaven. And that's immeasurable. You don't measure that place by cubits.

It's heaven itself. And therefore the whole point of the Holy Spirit in coming was to take the saints and bring them into a real upper room and to bring them right into that heavenly sanctuary. And in that heavenly sanctuary, it's called the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Zion of God. There's an innumerable company of angels. There's the spirits of Jasmine made perfect there.

Wonderful. There's the church of the firstborn, that's General Assembly. You see, it's the most wonderful place in the universe, the house of God.

It's the spirit. Taking us from earth and bringing us into the glory of heaven. And if you look carefully, that's what the Ephesian epistle is all about.

And that's where Colossians is trying to bring us. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God and set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Therefore, when we are gathered together, the Holy Spirit will make the Lord Jesus absolutely real to us as we are here on earth.

But he doesn't want to stop there. He wants to take us by the hand and lead us right into heaven itself. Into that tabernacle that the Lord pitched and not me.

And brethren, when we get there, our eyes will be opened and all the glory we shall see. The victorious Christ, the upper room, the house. Then I want you to note the conditions that were relevant before he came.

They were of one accord. Now, here I feel is a mistake that some of us make, at least I make. Perhaps you make it with me.

Sometimes when I look at the acts of the apostles, I begin to feel, well, Lord, they're beyond us. That's first century Christianity. We can't face that.

We're in apostate state. The church is in ruins, says Mr. Darvish. And therefore, we've just got to muddle along.

Now, don't accept that. Just the week before the Lord Jesus died, they were caught arguing on five occasions. Who's going to be the greatest? On one occasion, the Lord called a little child and put him in the midst and said, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

What a rebuke. On another occasion, he took a towel and girded himself and washed their feet. Again, we must remember that theologically, they had problems.

They never really cottoned on to the atonement. Think of that. When the Lord Jesus said that he was going up to Jerusalem and he was going to die, and then he was going to be buried, and then he was going to rise again, they never understood it.

The enemies of the Lord understood it. That's why they had the stone sealed at the sepulcher. But just imagine a group of men not understanding the fundamental facts of our atonement.

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and he was buried, and then he rose again the third day. And when it came to the crunch, Mark tells us they all forsook him and fled. Were they super people? Were they? Of course not.

All those men knew what it was to be broken before the Lord. Now that's the group that he can bless. When God begins to bring his people to a point of humiliation and brokenness, that's the beginning of all revival.

And when they were there and they were deeply broken, you remember Peter wept his heart out. The Lord restored them in his grace. And then would you believe it, they had another problem.

On one occasion, according to 1 Corinthians 15, 500 saw him at once. But when it came to the upper room in chapter one, there were only 120. Where were the 380? Where were they? But I love this, you know.

The 120 were there and they were gathered together and the Holy Spirit came and they had a tremendous blessing. And to me, that's helpful. If there's just the remnant of God's people who are going the whole way, God will meet with them.

And 120 were met in that upper room. Then I want you to note now the symbols. First of all, it wasn't an actual rushing mighty wind because as you know, the word rushing and mighty basically means a tempest.

Not just the whirlwind, it means a violent wind. Now you would know more about this in Australia than we would know in England. A mighty unrivaled tempest.

For instance, we read in the Old Testament of a wind and we read of a mighty wind. We read once of a rushing wind, but only once a rushing mighty wind. Now it wasn't the actual wind, otherwise they would have been blown off their seats.

But it was the sound of a rushing mighty wind. So they were all met in this room and then they would hear this sound and the whine of the wind and the howling of the wind and it would just fill the whole room and it means three things. Number one, the presence of God was among them in a simple upper room.

But how profound it was upper. That blessed Holy Spirit wanted to take their hearts and bring them right into the glory of heaven. Now when the presence of God is really manifested, not when the theory is understood, but note what I'm saying, when the presence of God is really manifested among His people, what would be the evidences of that presence? First of all, a matchless sense of awe.

Let me say it and you'll grip the words. God among us, the glory of God here. Here, can I use Old Testament language? Yahweh, the mighty I am among His people and no division between the holy place and the holiest of all.

Oh, the wonder of it, the awe. Every person in the Old Testament that had a concept of God was immediately broken with awe. Abraham was watching his teraphims in the Ur of the Chaldees when the God of glory revealed Himself to him and he smashed all the teraphims in the presence of the God of glory.

Think of it. There in Genesis 17, the God of glory appears to him again and he falls prostrate in His presence. God before Abraham.

If you turn to that mighty man Moses that knew God more intimately than anyone in the Old Testament, when God revealed Himself at the burning bush, He took His sandals off and the man is almost humbled in the presence of the great I am. Again with Joshua, when he saw the captain of the Lord of hosts, it was not as it was to Moses, take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou stand is His holy ground, but take thy shoe from off thy foot. One foot was for possession, going in to possess the land.

The shod foot was to symbolize the very presence of God. And then what do we find? His prostrated before the Lord. Think of that vision that God gave to Isaiah when he fell into the dust and cried, woe is me for I am undone.

And when you come to the New Testament when the disciples were on the Mount of Transfiguration and they saw the insignia of divine majesty radiant from the face of the Lord Jesus, they fell into the dust. What a moment. They saw His majestic glory that will be seen when He comes the second time.

Again when John the Apostle who had often been with the Lord Jesus, and it seems to be his practice to put his head upon the breast of the master, when he saw Him glorified as the Son of Man, when he was on the Isle of Patmos, he fell to the ground as though he were dead. His eyes caught a glimpse of the glory of the Lord. Beloved, in the real New Testament assembly that's filled with the Spirit, there is that awe, God is among us.

We need to have that revived. You see, it's in that atmosphere where God is that unsafe people can come and sit among us and sense that they're in the presence of God, not in the presence of a preacher. That's vital.

Secondly, with the presence of God when it is manifested, there is peace. Let me say the word, peace. Can I say it again? Peace.

I'm not discussing now peace with God that comes through the blood of Christ that's legal, so that God can declare us righteous. That's a wonderful peace, that's essential, but it's more than that. I'm not even thinking of that experimental peace that keeps the mind like a sentry, keeping it from the inroads of the attack of the devil, so that we're not mentally disturbed.

The peace of God, which is far better than all understanding, but I'm thinking of the God of peace being with us. Now, what does that mean? The word peace in the Hebrew, so the scholars inform me, speaks of binding together. Now, what does that mean? If you look very carefully at the structure and the philosophy of sin, and especially as you look at the mechanics of it, you will see that sin always disintegrates.

Let me explain. Man is body, soul, and spirit, and before he sinned, God communed with man through his spirit that moved through his soul and out through his body, and that's a man of a high degree. When sin came in, the spirit part of man was still there, the installation was there, but it was dead.

And so man was disintegrated. He was soul, he was body, but the spirit was dead, and he was robbed, in a brutal way, that moment. If you look at society carefully, God loves to bind husband and wife together in an unbreakable bond, doesn't he? Dare I say it? That physical union that's so beautiful between husband and wife shows that you're a one and one forever.

It also shows to the New Testament Christian the beautiful union between Christ and the church. That act should always be sacred, and when it's sacred, it brings fulfillment. But the devil is breaking that up all over the world, isn't he? We can see it.

That he loves people to be gathered together in a family capacity. God loves families, but the devil is disintegrating families, so the young and old will not mix together. And when you walk through the streets of London, when you go through the city, you see, and this breaks me, thousands of early and late teenagers smashed forever because of broken lives, broken families, and there are thousands hurting all over the world because we have smashed up God's creatorial order.

What a mess we're in. But in the assembly of God's people, there should be the binding together. Got it? Peace.

Making you whole as a person, body, soul, and spirit. Binding husband and wife together, but more than that. Linking us together through the glorious baptism of the spirit.

I'm quoting from 1 Corinthians 12. So that we're a body-life fellowship, bound together in love. That's peace.

Isn't it a wonderful thing for unsaved people to come among us and say, there's a piece here that I can't buy in a chemist shop. It's the peace of God reigning in the local church. Secondly, in the local church where God's presence is manifested, there should be joy.

Can I repeat that? Joy. You know, David knew something of this. He says, in thy presence, there is the fullness of joy.

At thy right hand, pleasures forevermore. Now, he wasn't thinking of what happens to a saint when he dies. Of course, he enters into joy.

He was speaking of the present joy of the Lord in his presence. You know, there is an expression in the Old Testament. I'm almost afraid to use it because it can be abused.

It is the happy God. Happy God. Now, we'll get the balance in a moment.

But if you go through the Psalms, especially the Psalms of David, you will find many of them where he is in elation because of worship. He's absolutely raptured by the presence of God. Again, I shall be very careful what I say, but when he brought back the Ark in the Levitical way, what did he do? He danced with all his might before the Ark of the Lord.

What does that mean? He had spiritual ecstasy, and he had spiritual movement in the presence of the Lord. When we come to the New Testament, the moment the Lord Jesus was born, all the angels were full of holy joy. Listen to them.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and goodwill to men. Again, the Lord Jesus, in that terrible rejection chapter, where he gave judgment upon Israel, he was able to rejoice in spirit. Oh, I wish I could give you the meaning of that word.

His heart was elated with holy joy. And he says, I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed it to babes. Then you'll remember in John 15, he speaks of his love being with us, he speaks of his word, and he speaks of his joy being bequeathed to us, the joy of the Lord.

But we must admit that when he was going to the cross, he was known as a man of sorrows. But when he came from the cross, he said two words, all hail, all rejoice. Do you remember when the disciples saw him on that resurrection evening? Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord? When you go through the book of the Acts, Acts chapter two, they were praising God, having favor with the people, and the Lord added to the church's failure such as should be said.

When you come to Acts chapter 13, especially the church in Antioch, they were filled with the spirit and with joy. When you go through the Philippian epistle, I was going through it the other day, and to my surprise, and I use many inflections, 18 times the person uses the word rejoice and joy. And the man who wrote that was in prison chained to two soldiers.

And then he finishes almost the epistle, and then he gives a postscript. He says, again I say unto you, rejoice in the Lord. And then he uses another again, again I say, rejoice in the Lord.

But when you come to the revelation, now note this, every scene in heaven is marked by joy. And every scene on earth, apart from the last two chapters, is marked by sorrow. But you see joy.

Now beloved, may I share this with you? Before the war, in the ascenders in England, you got that joy in the meeting. All over London when brethren stood up and waved the glories of the Lord, you would hear all over the company, Amen, praise the Lord, glory to God. The elders used to sit on the platform when the gospel was being preached on Sunday night, and they would amen the brother all the time he was preaching.

That's when souls were being regularly saved. You would go to the back room just before a gospel meeting, and you would walk in, and you would see 40 or 50 brethren all on their knees, praying to God, hitting the chair, praying fervently. That's all gone.

In fact, now if you say hallelujah in a breaking of bread service, they look round and they say, charismatic. And we've given all the hallelujahs and praise the Lord to the charismatics. And we rheumatics, we have a few grunts.

Now my dear friends, when we really get into the joy of the Lord, he will really bless us. But now we don't want an emotional joy. Notice what he says, rejoice in the Lord.

You see, the more you study the offerings, and especially when you get to the drink offering, which speaks of joy in the presence of God, your heart will be filled with holy joy in the presence of the Lord. Now can you see we're building up what this spirit-filled church is all about? Then you will notice, lastly, with the presence of God, when manifested, there's love. Now love is not an attribute of God.

God is love. There are two opposites in the nature of God seemingly. God is light, God is love.

And when God's presence is manifested, there is a manifestation of love. Now what kind of love? It's that love that the Greeks knew very little about, the agape love. Now what was that love? That love was manifested on the cross in two ways.

When man had committed the greatest vulgarity of all in crucifying the Son of God, he made all that butchery and all that wickedness with those wonderful words, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. He never said, I forgive them. Do you know why? There was never any bitterness in his heart.

He was thinking of the Father. Father, forgive them. Then when he was on the cross, he let out that great orphan cry with a loud voice, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And at that moment, that was the fullest manifestation of divine love that could ever be possibly demonstrated.

But we mustn't stop there. Paul tells us in Romans 5, now note this, hope makes not ashamed because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. That means the Holy Spirit takes the seed form of Calvary's love and sows it in your heart.

An agape love is now resident within us. Now in a New Testament church that has recaptured New Testament power, when the Holy Spirit is unquenched, that local church should be filled with holy love. Now I want to ask a question.

Can you think of anything more beautiful and more wonderful and more majestic than the house of God, the awe of his presence, the peace of his presence, the joy of his presence, the love of his presence? Now

I can almost hear a practical brother saying, brother Peter, we've never known anything of this. This is all new and strange to us. Do you know why? For years, we have been away from first love and God wants to bring us back to first love Christianity.

You know, I wish I had time to reprint what W.W. Faraday told me about the early assemblies in 1864. What Samuel Rogers told me of the movements of the Spirit of God in London in 1864. I wish I could read out a pamphlet that I've just discovered on the manifestations of the power of God that were experienced in London during the 1859 revival.

We would realize how we have slowly drifted from the real presence of God and we need to get back to it. Now with the presence of God, and I won't keep you much longer, there is the presidency of the Holy Spirit and I'm not going to speak much about this because our dear brother Mr. Hill gave us a wonderful exposition on that and the notes are all at hand and I think we should read them. We need the Lord not only present among us but president among us so he is in control.

But may I say this quickly. There are as you know in the scripture the gifts of the Spirit that is something supernatural in a man. There are the gifts of the risen Lord such as the apostle and the prophets and then those that are relevant today, the evangelist and their teacher and the pastor.

Now these are not manifestations in a man but these are men themselves. For instance, an evangelist is a man. Not something in a man, the man.

All that the man is, God gives that man to the church. A teacher is a man and he gives him to the church. And a pastor, whether it's linked with a teacher it doesn't matter, we're not going to argue that point tonight, but the pastor is a man.

Now this is our big problem. We're all clear about the evangelist that he travels and preaches the gospel. But when it comes to our teachers, very rarely do they teach in their own local church.

And that's the place where they should teach. So if God raises up three teachers, let each teacher submit to the other. Let each wash one another's feet so there's no jealousy.

That's very important. And let them function in the local church. But what happens, I'm sure this is the same here.

We have teachers in our local church and what happens? They're in Scotland, they're in Wales, they're in the south of England. And they hardly do any teaching in their local church. Now is that scriptural? And what happens if they're gifted men? They're away from their wife and family and there's great suffering.

Now when God raises up teachers, let them teach in the local church. Now this is not one man ministry, that would be wrong. But this is using the gifts that God has given in your local church so that the body might be edified.

And beloved, if we had churches like that, we would become strong and powerful for God. Because it's the gift that God has raised up in your local church that's functioning. Now that's all I can say there, but perhaps we can discuss that together individually.

And then lastly, in the local church there should not only be the manifested presence, the manifested presidency, but the manifested power. Now in the book of the Acts, if you go through it carefully, you will

see the moment the Holy Spirit came and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and the company was filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter stood up and preached. And obviously he preached an extemporaneous message.

And I want to say this without the fear of contradiction, that is the greatest message that we have in the Bible, apart from Acts 7. It is a brilliant message and if you look at it carefully, the centrality of it is Christ, his death, burial and resurrection. There is no appeal from Peter, but whilst he is preaching, they were pricked in the heart. Now that's an awful word.

It's the idea, so the scholars tell me, of a red hot needle going into the sensitive part of the flesh so that the patient says, oh, you know what it's like when you're having an injection with a bad nurse and she can't find a vein. There's a few squawks that come from the people or the patient. No, when Peter preached, they were so pricked in their heart that they cried out, men and brethren, what shall we do? And we know from the scripture that 3,000 were saved and 3,000 were baptised and 3,000 were added to the church.

Now that's power. Now, then we go into the next chapter and we discover that they're going up to the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour and they meet a lame man and the man is miraculously healed and the people come round the beautiful gate and he preaches again. Now notice this, 5,000 men were saved.

Now that's power. That's the rushing mighty wind in operation. Then we come to a prayer meeting and when they had prayed, now note this, the place was shaken where they were assembled together.

What does that mean? Well, it means the Lord was in heaven. It means the Holy Spirit was on earth and he was revealing the glory of the Lord and so he gave them a demonstration. He shook the place to show to them the power of prayer.

That's power. Then we come to the fifth chapter and we find two hypocrites. The whole church was saying, I surrender all, but there were two keeping half back and they were smitten with death.

That's the presence and the power of God. You can't hide sin in the house of God. Then we come to the eighth chapter and the church goes, because of persecution, to Samaria and they went everywhere preaching the gospel and Philip went down to Samaria and preached and the whole city believed.

Then in Acts chapter nine, there's a light from heaven, there's a voice from heaven and Saul of Tarsus is converted. And in Acts chapter 10, Peter's praying, Cornelius is praying and he's sent to the house of Cornelius and he preaches and the Holy Ghost shall anoint them that heard the word. And then in Acts 13, the gospel goes to the uttermost part of the earth and thousands upon thousands are saying, ah, but you say that's the first century and probably, Peter, we shall never get back to the first century.

But the Holy Spirit's the same. Can I repeat that? The Holy Spirit's the same. Now I want to witness what I've seen and I want to show you that it's the same Holy Spirit working today.

In the year 1925, Fred Elliot went and preached the gospel in Aberdeen to a small assembly, just 60. He was there for a month and 300 were saved, 300 were baptized and 300 were added to the church. And within a month, there were 360 saints.

1925. Then that same preacher went to London and he preached in Folkestone Road and after three weeks, there were 120 saved and 120 were baptized and 120 added to the church. And from that one

assembly, I believe 10 assemblies started.

All within 10 years. Then in 1925, he went to Merion Hall and he preached and there were so many getting saved, they couldn't deal with them at night. And so there was an announcement made to all those that wanted to be saved, would you please come to Merion Hall from 12 to 2. And there was a queue of people lining up to be saved every day.

And all over Britain, there were tents. Now note this. There was a 3,000 seater tent in Cardiff and on Sunday nights, there were more people outside than inside.

A 2,000 seater tent in Liverpool, a 1,000 seater tent there in Glasgow, a 1,000 seater tent in the month of April in Aberdeen. And this went on for years. A 1,000 seater tent in London, a 1,000 seater tent there in the south of England.

And the whole of England was being shaken with the preaching of the Gospel. But what has happened? Now can I share it with you? We've gone asleep. We've all got on materially.

We're all very comfortable. And the spirit of Laodicea has come among us. Now beloved, we need to recapture again the presence of the Lord.

We need to recapture again the presidency of the Holy Ghost and give the reins to Him. We need to recapture local gift, building up the local church. We need to recapture the power of the spirit among us.

And beloved, we can see blessing. Do you know they keep telling me this and with this I close. Australia's never had a revival, but it can see one.

Do you know I believe there's more hope for Australia than for England? That's why I've come here. And I'm expecting one or two assemblies to get low before the Lord and recapture all that we've lost. Recapture His presence, His presidency, His power.

And oh, it moves me. Some of you young men He wants to anoint with the power of the spirit so that you become preachers. And you have teachers here, men of God, that can be used mightily to feed the flock of God.

And I know you have the leaders that will give themselves wholly to the Lord so that you become spiritual pastors. And remember, you never give a live child to a dead mother. You always give live children to living mothers.

And we need those assemblies where the light of the spirit's seen and then we are seen mighty blessing. May this time be a time when God will light the fire again.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32350.mp3>

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