

Life Forevermore, Part 2

by Thaddeus Barnum

The Holy Spirit is essential for the church's growth, empowerment, and witness, enabling Christians to be equipped and strengthened for ministry.

Duration: 26:26

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 10:20, Luke 18:18, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 4:12

Topics: "Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by addressing the audience's need to confront their secret lives and be set free by Jesus. He then highlights the current troubles in the country, referencing incidents in Minnesota, Baton Rouge, and Dallas. The preacher emphasizes the importance of following the commands of God and receiving the Holy Spirit's empowerment to proclaim the kingdom of God. He also mentions a wise and learned man who stands up, representing the elite class, and prays for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church. The sermon references Acts 1:8 and uses a story about a woman finding expensive jewelry to illustrate the impact of commas in the Bible.

Transcript

Mighty Father, we are in need of you today to behold in this time the wonders and the glories of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and to know that fresh outpouring of God the Holy Spirit upon your church and upon us. Lord, be strong with us today. Stir us today.

Do your work in us today, giving us the ears and the hearts and the eyes that we need to see and behold and know you. Through Christ our Savior we pray. Amen.

I bid you good morning. If you've got Bibles, I'd like you to turn to the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 1 in verse 8. The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1, verse 8. I want to continue the conversation I began with you two weeks ago. To give a brief review, I ask this question of you.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? We speak of it in the Creed because for centuries Christians have said in response to this, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son with the Father and Son. He is worshipped and glorified. He is the Lord, the Giver of life.

Always, when we come to this conversation, it is not just simply about what we believe. The question is, has the Giver given and as you, the receiver, have you received? Do you know something about Him? Do

you believe in the person of God, the Holy Spirit? And I begged the question because He, the Lord, the Giver of life, is the one who births inside us this eternal life that the Father has desired for us from before the ages began. It is why He sent His Son.

When we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, in His mercy He sent us His Son, that we who have been born into this life might be born into eternal life. And so the gospel of John just simply opens by saying and asking us right out, as many as received Him, have we received Him? To Him, to them He gave the right to be children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who are born not of blood, not of the will of man, not the will of the flesh, they're born of God. And that's the joy of what Jesus comes to bring us, that we can actually be born of water and the Spirit.

That new life might come in us. That's what He did at Calvary for us. It's exactly what He did at Calvary for us, to open the way of life, that that life might come into us today and to now.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, born again in Christ, alive in Christ? That's always been the message down through the corridor of centuries upon centuries of the church, to come alive in Jesus Christ. Allow Him to do the work in us He wants to do. The second thing we talked about is that's exactly what it is.

He disciplines us. He trains us. We become lifelong learners of Jesus Christ, so thoroughly yoked, so thoroughly, so thoroughly yoked with Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, that we might live as Jesus lived and love as Jesus loved, and help others do the same.

That growing up in Christ, growing up in Christ. Peter said it this way at the end of his second, of his second letter, that we might grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That's growing that happens inside of us, as that life takes root inside of us, and we are changed from one degree of glory to another.

And that's the whole point of it. When the Spirit of God comes, He begins to set us free. He begins to give us a freedom we've not known before.

And so we saw that passage from 2nd Corinthians 3:17, where the Lord is, the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. There is liberty. He sets us free.

The Spirit of life sets us free from the law of sin and death. And I begged that conversation with you. I begged it because there are too many Christians today who are allowing the devil to torment them.

Too many where old hurts and old hurts have come creeping in. Too many times when addictions have robbed the life of the Christian, the life of the leaders, the life of the pastors, so that we learn to have an image, but inside we have a secret life that nobody knows about. God knows about it.

We know about it, but we walk alone. And I begged the conversation because I have to tell you, I do not want the devil plaguing our people, not our pastors, not our leaders, not our Christians. And that's why I can say to you, I can diagnose, but thank God I can treat.

Yes, I can. I can be a doctor that not just diagnoses, I can treat. Why? Because I believe in the Holy Spirit.

I believe He can set free. That's why the ministry in this church and all across America, this new ministry called Celebrate Recovery, where we as Christians can rise up and say, no, no, we have got to have the

courage to confess, I'm in trouble. I'm walking alone.

I'm caught in the addictions of alcohol and Internet and all the things that are plaguing my life, and I've got to come clean. I need help. I need to say I'm powerless over this.

I need help. And that's why Celebrate Recovery, we've got a booth in the back. Have the courage to confess.

Don't walk alone. Never walk alone, because that's exactly what the devil wants of us. Too many pastors are preaching in pulpits, and their lives are not healthy.

That's part of our job. Oh, set our pastors free. Set our Christians free.

Set our leaders free, because this hour requires it. My friends, Thursday night, Celebrate Recovery. See somebody in the back.

Do something about it. Stop letting the devil torment us into our little secret lives. Let's come clean.

Let's watch Jesus set us free. Huh? Well, the Pentecostals are back, and now I begin the sermon. I got to take the conversation on, and I'm looking at Acts 1-8, and I have to do it for a reason.

If you don't know this, our country is in trouble. You cannot watch Minnesota and Baton Rouge and Dallas and not know our our people are in trouble. I had a man at the 8 o'clock service just embrace me with tears, and all he said to me is, my son is a policeman in Baltimore.

We have no more words. He said everything he needed to say. My concern today is that the remedy and antidote for our country is you.

It's the Christian, and it's the church. That's why this passage is so important today. Here it is, Acts 1-8, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the uttermost parts of the world.

My question is, to whom, O Lord, are you speaking? You see, it's quite clear, if you look at the context in chapter 1 of Acts, that in verse 2, he has gathered his apostles together. He is speaking, verse 3, of the kingdom of God, and in verse 4, that there is a promise of the Father, that the Holy Spirit, which John said, the Baptist told us, that you'd be baptized with the Holy Spirit. My question is, to whom is he speaking? Quite clearly, it's to the apostles.

Again, we find in Acts 1, that when Judas had left his office, they're choosing another apostle, who needed to be with Jesus since the baptism, to his resurrection, so that, verse 22, that they might, that person might be a witness to the resurrection. My question is this, therefore, is it true that the Holy Spirit comes upon the leaders and the apostles of the church? That's what he intended. Is that to whom he is addressing this conversation? I say that because when I come into Acts chapter 2, I find that everybody's together, the church is together, they are all together, says verse 1. Verse 3 says, that when the Holy Spirit came, he rested on each one of them.

Again, in verse 4, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and then a multitude gathered together, everybody wanted to know what was going on, on Pentecost morning, and Peter, he stands up and he says, these are not Anglicans like you think, with their wine. Oh no, no, no, no. He says, what you're seeing and what you're hearing was prophesied by the prophet Joel.

Verse 17, in the last days it shall be God declares, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons, your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams, on male servants and female servants, I will in those days pour out my spirit, on whom? On all of us. Oh yes, you.

You the old, you the young, you the maidservant, the female servant, the male servant, the men, the women, every one of us. He's come to pour out God the Holy Spirit upon his church, upon all of us, and that's how it's testified. Look at verse 21, it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Again, in verse 38, Peter says, repent, be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, and you shall receive the forgiveness of your sins. You shall receive the promise of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. This is the testimony of the New Testament Church.

It isn't the testimony of the few that are called to be anointed and empowered by the Spirit. It is the call and appointment of all of us, all of us, to be filled with God the Holy Spirit for the purpose with which he has called us to serve and administer. Do you believe it? I've got to tell you something, we are entrenched in a lie on this conversation.

If this is true, are we actually living this? What do I mean by it? For centuries, this is where the devil has caught the church, always, right here in this place. There are the called, the elite, the professionals, the clergy, and then there's you. The old statement is true and wrong.

The minister's minister and the congregation congregates. That's the story. I grew up, Erlin and I grew up where we met in a church, where when you looked at the bulletin, you saw the pastors and you saw the elders, the vestry, but underneath when it said ministers, it said the congregation.

Yes, all of us. It's the empowering of the people of God. That's what it is.

Why? Well, because the Bible says that the church is actually the body of Christ. He is the head of the church. He is the one who is the head and he is the one who operates the body.

When this pastor, our pastor that grew us up in the faith, his name? Terry Fulham. He was a pastor, 70s, 80s, 90s. We knew him for such a long time.

He nurtured us in the Word of God and in faith, and he taught us that when you believe in the headship of Jesus, then you've got a rector of the church who is a leader of the church who is under the head of the church, Jesus Christ. And that changed everything. It meant that the vestry needed to come together, the leaders of the church, to come under the head of the church and find out what he wants to do with the church.

The most important thing he wants to do with the church is to empower us to be what God has called us to be. You have an appointed call. If you know Jesus, if you want to be empowered by his Holy Spirit, you have been given a call by our Lord to his service.

You are a minister of our Lord. Listen to how it says it in Ephesians 2.10. We are his workmanship, all of us, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God planned beforehand that we should walk in them. First Corinthians 12.7, to each one has been given the manifestation of the Spirit.

And so Terry Fulham would rise to his generation and say, dear friends, this is where it's all gone wrong. And he pointed to a text in the Bible to show us. He went to Ephesians 4.12, and you'll see it up on the screen in two different translations.

I'm looking at the bottom one. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are all located in verse 11. There it is.

The professionals. There they are. The ones called by the Lord to be in the function of service that the Lord has given.

A function of eldership. A function of ministry. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, prophets, teachers.

Look at what it says. Look at the bottom one. For the perfecting of the saints, comma.

For the work of ministry, comma. And for the edifying of the body of Christ, I am exhausted. What do the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have to do? They've got to do all that on the bottom of the page.

Where is the King James? It's the bottom one. Do you see it? That ESV there is dangling. Forget it.

The bottom one. It's the bottom one. Are you with me on the bottom one? I want you to see the comma.

The job of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers is for the perfecting of the saints. Second, what they do is they're the ones that do the work of ministry. And third, they're the ones that do the edifying of the body of Christ.

It's the trained. It's the professional. It's the clergy.

It's the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. It's the deacons. It's the priests.

It's the bishops. They're the ones who are to do the work of the ministry, not you. You get to watch.

Terry Fulham said that comma has been in the King James. It's a perfect picture of what the devil has done with our church down these 2,000 years. Perfect picture.

He says always watch out for commas. And then he would tell the story of the woman in the 1930s who went to England and she found the most beautiful piece of jewelry. It was expensive.

It was terrifyingly expensive, but it was the answer to her prayers. And she wrote a Western Union. If there's anybody here who doesn't know Western Union, poke somebody and let them tell you.

A Western Union telegraph came across to her husband. Found the most beautiful piece of jewelry. Want to buy.

It's this much. What say ye? He immediately wrote back. No price too high.

No price too high. So she bought it. No price too high.

Oh, the comma does make a difference because it changes our conversation today. Look at the way the modern translation correctly says this. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are

given to equip you for the work of ministry.

You. It's you. Thus, together, this clergy-laity distinction is so deeply rooted inside of us that we have lost the heart of the work we're called to do.

This is why our Lord took this extraordinary passage of Luke chapter 10 and did what he did with it. This lawyer, this brilliant lawyer stands up. He wants to understand how to inherit eternal life.

Poor man. He does not get it. He's trying to think that there's something that we do here by following the law, the commands.

There's something that we do here to inherit eternal life to come. And just before he stands up, the 72 had been sent out by the Lord Jesus. He had equipped them with the Holy Spirit.

He gave them the gift of life inside so that they could go out and proclaim that the kingdom of God is here now. And they came back, and they were rejoicing that the devil was subject to the name of Jesus. There was healing.

The kingdom of God came, and Jesus said, oh my goodness, celebrate not that the demons flee. Celebrate that your name is written in the book of life. And then he went to the father, and he said, father, I praise you that you have not revealed this to the wise and learned, but you've revealed this to the little children.

And then a wise and learned man stands up, and there he is, the perfect picture of the elite class. He's brilliant. He knows the law.

It's all memorized. He knows everything. But the life of God is all clogged up.

He can neither receive it or give it. And that, I fear, is where the church has been for so long. Clogged.

And our Lord has such compassion on him. He says, let me tell you a story. There's a man, there's a lifeless body on the side of the road.

The lifeless body on the side of the road, almost dead. And what happens? You guys, you guys, the priests, the Levites, they see it, but there's nothing in them that knows how to give life. So they go about their duties, their high priestly duties, and leave the dead body on the side of the road.

And this has infuriated the Reformers ever since, because that's not the way it's supposed to be. That's why you've got, in the days of the Reformation, you've got Martin Luther standing up and saying, what about the plow boy? What about the milkmaid? You send them to church, you require them to go to church, and they hear the mass in Latin. They don't know Latin.

You're not giving them life. They don't know the Bible. The Bible's not written for them.

They don't know it. And then thank God for the printing press. Why? Because it gave the people of God the Bible, that they could have the lifestream begin to pour into their hearts, that the young, the old might know Jesus, might know the saving grace, the saving power that gets the devil off our back, the devil off our life, and to be able to live for the glory of God, the purpose the Father has had for us from the foundations of the world.

That's why he sent his son. Oh, praise be to the Lord for the days of Martin Luther. But he was just, he was just opening the stream of life.

He said, brothers and sisters, guess what? Guess what? The priests. Let me talk to you about priests. You're priests.

You, every one of you, have access to the Father. Every one of you can come and confess your sin right to him, and let the blood of Jesus cleanse you. You have access to worship and access to praise.

You are a priest of the Most High. He's called you. He's called you to himself.

He wants to anoint you with the power of his Spirit to be his witnesses all through the land. That's how revival happens. The people of God wake up and go, it's not about them.

It's about us. It's about us. I'm nobody, and I'm empowered to be a servant of the Lord.

I'm nobody, but he's given me the power of the Spirit of God to impact my life and impact my world. That professional class is still with us today. I don't know how to say this to you.

I meet with search committees. I know what's going on in the search committees across many folks in the country today, and we're all looking for these, like, Hollywood cookie cutter, got to be perfect pastors who build perfect teams to minister to you so you'll come because you've got a consumer mindset looking for a church, need the right pastor, need the right youth, pastor, children, mom's group. I need, the building needs to be air-conditioned.

Are you kidding me? We were called by our Lord and Savior to be his and to make a difference, every one of us, and that's what he wants to do through us. I was given an assignment for this coming fall. I am supposed to preach and lead a plenary session at a diocesan convention in the fall, and the subject is called equipping the laity.

I'm so sorry, that word's not in my Bible. The people of God are in my Bible. There's no separation between clergy and laity.

We have different offices, different functions, yes, but all of us are called by Jesus to bear witness to him, and until our churches across our country, I don't care, Anglican, Presbyterian, non- I don't care. The Christian rise up and say the Holy Spirit is empowering us together to impact our world together. I'm called by the Lord.

I'm a priest of the most high. He's got something for me to make a difference in the world today. He wants me to be his witness, every single one of us.

Then we're watching the empowerment of the church. Then we'll see revival like we've never seen it, because people will rise up and say, I'm not here to be entertained. I'm here to worship.

I'm here to praise. I'm here to hear the Scriptures, so I can go do the work I've been given to do, to be equipped and strengthened to a ministry that God has called me to. And it's everywhere.

I went into a hospital room not long ago. A 92 year old woman, her body was just crumpled in arthritis, and her eyes just glowed with the love of Jesus. And you'd say, you know, I think she's retired.

It's nothing about her that was retired. She can do nothing with her body, but with her spirit, she has been called by our Lord on the front lines of intercession for her family, for her church, and for her community, and for the world. A prayer warrior like I'd never seen, anointed by the Spirit of God.

Her grandson had a medical affliction upon birth of Down syndrome. We had lunch with him not long ago at Caledonia, overlooking the 18th hole. And he said, you know what? I said, what? He said, I love Jesus.

I said, you know what? I said, what? He said, I work. And every dime I have goes to the ministry of rescuing babies who have what I have, so that they're not aborted, so they can live like I can live, and give glory to God. It's you.

He's calling you into his service. Stop looking to come to church and be the church. You're a minister of the Most High.

You have been called by God, anointed by him to serve. It's time the church arise in a time like we're living in. It's time for the Christians to arise, the young, the old, the maidservants, the menservants, all of us.

Because we have a work to do in this country to bear witness to Jesus Christ. What is holding you back?

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