

# The Spirit of the Gospel (Isa. Lxi: 1-2)

by Seth Rees

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of having an aggressive and progressive spirit in spreading the good news of the gospel to all classes of people.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 11:30, Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 9:37, Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:15, Luke 4:18, Luke 14:23, Romans 10:15, James 1:27

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Gospel Ministry"

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## Description

Seth Rees preaches about the spirit of Christ and His gospel, emphasizing the need for His followers to be aggressive and evangelistic, always seeking to spread the good news to the meek, broken-hearted, captives, and those in need of comfort. He highlights the importance of not settling in comfort but constantly moving to reach more people with the gospel, echoing the spirit of Jesus who was always about His Father's business. Rees stresses the gospel of 'good tidings' as a message of hope, joy, and liberation, urging believers to carry this message to all classes, especially the poor and broken-hearted, to bring renewal and restoration to their lives.

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## Transcript

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." (Isa. 61, 1-2.)

These words not only express the spirit of Christ but the spirit of His gospel and of all those who are truly His followers. Just at the time when through the healing of the sick, the casting out of devils, and the blessing everybody in sight, Christ was about to become popular in a certain locality, the disciples came to him and said, "All men seek for thee." He answers, "Let us rise up and go to the next city; it is time to be leaving" and on He went from city to city, from village to village, and from hamlet to hamlet, until within two years and a half He had walked through all the villages and towns of Galilee, Samaria and Judea preaching the gospel everywhere. There have been a great many preachers who thought that the fact that certain localities received them well and wanted them to stay was an evidence that their work was there. Christ said, "It is time to be going." The spirit of the gospel and its author is that of evangelizing, is aggressive. The apostle Paul, the greatest warrior of all the past, pressed on to the regions beyond, and said, "Let us forget the things that are behind." This is the Spirit that actuated Christ and when they made

it comfortable for Him in any locality He was thinking about some other village, some other town, or some other city, or some other country. No doubt Martha and Mary made it very comfortable for Jesus. No doubt they were delighted to have Him. There were times when He had no place to lay His head, and spent the nights in the mountains, but He was always welcome in the home of Mary and Martha, and yet He did not spend much time there. He journeyed from place to place, from city to city. He was about His Father's business. It is easy for us to stay with our friends. It is not always easy to get up and go among strangers. There is a tendency these times to settle down with comfort, with ease, with the people that love us, but the spirit of the gospel is aggressive and progressive and, hence, must either evangelize or crystallize and fossilize. People who have the spirit of the Master are everlastingly thinking about somebody else; another village, another hamlet, another humble home, another broken heart, another wrecked and ruined life; and when we get the spirit of Jesus we can hardly be content anywhere except in the blessing of humanity and the publishing of the glorious gospel of "good tidings."

Let us remember this morning, beloved, that while there are times when it is proper for us to come together and celebrate, and derive assistance from each other, the time will soon come for us to scatter; we will have to be going; we must get into the regions beyond and find those to whom the Lord wants us to carry this great message. There is something about Pentecost that, while it unites, it always scatters; if by no other means, by that of persecution. When the early Church received the Holy Ghost they soon received persecution enough to drive them everywhere, and under persecution some bold and daring spirits crossed the boundary lines and rushed over into ancient Britain and Germany and gave our ancestors the gospel and we are here this morning in this Tabernacle instead of sacrificing human lives in heathendom because somebody was persecuted, somebody crossed the boundary lines and pressed into the regions beyond, somebody left home with all that was near and dear to them that we might have the privileges we enjoy today. Our ancestors were not only idol worshipers but often mingled their worship with the shedding of human blood:

Do we owe anything? Have we any debt we ought to pay? Certainly it is for us who know the Holy Ghost and understand the spirit of the Master to realize that we are under obligations to carry the glad tidings, not only to our neighbors and friends, but to all the world. Somebody brought it to us, and we must take it to others. The spirit of our Master is of that push, that aggressive forward march which has always characterized the deeply spiritual. He would say to this congregation this morning, "Go forward." It is the watch-word of the gospel in all time. Let the people rise up and pitch their tents in other fields. Your daughters must find their crowns in the slums. Your sons will find their thrones under the burning sun and on the sandy plains of foreign fields; and if ever we keep step with the spirit of my text we will walk and walk until we have fulfilled all that Jesus has planned for us. Yes, it is easier to stay with your relatives and friends but it may be better to turn your backs upon them and go out, "not knowing whither you go." Many preachers stay three years, four years, five years, because they are liked by the congregation they still hang on. Many a time they had better be up and gone. One of our greatest needs is this aggressive spirit of Jesus. Press out, press up, follow the water courses, and the ravines; seek the mountains, the slums; seek the jungles, and seek the lost everywhere. This prophecy is unquestionably the prophecy of the Son of man. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek."

This gospel is one of "good tidings." Our mission is much the same as that of our Master. If He was commissioned to preach "good tidings," so are we. I hope the Lord will somehow turn His hand upon us and preserve us from an unhappy presentation of the bone and skull side of the gospel until the people will

be frightened from it. Of course there are things to endure, there is reproach, there will be persecution, but for all that it is a gospel of "good tidings." The most glorious news that was ever carried into the world is this gospel of the Son of God. Then if it should bring some privation, it carries with it such good cheer, such sunshine, such flowers, such sweet perfume, such blessing of every kind that we almost forget our trials. We may weep or groan but we end up with a shout. We suffer but we rejoice. We are sorrowful yet always glad. We are in tribulation but never hurt. Our sorrows never hinder us. There is something about the gospel that is good tidings and I hope we will keep preaching the mellow side of this gospel, for I have failed to find that Christ was ever severe except with hypocrites and church members who ought to have known better and were deceiving the people. His great heart of compassion was always deeply touched at the sight of suffering, and this gospel is a gospel of good things. Brother, when we come to you with this gospel you ought not to look down your nose, you ought not to look sad, you ought to look up and say, "Glory to God."

We often preach this gospel to people and at first they look sad. We tell them a little more and they begin to cry; and we keep on talking and they begin to scream, and they treat the subject as though it was something greatly to be dreaded. O, beloved, this gospel which has been deposited with us as His followers is His everlasting and most profound commission ever given to man. It is a gospel of glad news declaring the "acceptable year of the Lord." It is the jubilee, the fiftieth year. It is to end bondage, to end servitude, to put an end forever to all slavery. It is complete victory through Jesus Christ.

I love to preach this gospel because it helps people, it lifts their load and chases away their clouds, it seems to almost sing their sorrow into oblivion. I know people; I am intimately acquainted with them; I know they suffer but no one would ever suspect it in the public assemblies of the people. Their sorrow is hidden away and their joy, sunshine and smiles abound. So I want you to tell the people that this gospel brings good cheer. If it brings you a little persecution He will pour in the intoxication, the wine of the kingdom until you will hardly feel it. He will make you so drunk that while people are despising you and saying all manner of evil against you, you will rejoice and be exceeding glad. O, glory to God!

The next thought that I want to put especial emphasis upon is the fact that this gospel is for all classes. Especially for the poor, the common people, the neglected, the people who are down and cannot get up. The people who are held in disrepute by the world and the worldly churches. They are the people that we are to cheer. Thank God for a gospel that will cheer folks the darkest night that ever was! It is awfully dark in this country. All about us people are feeling their way. One or two in a church, or two or three in a community. Common people, honest souls who are looking for light. Thank God we are commissioned to preach the gospel of "good tidings" to them.

Again, "He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted." You know we are inclined to suppose that things and people are as they seem. They are not. Nobody is as they seem to be until they are sanctified wholly. You meet people on the street and engage in conversation with them, and they will not disclose a single trace of the fact that they are broken hearted, but before they are two blocks from you, their breasts may be heaving with the deepest sorrow. There is a way that this world has of covering up the fact that it is broken hearted. People assume a frivolous and lighthearted exterior, many times to cover up conviction, and their appearance of being without trouble is only to hide awful sorrow. Not only is this true among the poor but in palatial homes, on boulevards and avenues, in every station in life there are broken-hearted people with heart aches and sorrows untold. Family difficulties that never can be healed but by the gospel of the Son of God, and if we do not carry this message to them their lives will be wrecked forever. We are commissioned this morning as servants of God, to preach this gospel to the broken-hearted. O, the

sorrows that we meet in the slums, in the hotels, in the holes and hovels and cellars and garrets! The people who are tired of life; the people who are on the very verge of suicide! A gospel of cheer is their only salvation. That man who met with financial reverses and went and jumped into the lake might have been saved if he had heard this gospel. That woman who put an end to her life because she was disappointed would never have been disappointed if she had heard these good tidings. Ah, there is power in the gospel to bind up the brokenhearted, to renew ruined and wrecked lives, to restore the joy and sunlight of God's eternal grace to the soul until life is worth living and we will be glad to live it for other people.

The dear man in Chicago was in the employ of the great Northwestern Railway Company. He met with many reverses. Sickness fastened itself upon him. He went to the hospital. After some weeks returned to his job. Was again taken down and sent to the hospital a second and third time. He was finally told that he must go to a higher altitude. His money was almost gone but being a railroad man, his pass was secured to Denver. Before he could recover strength a telegram announced the serious illness of his family. He returned home without health and without money, and it is well known that when a man's money is gone his friends are scare. His family was sick, his rent was due. His children were hungry. The only thing he had left in the world was a life insurance policy. He said: "I will give my family the benefit of this," and started to the lake intending to commit suicide. When within about three blocks of the lake he was passing the church where we were holding a convention. He heard the singing. He stood on the side walk and mused. There was a great struggle going on in his breast. Only three blocks away was the lake, and the morgue. Up one flight of stairs was gospel singing. He first thought that he would go in, and then remembered that his family were hungry. He said: "No, I will hurry to the lake." What an awful conflict was going on between the powers of darkness and the Spirit of God. He finally said, "I will go upstairs and listen to this singing before I go down to the dock." I will not soon forget that hour. He threw himself down in a pew in the very rear end of the church, and as he threw his head down on the back of the pew in front of him and listened, he heard a gospel of good cheer. The Spirit of God seized him with awful conviction. When the altar call was made he came forward, yielded himself to God and was gloriously saved. He returned home with money enough to pay his rent and give his family a square meal. He soon brought his wife to the church and she was saved. Soon after he sought the baptism with the Holy Ghost and was sanctified wholly. He erected a family altar in a Christian home. He heard about divine healing and was anointed according to the fifth of James. Jesus healed his body. He returned to his employment, and a more cheerful, happy home you will seldom find. This is a sample of what a gospel of good cheer will do wherever preached.

I want to remind you this morning that you do not know when you stand upon a street corner, or under a brush arbor, or in the pulpit, or in the mission to preach this gospel, who is listening to you. It may be somebody who is dying for salvation. Somebody who has reached his extremity. Thank God, if you will faithfully preach this gospel you will help people.

Little did I dream when Abe McPeak sat in the back pew so heavy hearted that he could not hold up his head, afraid and ashamed to look up, that we had in the audience such a character, such possibilities. The gospel is the same every where. God spoke to him on that back seat and sent the gospel at the right time to save him from a life of sin. You heard his testimony last Sunday night. God has saved, sanctified and kept him until the police officers have been forced to acknowledge that his whole life has been changed and transformed. And they have been forced to take his photograph out of all the rogue's galleries in the country. You are continually rubbing up against people whom you will never meet again in a life time. You will never cross their path again. You will never have but one opportunity. If you do not have this gospel of

good news with you, you may lose the chance of your life. God help the young preachers and evangelists, you are called to proclaim the glad tidings, to preach every time as if it were your last time, and your only chance to rescue men from sin and hell. O, thank God for the broken hearts that have been healed!

One November night a broken-hearted, disappointed, friendless, hopeless and homeless girl stood at the door of our Rescue Home in Chicago with a six weeks old infant in her arms and asked admission. Of course she was taken in, but as soon as she came under the power of this gospel there was such a transformation, such a change of heart and life, such a change in her spirit in every way that today she is a charming, sanctified, Christian girl. She would grace any church in the land and this gospel of good news did it. O I wish we knew the power! I am sure we would not pass the hard cases by, for there are no cases too hard for this gospel of good tidings.

I am greatly burdened this morning that we may go from this camp meeting not to look for splendid things, not to look for favor either of the world, or of the church, but to look for souls. Hunt them out; run them down. Ask God to give you a nose that will scent hungry, saveable souls. Let us ask God to save time by putting us on the track of people who want salvation, instead of spending so much time upon those who will never get it. I am constantly coming in contact with hungry souls, and for years there has been an understanding between the Lord and myself, that I am not to go any where to hold meetings where there are no hungry people. It has been years since God has allowed me to go into a single locality where I have not witnessed a revival, a few souls saved at least. You say there are places where you can not have a revival. Well, if there are I trust God to keep me away from them. I have been wonderfully blessed in finding the places where wean have revivals. I would not stay in a place, either as pastor or evangelist, where we could not have a revival, but would trust God to put me on the track of dying souls who would accept the truth. Life is short; our opportunities will soon be in the past; our chances will be no more. If we are going to rescue people from sin and hell we must do it quickly. Thank God we are commissioned to proclaim "liberty to the captives;" to undo the heavy burdens.

O there are burdened people here this morning! Some of you are carrying burdens that will hump your back and kill you finally if Jesus does not unbind them. When sanctified people are so burdened that they can not rest, He rests them. When you can not bear another thing the Lord comes in and He bears your burdens, lifts your loads, relieves and rests you, and you rejoice in the fact that He came for that very purpose. Brother, let Him carry your load. If I would carry mine I would go to the coffin box in a hurry. Sister, unload on Him. Brother, there is nothing so dark in your life but Jesus can help you. It may be something you can hardly unbosom to your dearest friend, but Jesus knows about it, and He came to unbind and release and set free every burdened soul. Glory be to God forever! O this gospel is our commission. Let us preach it everywhere. Let us preach to those who are in prison, in bondage to appetite, in bondage to lust, lust for money, lust for the world, lust for fame; the people who love this world and yet wish they could get away from it.

Why, a wealthy man in Nebraska spent hours with me in a recent camp meeting, telling me how he loved money, and hated himself for loving it, but was powerless to help it. He is bound. He is the son of a banker, born with the lust for money. He said to me, "I despise this mercenary spirit; but how am I to get rid of it?" Thank God, I could tell him. There is a gospel that unbinds, that sets free. When you get this Blessing you can write checks just like you drink water. You can bless the poor, you can help the fallen, you can nurse the sick, you can go any where, do anything for Jesus when you get this Blessing. Beloved, don't forget that this world is dying for this gospel. In the jungles, on the great thoroughfares of life, people are crowding their way through and hastening to the judgment. If we give them the "good tidings" we will

have to hurry. "The opening of the prison to them that are bound." If ever He turned the apostles out of prison, He is turning men out of prison these days. Deliverance from the stocks, chains, or the guards, is no more real than is the deliverance from sin.

Many a time I stop and celebrate my deliverance from prison. Well do I remember the chains that bound me. Well do I remember the stocks on my feet. Well do I remember the ring that was on my tongue, and the bondage in which I lived. Thank God, every chain fell off! My feet and hands and tongue were loosed, the prison door was opened, and I walked out in the society of angels. Thousands of people of whom you have thought but little, are in the same condition today. Well do I remember of spending a whole Sunday in the woods alone, after a hilarious night in sin, as heartbroken and homeless as I felt I believe if there had been a saint there to turn some old log into a mourner's bench and gotten me down on my knees, I would have been saved. But saints were very rare in that country. But few ever spoke to me about my soul. I did not know there was a better way. So when I walked away from sin, heartbroken, sick and nervous, there was nothing to-do but to stray off alone and weep my sorrow out with myself. Had I known such a Christ as this I would have turned to Him. There are multitudes today in the same condition. They are as savable as I was; they are worth as much in the sight of God as any one, and we must give them a chance before they drop into the pit.

Notice, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me" to preach this gospel especially to the poor, to the masses. O my heart yearns over the bums and thugs, tramps and homeless men, who are down and cannot get up; over the harlots and jail birds who have lost every thing and do not dream that there is a ray of hope. How my heart yearns over the three thousand fallen women in this country; the one hundred thousand men, women and children in prisons, jails and workhouses. The one hundred thousand bootblacks; the one hundred thousand newsboys; and two million and a half of homeless men. Many of the homeless, worthless, hopeless men have come from the best of families; are graduates from colleges and universities; have filled places of trust and honor, but sin has brought them down to the depths. The gospel is their only hope. There are thousands of poor waifs and friendless children for whom nobody has ever prayed in particular -- not once. They are some mother's child, but nobody knows their name today except as "Jack," "Dick" "Bob," or some such nick name. There are hundreds of street urchins living on garbage and apple cores, any thing they can pick up. Some of them live by gathering cigar and cigarette butts. They might be saved. There are not many to do it. The holiness fighting preacher will not do it. The churches of these times seem to have forgotten the poor. It requires money to secure a pew in the modern church, but there is a little boot-black down there you might pray and weep over until God saves him and sends him out to preach the gospel. Some who have been saved from houses of shame are so burdened for others who are where they used to be that they can hardly eat or sleep. God has rescued them and they feel that they must rescue others. This is why Jessie, who was saved from a life of sin in New York, could not rest until she had preached this gospel in the houses of sin until hundreds and hundreds had received this message. At the age of twenty-six she had spent thirteen years in street life. She said, "My people are in bondage, I must declare this gospel of good news to them."

Never am I more affected than when in Harrison Police Station in Chicago, than when listening to Brother F. preach to the prisoners there. A little more than a year ago he was in the same condition; occupying one of those same cells, but one day one of our slum missionaries, a messenger of light, extended her hand through the bars and offered to take his hand, but he ordered her to leave his cell-door; fortunately she had received the Holy Ghost, and instead of leaving she sank down in the filth on that stone floor and prayed for his salvation. She wept and prayed until she had the assurance that he would be saved. God

touched his heart so that he received a card announcing the place of our meetings, and promised that when he was released he would come to the services. The promise was made to get rid of the missionary. A few days latter putting his hand in his pocket for a piece of tobacco he found the card which reminded him of his promise. A liquor dealer had paid his fine. He was walking the street with only ten cents in his pocket, had no place to go, so came to the service. It was that very night this gospel reached him, and at the altar in floods of tears, and cries of penitence, he was gloriously saved. He was a bar-tender, a pugilist, a drunkard; he could demand large pay because of his skill in mixing fine drinks. That night he was saved; it seemed almost to good to be true. He went out that February night into a dark alley just back of the church, and kneeled down in several inches of snow and slush and prayed, and this washes prayer, " O God, if this is true, if I am converted, and you mean for me to live a Christian life, take away this appetite, for rum and tobacco," and like a flash the appetites were gone.

O that God will help us to see the possibilities of this gospel! The possibilities are limitless, they are boundless; let us rise up and preach it. Let us receive the Holy Ghost. Let us getaway from our own interests, from our own selfishness, and help and bless some body else.

Do you know the worst I wish for some of you is that you would come to this altar and get so saved that you would never come to another altar while you live; so that you would never feel your pulse again to see if you have got the experience? There is a place beyond searching; there is a place beyond researching, beyond going for another baptism; a place where if Gabriel, himself, would come and tell you to search, you would look him straight in the two eyes and say, "Glory to God!"

Why do I wish you such a blessing? It will put you perfectly at leisure from yourself. You will give no more precious time to tinkering with the running gear of your soul; no more time spent thumping yourself to see if you have the blessing. Glory to God, you will have all your time to rescue men and women from sin and shame! Imagine Paul, who said, "it is no more I" spending days and weeks searching and examining his own experience. Ye are dead. There is no more "I" to examine. There is not "I" enough to examine; not "I" enough to search. It is "no more I." It is Christ, and Christ says He has anointed me, He has commissioned me to preach the gospel to this dying world. People come to me and say "I want to go into the slum work." I ask them, "Are you sanctified wholly?" and before they have had time to answer they have answered. Their very hesitation is an answer. The Lord wants us to get done with ourselves and with our own interests, and have all our time to weep and pray over the lost.

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