

The Holy Spirit - Part 1

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the essential role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers and the church to fulfill God's divine purpose.

Duration: 58:55

Scripture: Zechariah 4:6-14, Matthew 6:33, John 16:13, John 17:14-16, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the prophecies of Zechariah, specifically chapter 4. The passage describes a vision of a golden candlestick with seven lamps and two olive trees. The preacher emphasizes the importance of understanding the symbolism in the vision, particularly the significance of the Holy Spirit's power. He highlights the need for believers to rely on the Holy Spirit's power rather than their own strength or abilities. The sermon concludes with a reminder that believers are God's greatest miracle and should not take their faith for granted.

Transcript

The familiar passage of scripture in the fourth chapter of the prophecies of Zechariah. Prophecies of Zechariah chapter four. The angel that talked with me came again and waked me as a man that is wakened out of his sleep and he said unto me what seest thou? And I said I have seen and behold a candlestick all of gold with its bowl upon the top of it and its seven lamps thereon.

There are seven pipes to each of the lamps which are upon the top thereof and two olive trees by it one upon the right side of the bowl and the other upon the left side thereof. And I answered and speak to the angel that talked with me saying what are these my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me knowest thou not what these be? And I said no my lord. Then he answered and speak unto me saying this is the word of the lord unto Zerubbabel saying not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the lord of hosts who art thou oh great mountain before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings of great grace unto it.

Moreover the word of the lord came unto me saying the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house his hands shall also finish it and thou shalt know that the lord of hosts hath sent me unto you for who hath despised the day of small things for they shall rejoice and shall see the plummet and the hand of Zerubbabel even these seven which are the eyes of the lord they run to and through through the whole earth hardly fail to link with that 10th verse the so familiar words of act 1 8 ye shall receive power when the

holy spirit is come upon you not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the lord of hosts power by the holy spirit thing which we all feel the need of perhaps more than anything else the thing which the church of god needs more than anything else the

declaration is made by the lord himself ye shall receive when the holy spirit is come upon you by my spirit saith the lord of hosts if as is so much the case we are conscious of powerlessness of our weakness and of the weakness of the people of god generally of the church in this world it is useless to bemoan the weakness and deplore the lack of power the need is to inquire why it is to discover the causes the reasons the meaning for evidently it's not the lord's will it's contrary to his own declared intention for his people when israel met that great set back at ai after jericho joshua prostrated himself before the lord and cried unto the lord the lord in effect said to joshua in defeat and failure it is useless to cry unto me the thing to do is to find out why to investigate the reason

i can't do anything the lord virtually said however much you cry i can do nothing until you have laid your hand upon the cause brought it to light when you've done that and the thing is exposed and dealt with then the obstacle is removed and we can go on and the power of further mighty conquest can be renewed and restored and so it does become necessary in a day of defeat and limitation and weakness loss and lack of power to find out why now we are not going to spend a lot of time on uncovering the faults failures wrongs that may be in us or in the church but there are some things which in a general way would be well to take note of as those of us who feel the situation most acutely and in our responsibility for the lord's interests and the lord's people think about the situation and

about the matters of the people of god some things do press upon our consciousness and recognition that may be profitable to mention here this evening and i feel that i shall find a considerable amount of agreement when i say perhaps the greatest or amongst the greatest of our needs the needs of the people of god in our own time now and even here is a new apprehension and appreciation of the great basic realities of our life and position as christians our second hymn this evening contains some of the most wonderful things of which it is possible for man to conceive when you went through that hymn singing it i have no doubt with all good meaning and heart i wondered how much we were alive to the tremendous things that were passing through our lips no spot of guilt on me remains a mere

fragment in a long hymn but what a mighty thing for any mortal human part of this creation to say no spot of guilt on me remains while jesus loved throughout see what i mean i feel dear friends that we take so much for granted almost as a matter of course it has become so familiar so often repeated and yet it is true it is true that true and genuine believers born from above believers children of god are god's mightiest miracle in everyone is the embodiment of the greatest things that ever god has done only to run our fingers over the features and factors of our faith our christian doctrine mention them one by one and in every single instance and aspect we are dealing with we are in the presence of an immensity that will take all eternity all eternity the ages of the ages to comprehend

everyone again we are not going to do that we could think back into the eternal councils and find ourselves in that foreknowledge for ordination predestined chosen in christ before the foundation of the world can you comprehend that i say it will take all eternity to encompass that one thing the incarnation of the son of god that has defeated and defied all human attempts and efforts to explain and defy god infinite eternal god found in human form comprehended in a man you understand that that's the mystery of god so we go on we've said while jesus bled crying through earth and sky have we ever yet shall we ever have an exhaust and measure infinite virtue and value of that born again from above of the holiest by nicodemus

was the teacher in israel and had a vast amount of knowledge in the

things of god but that beat him that absolutely put him out of court he stood before that with a mighty question how i could go on like that dear friends you and i as children of god are supposed to be the embodiment of these things this is our faith not a creed not something objective to ourselves something that has made us constituted a part of us so i repeat the great need in the matter of recovery of power may very well be a recovery of the wonder and greatness of the things which have become so commonplace that we can hear them sing them and never feel the thrill never feel startled by a single clause that has eternity in it true isn't it it's true and among the many many things of which that is true i think one of the major things is the holy spirit the holy spirit sent forth by god

from heaven to indwell the children of god to indwell the church of god do you not feel that we take the holy spirit too much for granted we come to discuss this as a subject what do we say well in controversy over it as many interpretations many designations we resolve the things so often by saying well of course every born a new child of god has the holy spirit and that's so often the beginning and the end of it that's what it amounts to we are really born again from above by our new birth we receive the holy spirit yes yes agreed but the holy spirit god the holy spirit an equal member of the divine trinity very jehovah in equality god of all the ages the god of heaven and earth god over all infinite in power infinite in wisdom infinite in grace and much more much more which we may see

in these days that one resident within you as you sit there where you are and in me as i stand here where i am is that christian truth is that the teaching of the scripture is that the revelation of the word of god is it don't you agree we need to recover something with a new apprehension and a new appreciation of the greatness of the fundamental thing he shall receive power when the holy spirit has come upon him by my spirit said the lord of and not the lord of earthly hosts because as you notice the margin there says not by an army not by an army not by earthly and worldly hosts and they have done great things in history and can do great things in this world but says the lord not not that and i see in this an invidious comparison between that not but an army well look at some of the

armies in the bible look at the great army spread over the look at the hosts of the midianites the amalekites and all the children of the east like lucas was it by an army over against an army 300 up against a host like that that gideon came the day by my spirit said the lord of other hosts those hosts delicious servants saw when his master prayed his eyes opened chariots of israel the host when they're on the lord of greater hosts and all the hosts come by the holy spirit it's a romantic story of the forces the immense forces that have lifted themselves against the lord of hosts empires and their caesars their rulers straddling the path of the onward movement of the spirit of and where are they where are they god becoming his son as the heir of all things the heir of this world made it

for him and again and again men have lifted themselves up to take world dominion to themselves and what an exhibition of power they have made what shouts they have given forth in their assertion of their power and ability to take the earth to take the nation where are they where are the caesars who did it where's the hipper and the mussolini and the others who made a bid for the inheritance of god's son world dominion same faith awaits those today who are on the same business and all who will follow them by my spirit said the lord of hosts the lord of hosts where are they where's the holy spirit he's still intact he is still on the field he is still pursuing the divine purpose power by the holy spirit and we are so weak so impotent so powerless almost helpless aren't we wrong i ask again

it may be this it is not that we so much need god to send the holy spirit maybe that we just need to recognize more clearly grasp more livingly the tremendous thing that god has done in sending the spirit how great the spirit of god is there will ever and always remain the mystery and the wonder that defeats our intellectual powers to explain we'll never be able to comprehend with our human mind this thing and yet to have some perception perception of the fact of it is essential when that was really recognized at any time people were down on their faces in the presence of god the holy spirit broken yes that's not just language look at them look at them down prospering in adoring worship and wonder oh friends this is what has been coming home to me this amount so many matters is a matter

for us to bring back into its right realm when the holy spirit came in his advent on what is called the day of penance they were filled with amazement everybody said what is this what is it the old question about the manna defeating all powers of definition explanation and recognition came here with this visitation from heaven what what is this amazed they were perplexed all their mental powers broke down before this in an effort to give an explanation no i am not saying we've got to have another experience a pentecost like that all i am saying dear friends and yet it's a big enough thing to say is that we do need to recover something of the wonder of the holy spirit having come and being with us and being in us going to make such a large number of changes in us going to have so many

effects through us not all pleasant truth but better better for men to be antagonistic to something that is really a god than to be able to ignore because there's nothing to take note of but i was saying that amongst the many things needed to be recovered in the wonder of the faith of the christian is the wonder of the holy spirit be no exaggeration to say this is a matter that could occupy us without monotony and without repetition for a year of days i thought about it i could see quite easily 1552 evenings through the year once a week filled to the full with this matter alone the meaning of the holy spirit with this matter alone the meaning of the holy spirit and i suppose that's limiting the holy ghost even to put it like that well now come for a few minutes to this where we have taken

our scriptures in Zechariah and in Acts chapter one just in broad outline without the closer examination that must come there are these things there was a task a task before the lord's people in both instances on both occasions a task they were conscious of being in a purpose of god for them relationship with god was not a matter of believing certain truths performing certain rites going through a certain ritual attending services and going away having done their duty for the people of god and this is true or should be true of all people of god in all ages if they are really alive to the meaning of their relationship with god for them in the days of Zechariah and in the days of the acts the thing which controlled their consciousness mastered their awareness as the lord's people was that

they were bound horizon by a divine purpose in the old testament it may have been represented in symbolic form or form of type lying behind that was the spiritual reality they inwardly were aware that this thing represented a divine thought a divine desire it contained a divine meaning it stood related to god in purpose and so they were a people in the grip of this sense of being a people apprehended by god for a purpose for a work for an achievement of god they believed that was true of this remnant that had come back from the exile weak feeble nevertheless unable to turn from this business this divine business and just settle down in the land cultivate their fields and their vineyards the rest central thing was this that was so near to the heart of god representing this internal thought

of god they were in the grip of that we know how true that was at the beginning of the book of the acts as they waited during those 10 days after the lord's ascension there is little doubt that they were in the grip of

a sense of having been laid hold of for a purpose whatever may have happened when he was crucified in the devastation of vision and outlook and hope during the 40 days that had been recovered and restored and during those 10 days up to the 50th they were men gripped together people possessed by something that was to be something in the purpose of god that was ahead a mighty controlling anticipation expectation and if they were under command to wait to tarry until you may take it for granted that it was a restive waiting it was a stretched out waiting as it said they

continued steadfast the word meaning stretched out extended it's a picture word of the head thrust forward looking waiting reaching out something has laid hold of them something to be that is how the lord's people ought ever to be because god is a forward-looking god he has not reached his end yet god is an expectant god god with anticipation god who is reaching on toward an end who is moved himself governed by what is so often called the eternal purpose purpose he is the purposeful god his people come under his apprehending hand ought to be like that in spite of all setbacks and discouragements and frustrations and oppositions difficulties conscious self-helplessness and impotence there ought to be in us this sense god-given sense that there is yet something in the purpose of god

intended and we're in it we're a part of it that is the meaning of vision again i'm making statements as i have been saying i'm stating divine truth sitting there how do you feel about that do you assent with your mind yes do you agree to the proposition the suggestion the idea you like it but is that in us friends is it really in us called according to his purposeful god that's the beginning of the spirit of god that is where the spirit of god begins if you have had any of a real experience of being translated out of the authority of darkness into the kingdom of the son of god's love or put that same experience in any of the many ways in which it is put if you really have had an experience a salvation of new birth put it as you will that crisis in which means transition from an old to a

new is it not true whether you have been able to put it into words and define it or not is it not true that the first consciousness of your new experience there's something to live for that i never had before now i sense that there's some meaning in life is that not true it's the beginning of the work of the spirit in a life to constitute us according to the god of purpose here then were these people in the days of the return from captivity here were these people the beginning of the church era are book of the acts very conscious of meaning purpose call apprehension by god as yet in both cases in both is consciousness never be achieved unless god himself came and look at them after the captivity this little weak despised beset remnant you've got of course to read the zechariah the book of

ezra they go together publish yes no doubt about it come back with that but look what's up against us look what's up against us look what we're up against in ourselves what are we what can we accomplish what can we do look at the forces we have to contend with within and without and the same holy spirit who caused the stories to be written has taken pains to let it be seen that there was plenty to be overcome if this was to be done why this in our passage who are thou oh great mountain oh great what was the mountain can't be sure in the case of the remnant make some guesses perhaps quote some passages that might relate but taking the whole situation as we read in ezra later indeed in maya there's a mountain good and high great mountain the lord calls it a great mountain sometimes what we

call great mountains are very little things with the lord but the lord here says i know how great the difficulty i know how strong the opposition i know the fury and the subtlety of the enemy oh great mountain the church was confronted with a great mountain the lord had taken account of that mountain and he said if you have faith the grain of mustard seed you should say unto this mountain be thou removed and be thou

cast into the sea what was he talking about the thing that dug the steps of the apostle paul over the whole area of his missionary journey judaism and tracking him down working by every subtle and often diabolical means to prejudice his ministry and message and destroy his influence that judaism that was up against the lord jesus and at last at last speaking from the human and

earthless side brought him to the cross that's a mountain that's a mountain but who art thou oh great mountain great mountain and a little weak helpless remnant not by might nor by power but by my spirit said the lord of hosts and mark you by the end of the life of the apostle paul that mountain had been laid low the letter to the galatians is the letter is it not of the holy spirit the holy spirit and it was that weapon that struck a mortal blow at judaism well the temple was finished and the wall was complete in spite of the great mountain but what am i saying how helpless the people are in themselves therefore how necessary but god comes in if the purpose which has gripped them is to be realized the necessity of the holy spirit jesus knew it you see he was meeting this opposition every

day of his life it was resisting him wherever he went oh what a force it was that was up against him both human and satanic he met him then there came that evening when he sat down with his disciples at the table 13th of john and began to speak they rose and left the table went out and he began to talk further and talk through all those chapters we as we have his talk john 14 15 16 and 17 what is he doing he has taken the measure of the forces that are going to be up against them in this world he has met those forces himself and he knows that his church is going to meet them wherever it goes with its testimony to him yes it's this tremendous thing that confronts this one this one this one listen to him in that prayer chapter 17 wow wow wow what a force it is as in the grip of the evil

power he knew but what is he doing in this long conversation what is the thing to which he heads everything else up when he the spirit is come oh 16 chapter 16 and a lot more and 16 is on the coming holy spirit it is expedient for you that i go away if i go not away the paraclete will not come but if i go i will send him unto you and when he is come in a word the great mountain will find its match and its master and you little flock little flock flock you so weak so small so helpless in yourself will because you receive power of the holy spirit coming upon you will be equal to the situation and more than equal the holy spirit see he has pointed to the way in which a feeble people in the afternoon with every mighty force in this world against them can accomplish the purpose of their

calling the holy spirit oh how great how wonderful the holy spirit there then is the task there then is the need there then is the adequacy of the holy spirit to meet it but there's another point on which i'm going to close where as i said at the beginning there needs to be recovery on we make very much of course and rightly so of the sovereignty of god it's a very comforting truth it's a very strengthening doctrine it's a wonderful reality the sovereignty of god do you not think dear friends that it's just possible to leave too much don't misunderstand what i mean is this oh well god is god the creator of the heavens and earth he is on the throne of the universe he has in his hand all power he has purpose and he can and will accomplish his all we have to do is to trust that sovereign

power and wisdom of god and in effect sit down in our armchair and wait for the sovereignty of god now son of course you wouldn't and i wouldn't put it like that yet here is a point of peril here's a point of peril we have got to recognize that although all that is true of god and much more in the same realm alongside of that alongside of that there is range what with these 120 after he had gone to the throne a continuing steadfastly in prayer about what this that he had promised the coming spirit and the power by the comings doubtless day and night through those 10 days that fixed period they were stretched out on this matter he

has said it and is there not much more like that that indicates

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