

Taking Mary's Posture

by Thaddeus Barnum

The sermon calls for believers to adopt a posture of humility and openness to the Holy Spirit, enabling them to bear witness to Jesus amidst cultural changes.

Duration: 25:06

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:35, Acts 1:8, Acts 15:28

Topics: "Virgin Mary"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for believers to have a posture of readiness to receive the word of God. He highlights the importance of being sealed with the Holy Spirit, who testifies of Jesus through us. The preacher emphasizes that God uses ordinary people to bear witness of Jesus and that our testimony should be rooted in the authority of Scripture. He also urges believers to stand strong in the face of a changing culture and to not be ashamed of the unchanging gospel of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Holy Father, we now come to your word, and we ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you would cause us to hear your voice. You would give us minds to understand your word to us, and that you would give us hearts to receive that word and be empowered to obey and serve. Bless now your servant.

Empower the words, and we ask it in the precious name of Jesus, and for his sake. Amen. Good morning.

It is time. Time for us to have some respite, and time to watch Micah step up, watch you step up, for us to put our eyes upon Jesus, and to ask that he, in his kindness to us, might bring us as a family to one mind, one heart, as to who it is that takes this position that I've had these years. His gift to us is to bring us to one mind.

Do you believe that? Where we can say together, it seemed good to us and to the Holy Spirit. And it comes out of the Bible, Acts 15, 28, it seemed good to us and to the Holy Spirit. It is time to step up.

This morning, I would like to take a look at the early part of the Sermon of Pentecost and outline just some principles. From Acts chapter 1, if you've got Bibles. I believe that Acts 1, 8 is the centerpiece here.

Acts 1, 8 is where we find our Lord saying to his disciples, You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be my witnesses. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be my witnesses. He's making it very clear we cannot be his witnesses without his

power to come upon us in the Holy Spirit.

So that what happens is that he in us becomes, as it said in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, we become, he manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. Has it not been our heart as a church that we bear the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Jesus everywhere? That's what I want to be known for. The smell, the fragrance of Christ through us.

Why? Well, we don't preach ourselves. We preach Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bondservants for Christ's sake. That's how Paul says, we don't preach ourselves.

The church is not built on a personality unless the personality is him. I believe in Acts 1, 8. We are watching here a change of position. We are not watching here a change of focus.

Do you want me to say it again? We are seeing here a change of position. We are not seeing a change of focus. Our posture is the same as it's always been.

And that's why I've loved this passage that Erilyn read today. This is the posture of Mary, is it not? This is the posture that she had at the very beginning. The Lord told her, the angel Gabriel came and said, the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon you.

The power of the Most High will come upon you. And you shall have the Son of the Most High. The Son of David born through you.

She didn't understand these things. Who can understand these things? She didn't have control of these things. Who does have control? But, thanks be to God, her response and her posture of Mary was, Be it done to me.

Be it done to me according to Your Word. Be it done to me. Hands open.

Ready for the Spirit of God to come. How do we see it at the very end of the Bible? At the very end, the last picture we see of her, we find her, the last moment of her is in Acts 1. Verse 14. She's there with the disciples.

She's devoted in prayer. What's she waiting for? She's waiting for the Holy Spirit to come again. Same posture, isn't it? The same waiting.

And I must say, it's still as incomprehensible. Who knows what the Lord wants to do with us and through us? Yes? And there she is in the same posture. The same place.

And this is the place of the church. This is the place of all Christians. This is the place of the family of God.

We are to have this posture among us. Are we not? It's when we have this posture that we watch the Lord do what only the Lord can do. It is how we receive Jesus.

It is how we receive the empowerment of His Holy Spirit. And when we do, we become witnesses of Him. That's it.

We become witnesses of Jesus. That's what we do. So, what happened? The power of Pentecost came.

What happened? Peter stood up and he gave testimony. He began to give testimony. And what did he give testimony about? Himself? Oh, is anybody here this morning? You can respond.

It's not... After 11 years, you should respond. Most of you spit. Spit! What happened? Well, he stood up and he began to speak, not about himself, but about this story, about Him, about what He had done.

He'd come to bear this story. And everything he says is rooted in the authority of Scripture. Every breath he's taking is coming out of the Bible.

Why? Because God, long ago after long ago, has spoken to us through the fathers and through the prophets. And now He's spoken to us in His Son. And so, what happened? Well, he began to testify through these discourses of the Scripture.

That long ago, the Lord foretold these days. And that's the message I want to bring to you this morning. This is the whole point underneath it.

The whole point behind it. Peter is going to testify of this salvation given to us by the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. That God Himself, active in our salvation, and He begins with the Father.

And you'll find this in Acts chapter 2. And you'll find it in verse 23. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan, the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. What does that mean? Well, it means the Father, from the beginning, has this in mind.

This has been His plan and His purpose. And He is unchanging. I've got to ask you to believe that today.

That He is unchanging. This is the heart of the matter with the Father's plan and how He's done this. Let me say it how Paul would say it.

Ephesians 1, verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless. He's got a plan for us. He's got a purpose for us.

From the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself. And this is the course of things.

This is the matter of things. This is why it's so important to say these things today. Our culture is changing fast.

The world around us is changing fast. He is not changing. His purpose, His plan has not shifted, has not changed.

You've got to ask the question, do you really believe that or don't you? And underneath it, we have God the Son. God the Son as He described by the Apostle Peter in this first sermon of his. He describes Him as He who came among us and was crucified at the hands of lawless men.

He was buried. He was put into the tomb. And God raised Him.

God raised Him on the third day. God raised Him. What else did He do? He exalted Him at His right hand.

And He made Him Lord. And He made Him Christ. That's the one that we're talking about.

And what does it afford us? Well, it affords us this very simple message. Forgiveness of sins is now possible. Through what He did.

Again, I will sing the song that was given to us in Ephesians chapter 1. In Him we have redemption through His blood. The forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace. Which He has lavished upon us.

This lavished love that has come for us that would release us from our sins and make us clean. And make us forgiven. This is what He's come to do.

This is the work of the Son. The work of Jesus. Whom now is at the Father's right hand.

This is what He has come to give to us. And when He stands, sits at the right hand of the Father, He has, as it says, and I'll read it from the text in chapter 2, verse 32, This Jesus, God raised up, and of that we are witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and are hearing. What does that mean? Well, it means that what Jesus has done is received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit.

And He has poured out the Holy Spirit to us. For what purpose? That first we might hear the proclamation. That's the whole point.

When Acts 1.8 says that the Spirit of God is going to come upon us, that we might be His witnesses. We cannot be His witnesses without the power of the Spirit of God. And when the Spirit of God comes, He opens our ears to hear.

He opens our heart to hear. And He gives us a posture of Mary. He humbles us to a point where we are broken and all we can do is open up and say, Lord, I don't understand it, but I receive.

That I might too be saved and in being saved, recover and receive the same power of the Spirit, so that I might bear witness of Jesus. That I too might be a sweet aroma, a sweet fragrance of Christ, manifesting through us everywhere we go. Boy, you smell! Thank you, Jesus.

This is what He's come to do. This is what He's come to do inside of us. It isn't about gifting, my friends.

It isn't about personalities. It isn't about past experiences. It isn't about resumes.

If anybody had a resume, I would appeal to Mary. I do not have a good resume? My friends, she's got her arms open waiting to be witness of her Son. God the Father has exalted God the Son to His right hand.

And down has come the Holy Spirit. And somehow He takes these jars of clay and through us we testify of Jesus. We make our proclamation in our lives and in our words.

We make our proclamation. That's who we are. That's what we do.

We testify of Jesus in the power of God the Holy Spirit. And that's why when it comes to the moment when these things happen and the men and the women are convicted by the Holy Spirit, they say, what shall we do? Peter says, repent. Let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Repent of your sins. What does that mean? Take the posture of Mary. Get rid of the culture that's choking us to death right this moment.

A culture that has got idols of success and of money and of pleasure and is dragging us down. That's the question that really is at the heart of these things. Lord, would you do your work inside of us and let the posture be ready to receive.

Let the work of your proclamation come into our ears and let us receive. Again, just like Paul said in the end of Ephesians 1, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. Something happens inside of us and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit and He, through us, gives testimony of Jesus.

That's the story. That's the story! That's it! We get to bear witness of Jesus. How? By the power of the Spirit of God.

In us and through us. That's what He does. He does it through the most unusual people.

Am I not right? I'm going to... Were you looking at me? I'm going to say this really carefully. If our posture changes and arrogance comes in, if our proclamation changes, the Holy Spirit doesn't come. And that's the problem today.

Our message is changing. The culture is so strong. The culture is so powerful.

What's happening, it's happening so fast. Our elders here in our midst can remember days where nobility and honor and respect were still among us. Times have changed.

Let me say it as the Bible says it. In the last days, difficult times will come. Men will be lovers of self.

Lovers of money. Boastful. Arrogant.

Revilers. Disobedient to parents. Ungrateful.

Unholy. Unloving. Irreconcilable.

Haters of good. Malicious. Without self-control.

Treacherous. Reckless. Conceited.

Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Holding to a form of godliness though they have denied its power. What does that mean? It means that the religion of today can be quite exciting.

People are going for religious experiences everywhere. But those religious experiences do not change the soul. You change the proclamation.

You change the posture. You don't get the power. Why? Because God is not changing.

His message has not changed. It is the definite predetermined plan of God and foreknowledge of God. The proclamation does not change.

The character of our Father does not change. He is the Alpha. He is the Omega.

But religion today is changing. It is changing right now in our midst. Listen to this today.

I can say this to you. At the end of next month, the Supreme Court is going to make a ruling about defining marriage. Are you aware of that in our country? The source of morality comes from where? Already the tales have been told that pastors are going to come, churches are going to come under persecutions in the days to come.

And don't tell me you cannot feel it. You cannot see it. What's going on in the culture today? Can you not feel what's going on underneath these things? It's all changing.

And it's changing fast. It's shifting. And it's shifting fast.

It's not that this culture is becoming anti-God. It's quite the opposite. This new proclamation.

These new moralities. These new conversations. All have the changing God in place.

God now is defined by the image of their new gospel. He's now for the new gospel. Why? Because underneath it, at the bottom of the day, God is changing.

God's plan is changing. The Bible is outdated. The Bible is not right.

And a new religion is being birthed in our culture and in our country. Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

And you can hear the sound of Paul somewhere inside saying, I am not ashamed of the gospel. For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation. I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation.

I am not ashamed. I will stand in this day. I will stand not in arrogance.

I will stand with the posture of Mary. This is not a posture of arrogance. This is not about me saying, I'm right.

This is about God being right. He's been right from the beginning. He's the Alpha.

He's the Omega. The beginning, the end. His plan that was, is and will be end of story.

And this Jesus who has come among us will come again. And he will not come with the ruling of the Supreme Court. He will come with the ruling of his own hand in righteousness and in truth and in justice.

And in mercy. My dear friends, the challenge that is before us is this proclamation going to shift and to change. And when things are going so fast, and things are changing so fast, you don't know the pressure that's on our pastors.

It's just there. And on the church leaders. There are so many denominations today.

So many non-denominations or other denominations or places where the pastor is literally in a place where he's under the pressure of the politic of the elders. Do you know that? And so, if he takes a stand too strong, he may lose his position. There's a politic here.

So, you don't know what to do or how to do it. And there are others who... I mean, we know that part of the church doesn't care about the Scriptures. And we know that there's a huge section of denominations and statements coming from mainline churches that have said, we're going with the new Gospel.

We're going with the new culture. We're going out with the Bible and in with the new God. We know that.

But the problem is, there are pastors now today who know the posture. Who know the proclamation. Who have been changed by Jesus inside.

They have borne the testimony of Jesus. They've known the power of the Holy Spirit. But they're not able to stand today.

Why aren't they able to stand? I'll tell you why. Because they are a people, a lot, who are so busy. And in their busyness, they get run by urgencies of the moment.

And so, they're always giving and going and giving and going at the expense of their families. Which is now out of balance. And always there's this pressure inside.

This pressure inside to perform. To do it well. And to make sure everything is going well.

And to keep everything balanced. And inside they're isolated. And so, they're modeling a leadership where others are isolated.

We spent a lot of time last fall talking about this. Do you have a Paul in your life? It's the same kind of conversation. We get isolated.

We give and we give. But we don't have anybody pouring inside. And I began my journey.

I began to go out. And I began to look like I was going out into the battlefields. And I was watching these pastors give.

And they were giving. And these church leaders, they were giving. And they were giving.

And nobody was giving inside. And when anybody gets isolated, when anybody walks alone, guess what happens? That's the devil's ground, isn't it? That's when the devil captures us. He captures our minds.

The other day, I was in Elmira. I was speaking to 57 pastors. We were dealing on the care and the well-being.

And while we were there, my phone went off. My cell phone went off. It's the first time it ever happened.

I got on my phone a sex texting. On my phone, standing there with the pastors. On my phone.

On my phone. I looked at this and I said, this is it. This is the whole point.

This is our culture. We're getting run down. We're getting exhausted.

We're getting tired. We don't know what's going on. We don't know where things are.

And temptation comes knocking on the door. Come on. Oh, my friends.

I think this is kind of what happened. I didn't understand last summer exactly what was going on. But I did know that the Lord was shifting things.

And as I gave it to the parish council, I gave it to the bishop, and we began to just have a season of prayer. I literally couldn't figure these things out. But what they said back to me was evident.

The Holy Spirit was shifting things. Changes positions. Micah was being raised up to serve in this leadership, interim leadership role.

And I was being released to care for the well-being of the pastors. And so here we are. The Spirit of God is among us, is he not? It's time for us to step into everything he's got for us.

Just like Micah preached last Sunday. Step into our family. Be about the gifts he's given us.

Strengthen our family strong. And don't let anybody walk alone. Pastors out there are getting picked off.

Leadership is getting picked off. We're getting picked off. And the culture is strong.

The culture is changing. If I could get this on my phone, a high school student could get on his phone, her phone, a seventh grader. Culture has changed.

And we've got to stand. It is so simple. The right posture.

The proclamation of the unchanging gospel of our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ. That saves. And the power of God the Holy Spirit that comes upon us so that our song, I believe in God the Father.

I believe in God the Son. I believe in God the Spirit. Our God is three in one.

Unchanging. Fill us with your Spirit, O Lord. And make us a sweet aroma.

And help us not be ashamed of the gospel in our day. But you have saved us. And here we are.

Fill us.

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