

(Spirit-Filled Life) Part 3: A Baptism of Power

by Zac Poonen

The Holy Spirit is central to the Christian life and essential for experiencing the power of God, and believers must have a direct and personal connection with Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 1:03:16

Scripture: Matthew 4:23-24, Matthew 8:16-17, Matthew 12:15, John 7:38, Acts 1:4, Acts 5:16, Hebrews 8:11

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Empowerment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his personal experience of relying on the power of the Holy Spirit in his ministry. He emphasizes the importance of having a connection with the river of God, which is always full of water, to effectively serve in any calling. The speaker initially desired to be an evangelist but realized that God had called him to be a teacher instead. He compares his ministry to pumping water from a hand pump, requiring great effort to obtain a small amount, while desiring to experience the effortless flow of a river. The sermon also references the disciples' encounter with the risen Jesus and the receiving of the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for believers to continually seek the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Transcript

You know, some people may feel that any study on the Holy Spirit is just a theological study. Now I want to tell you that the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra in the Christian life. But for many Christians, unfortunately it is like that.

It's like, you know, having a dessert or an ice cream at the end of the meal. Well, it's optional. You don't have to have it.

You can still say you had your lunch or dinner even if you didn't eat the ice cream. But the Holy Spirit is not like that. It's absolutely central.

The person of the Holy Spirit is absolutely central. Consider this. There would have been no Christianity on the earth today.

Even if Jesus had died and risen up from the dead. If there was no baptism in the Holy Spirit that the apostles experienced on the day of Pentecost. Have you thought about that? Because after Jesus rose up from the dead, He found the apostles sitting in a closed room.

He came and appeared before them. Not only appeared before them, He breathed on them. You read that in John chapter 20.

He breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit. Yeah, I believe that something happened. I don't want to get into doctrine here.

But my understanding is they experienced something. You see they were living in pre-Pentecost days so we don't know exactly what happened. But applying it to my life, I say what can I learn from it? Because I know that after having, you know, when Jesus breathed on them in John 20 verse 22 and said, receive the Holy Spirit.

There's no word that came from Jesus mouth that ever fell to the ground and wasted. I can't imagine that Jesus breathed on them and nothing happened. Because I know thousands of years earlier, the same Jesus breathed on a pile of mud and He became Adam, a living soul.

The same Jesus as the second person of the Trinity along with the Father and the Holy Spirit breathed on Adam. Something happened. I can't imagine that nothing would have happened when God breathed on that pile of mud way back in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. So this is the, that was the first creation where Jesus breathed on Adam.

This is the new creation. He breathed, received the Holy Spirit. Something happened.

There was an operation of the Holy Spirit there. And whether it was true for them or not, I see it like this, that it is something like they're being born again. But they were not filled with the Holy Spirit.

But even though they saw the risen Lord, imagine you had seen Jesus, supposing you were there and you'd seen Jesus crucified, killed, buried. And you've given up all hope. And then three days later, He walks into your room.

Put yourself in the place of these people and picture. Boy, what a shock they got. He's alive.

You know, that's why we should sing those songs with such excitement. My Jesus is alive. I thought of that.

How would I be singing it if I were seeing Him for the first time after three days? My Jesus is alive. Excited. The Lord breathes on them, the Holy Spirit.

And you think every problem is solved. But we read that eight days later, they were still sitting in a closed room. It didn't seem to have made any difference as far as that part is concerned.

And I see a lot of born again people like that. They're really born again. I don't question they're born again.

But they're sitting inside a closed room. And again the Lord comes and shows Himself. And then He tells them, you know, what you have experienced is not enough.

You must wait. And you will be baptized, Acts 1 verse 5, with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. Acts 1 verse 5. Wait in Jerusalem, you'll be baptized not many days from now in the Holy Spirit and fire.

In the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. Now, if they were of the mind to argue theologically, they could have said, But Lord, a few days ago you breathed on us. We received the Holy Spirit.

What is this you're now saying? Immerse in the Holy Spirit. This is the argument that's going on in the minds of so many Christians. And the devil will make them live their whole life arguing theology and never experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit.

It's exactly what he wants. Do you see how they were wise not to argue about theology? Lord, what happened when you breathed on us? You mean we didn't receive? What is this you're telling us now to wait? They said, Lord, we don't have to understand these things and explain these things in our mind. We see that even after you breathed on us, we were still scared.

We were still sitting inside that room. So obviously there's something more that we need to experience before we can go out and reach the world for Christ. So whatever it is, whether our theology is right or wrong, we certainly need power.

And I want to do what you say, Lord. I want to wait. So they waited.

And they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Now just think. If all those twelve disciples had said, no, no, no, we got the Holy Spirit.

Jesus breathed on us. I mean, is there anything greater than Jesus breathing on us? That's it. We don't have to wait.

There would have been no Christianity on earth today if they had made the mistake of arguing about theology and terminology. Thank God they didn't. And I want to encourage you, my brothers and sisters.

Don't waste your time arguing about theology and terminology. I'm not saying it's not important. I'm saying you can get all your answers right and miss out on God's best.

And there are a lot of other people who may not have the right answers who get God's best. Have you ever thought about this? Just think about what I'm saying now. From the day of Pentecost for about 1400 years, 1400 years, most Christians never had a Bible in their home.

It's only after printing was discovered, 1400, 1500s, that people started printing a Bible. And you could afford to have a Bible in your home. The old parchments written by hand were so expensive.

How many poor Christians could afford it? Can you imagine how Christians met for 1500 years in many homes where the preacher never had a Bible and the people sitting in the congregation never had a Bible? Can you picture having a meeting like that? Why didn't God allow printing to be discovered 100 years before Christ? So that everybody could have a... You think that would have been difficult for God? So that everybody could have a printed Bible from day one. Why has He allowed some manuscripts to be found from days prior to Christ but we don't have a single manuscript of the original writings of the apostles? There's a purpose in all this. I have studied the Bible for nearly 50 years now.

More than any other book in the world. I've spent my life studying it but I say it's more important to depend on the Holy Spirit. There's a great danger of people arguing about verses of scripture when what they need to do is depend on the Holy Spirit.

The reason I mention this is... You see, today because we have the luxury of having the Bible in so many languages and concordances. Concordances and all are only about 150 years old. There weren't much of that more than a couple of hundred years ago.

So even if people wanted to find a verse, they wouldn't know where it was. Even after the printing of the Bible. So how could people convince one another two, three hundred years ago when there were no concordances? Today we have the luxury of concordances.

We have got computers where we can search and find out a verse. And we have the luxury of being able to argue about theology and terminology and all the time we have powerless Christians. So if you can understand the spirit of what I'm saying.

You know that I believe theology is important because I've spent my life studying the scriptures. It's important. I'm not asking you to neglect the Bible.

But don't make the study of the Bible so important that you neglect the Holy Spirit. That's my point. It's the Holy Spirit who gives us light on his word.

And the central thing for the early Christians was not the Bible. They didn't have one. It was not even the death of Christ.

Try and see how many times in the New Testament the apostles called themselves we are witnesses of the death of Christ. Never. You know what they said? They said we are witnesses of his resurrection.

They spoke more about the resurrection than about the crucifixion. Today most Christians speak more about the crucifixion than about the resurrection. How many pictures we have seen of Christ hanging on the cross.

There are crucifixes all over the world. There are paintings in different houses of Christ hanging on the cross. How many paintings have you seen of Christ coming out of the grave alive? That's not the type of thing people want to think much about.

That's the reason for the powerlessness of today's Christianity. Do you know our main calling in life is not to be a witness of Christ's crucifixion as much as of his resurrection. Because the resurrection includes the crucifixion.

Whereas if you just speak about the crucifixion you may not include the resurrection. People talk a lot about the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ has become almost like a magic mantra, magic words by which we drive out the devil.

I've heard all types of superstitious things people say. The blood of Jesus, the blood of Jesus. Sprinkle the blood of Jesus over this compound.

The blood of Jesus is not going to be sprinkled over some building. It's not an Old Testament tabernacle over which the blood of bulls and goats was sprinkled. The blood of Jesus is only sprinkled over to cleanse our conscience from dead works.

So many unscriptural expressions. And if you read, that's why I say if you read the New Testament you'll see the apostles emphasize the resurrection. Christ is alive more than Christ died.

Christ died but he's alive, that's the main thing. Now I want to ask you brothers and sisters when you witness to others do you only speak about that Christ died for your sins or do you tell him that this Jesus is alive today and his life is manifested in us through the Holy Spirit. That's the point.

This resurrection life is to be manifested in us through the Holy Spirit. How do I know that Jesus is alive? Well I can say the Bible says that. I can say I meet so many Christians around me who seem to believe it.

But what if one day all the Christians in the world discovered that Jesus was not alive. And all of them gave up their faith. Would you still hold on to your faith? When everybody else has given up theirs? I hope so.

I remember once in my church I said to the people in my church I said I want you fellows to have a connection with Jesus. Initially you'll have your connection with Jesus through me because I'm your spiritual father. But it's like little children you know in the beginning they are dependent on their mother and father but gradually they stand on their own feet.

They learn to feed themselves and the time comes when they even set up their own home. They live on their own. So it should be like that in our church as well.

In the beginning naturally you're dependent on the one who's brought you to Christ but very quickly we want our children to be independent. So I told them I want you to know the truths of God. Initially you get it second hand from me.

But I want you to take those second hand truths and take it before God and make it first hand. Otherwise you won't really get the full benefit of it. I mean you must make it so first hand that supposing one day this is what I told them.

If I stand in this church and say well brothers you know I've sort of changed my mind on this whole doctrine of victory over sin. I don't think we can really have victory. You should turn around to me and say well that's great brother Zach we'll pray for you but we still believe in victory over sin.

That's what you should tell me. That means just because I lost faith you don't lose yours. Your connection is with Christ.

It must be so connected to Christ that your faith is independent of mine. Even though I may have led you into it in the beginning. This is how it should be in a true church.

You must not be so dependent on a leader that you have no direct connection with Christ. We are put into little groups called local churches. But none of that hinders us from having a direct connection with Christ.

See for example we can look at supposing this arm is a picture of a local church. This arm has got many parts in it. There are muscles, there are tendons, there are joints, there are fingers.

And this is all part of this arm. This is one local church and this is another local church. But these fingers even though they are a part of this arm and they have to move with this arm every time the arm moves yet they all have an individual connection with the head.

They can move on their own. Even without the arm lifting it can move on its own. And not only that even the little nails have got a connection with the head.

I mean try if somebody were to pull out your nails and that's the way they used to torture people your head feels it and you feel it pretty much. There is a direct connection. Even the nails have got a connection with the head.

The smallest little member in the body of Christ must have a connection with Christ. And at the same time you know you are part of a body. If the arm is moving up these fingers can't say hey I haven't got a leading from the head I am going to stay right down here.

You just move with the arm because you are made part of that arm. This is the mistake a lot of people haven't understood. I mentioned that when we were doing the study on the body of Christ in our last conference in March.

How we have two connections. One is with the local church and the other is directly to the head. Slavery is where this arm has no connection with the head except with the local church.

That's all. That's not God's will. We must be a part of a local and then independence is where these arms sort of says I don't want to have any connection with this.

I just want to have a direct connection with that. Buddha wrong. And all this is possible through the Holy Spirit.

God wants us to have a direct connection with Him. And the Holy Spirit is the one who makes this connection with Jesus alive. And that's why it's because of the gift of the Holy Spirit that we read this wonderful word in Hebrews chapter 8 and verse 11.

Hebrews 8, 11 it says they shall not teach everyone his neighbor or his brother saying no the Lord. For all shall know me from the least to the greatest. Least little nail to the greatest.

The shoulder or whatever it is. Or the smallest child and the oldest most mature saint. All shall know the Lord personally.

It's not that the oldest saint has to tell the new believer that your knowledge of the Lord is to be through me. There's a lot of this going on today. Where pastors are finding God's will for people.

Telling them what to do. They call it prophecy. It's tragic.

It's making another mediator between us and Christ. The Roman Catholics teach that. You can't go to Christ directly.

You have to go through Mary. Now Protestants don't teach it. But unfortunately they practice it.

Where you can't know God's will unless you go through the pastor. Well I'll tell you that if I had a choice I'd rather choose Mary than any pastor. Because Mary at least I knew she was a godly woman.

But this pastor I don't know how he's living in private. But thank God I don't have to choose Mary or the pastor. I can go directly to Jesus.

And all of us can have a direct connection with Christ. All shall know me. From the least to the greatest.

In the world they say from the greatest to the least. But you know in scripture everything is right side up. Not upside down.

Right side up. In the world everything is upside down. From the least to the greatest.

That's how it is in God's kingdom. So every one of us can know the Lord personally. And that is through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That's why I say there'd be no Christianity on this earth. If it were not for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Holy Spirit.

They didn't argue theology and terminology with Jesus. They said Lord we can't understand it all but we wait for you. I have met people in you know it's very easy to speak about these things to people in the villages who are not so educated.

And very often who come from non-Christian backgrounds. It's very difficult to teach truths to people who have already come from years of a Christian background you know to get them out of that fixation in their mind certain theology. I find it so much easier to speak to a Hindu who has accepted Christ.

I mean the difference is like trying to build a building on a plot of land where there's another old building. Then you got to first demolish the old building. Pull it all out from the foundation and then put the new building.

But if you go to an empty plot of ground it's so easy. So I find it's so much easier to speak about the baptism and the power of the Holy Spirit to people who don't have a prejudice due to previous ideas from their so called Christian culture. People who know nothing come straight to the Bible and I've often told Christians try and read the New Testament as if you've never read it before.

It'll really open your eyes to some things that you've never seen before. Imagine that you're reading it for the first time. This is the first time you're reading that verse.

First time you're reading that verse. Just go through the New Testament like that and see what happens to you. You may get some revelations which you never had before because you come to it with a preconceived Yeah, that's what it means.

I know what it means. Well, you don't know what it means. Let the Holy Spirit show you something there.

I'm only telling you what I've tried to do. And as I've come to the word of God like that and love the Holy Spirit I've seen the most amazing things in Scripture. Many times when I've shared these truths with other people they say, Brother Zak, I didn't even know it was there.

I was reading it all the time. I didn't even see it. Why didn't you see it? Because you had this fixation.

You had already got a mold of your previous theology and you poured Scripture into it and it came out that shape every time. It's like these cookie cutters. It all comes out the same shape.

But if you come to the Scripture with an open mind, you may discover some things wonderful. The same things I discovered. So I believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is so important for us to know that Jesus is alive.

How did the early Christians all say in 100 A.D. or 200 A.D. when there was nobody alive who had actually seen Jesus risen from the dead. That was Christianity in 200 A.D. None of them had seen Jesus physically alive. They had no written Bible in those days in their hands.

There were letters of Paul here and there. A few copies were there. That's about it.

How did these people know that Jesus was alive? Which verse did they quote? They didn't have any verse to quote. They didn't have a copy of the Gospels. How did they know Jesus was alive? They were so dependent on the Holy Spirit.

I feel that is the dependence on the Holy Spirit that's gone away from a lot of Christians today. Again, understand me properly. Because their dependence has become on the printed Word.

And that's why they spend all their time arguing about whether King James Version is right or some other version is right. Imagine arguing about something like this. It's the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament if you were to ask Israel, people in Israel, can you tell me in one word what is unique about you people? They would have said the Law. Everyone would have said that. We have the Law of God.

The Ten Commandments and God's Laws which makes us unique among all the people of the Earth. And that was true. Now in the same way, if people were to ask you what makes you Christians unique? What would your answer be? What has replaced the Law today? The Old Testament was the Law.

What is the replacement? What is it that has replaced the Law today? Moses went up to the mountain, came down with the Law. Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit. You see the exact parallel.

This is what should be unique. The Holy Spirit of God has come into me and filled my life. He's made Jesus real to me.

Jesus is alive. I mean, I don't care if all 7 billion people in the world today stop believing. It makes no difference to me.

I don't care if all the people in my church go off and leave me. It makes no difference. The Holy Spirit has made Christ real.

If people take away the Bible from me, maybe lock me up in a prison for preaching the Gospel. It makes no difference. I don't need a Bible.

I have the Holy Spirit. That is the fundamental requirement for true Christianity. That's why I say the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra but the central person that should be uppermost when we think of Christianity.

The second person of the Trinity came to earth and most people didn't even know he was there. They ignored him. For 33 years he was in Nazareth and most people didn't even know he was there.

The Almighty God had come in human form. Imagine, so many people didn't even know he was there in their midst walking around there. I sometimes think the Holy Spirit is like that.

The third person of the Trinity has come to the world and most people don't even know he's there. Most people don't even think about it. Can you imagine living in Nazareth and not even realizing that Jesus was living one block away from your house? You didn't even know that.

Don't you think you'd feel terrible after 30 years you discovered, hey, that was Jesus. That was the Son of God living there. It's exactly the same with the third person of the Holy Spirit in churches today.

I believe that if the Holy Spirit left the earth today most churches would continue exactly as they are continuing today. They still have their weekly services. They would still say, Lord, as two or three are gathered together in your name, you are here and we thank you.

Nothing would change. Because most things that go on in Christendom today don't need the Holy Spirit at all. They just need some clever preachers who sat down on Saturday and read a few books and heard a few tapes and prepared a message and came up and presented it on Sunday morning.

They don't need the Holy Spirit for that. Let the Holy Spirit come and go. We'll continue with our services.

We can sing our songs. We've got good music leaders. We don't need the Holy Spirit to lead the music.

No, no. We've got instruments. We've got all types of things nowadays.

This is the tragedy. And mission work would go on because we're getting enough money for missions. Why do you need the Holy Spirit? There's enough missions.

There's enough work, money for missions, everything. 98% or 99% of Christian work would go on even if the Holy Spirit went away from the earth. How is that possible? Doesn't it show how little dependence there is on the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is what makes, brings us into fellowship with God.

He's the living connection between me and God. It's like, you would know if the electricity went off here. It happens sometimes in Bangalore where I live.

In the middle of a sermon, suddenly the electricity goes. And I tell you everybody in the room knows it. Would you know if the Holy Spirit left? Would you know if the Holy Spirit left a preacher? His anointing is gone.

Tragically not. That's the tragedy today. Because we have not honored the Holy Spirit.

We have not you know, we have heard that verse. It's true. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ.

And some people have said that means the Holy Spirit will never talk about the Holy Spirit. You read Romans chapter 8. Was that written by the Holy Spirit? It's full of references to the Holy Spirit. There are more references to the Holy Spirit in Romans 8 than to Jesus.

So we have misunderstood that verse when we read that the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ. That's why we need to know what ministry the Holy Spirit can come and do in us.

Paul tells the Ephesian Christians be filled with the Holy Spirit. Be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. It's so important.

You never read a word saying be filled with Jesus. There's no such verse in scripture. Be filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's so important, the third person of the Trinity. Why is it there's so much bondage in Christendom? I'll tell you. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is liberty.

2nd Corinthians 3 17. Liberty comes freedom from sin, freedom from being enslaved to religious dictators and cult leaders and all this type of stuff. Authoritative pastors and everything comes through being open to the Holy Spirit.

If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you're not filled with the Holy Spirit, you'll be enslaved to some religious leader. And Christendom is full of it. I'm talking about evangelical churches where we have strong leaders who control people, make them dependent on them.

And those poor people respect this man even if he's a carnal, worldly man living in sin. And they listen to his boring sermons Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, not even questioning is the Holy Spirit here? Is the Holy Spirit anointing this preacher who's getting up in the pulpit? They don't even question it. It's a ritual.

They come to the meeting, listen to that boring sermon and go home. You ask your children, how many children would keep watching a boring television program even for a second day? They wouldn't. They've got more sense.

But Christians don't. They go Sunday after Sunday after Sunday, listen to all these boring sermons and never even question is the Holy Spirit working in our church or not? If they questioned it, I tell you they'd fall on their face and repent and seek God and say, Lord, pour out your spirit upon us. Something is missing here.

You know, when the electricity would go off in our churches because electricity is very irregular in many parts of India. We immediately know it if it's at night. And immediately people are looking around for candles or lamps or something.

You need it because we can't read now. I can't read my Bible and somebody will come and put a torch on my table because they know I can't read now. Now, how many people feel like that when the Holy Spirit is not there? How many people feel they need a light when they're reading the Bible? How many people feel every time you know we are taught as Christians you must begin your day by reading the Bible? Good.

But how many of you turn on the light when you read the Bible? I mean the Holy Spirit. How many of you go and say, Lord, I won't be able to read a thing here if I don't have the light of the Holy Spirit. I'm just trying to show you how so much of Christianity moves along even among the so-called Pentecostal charismatic, so-called spirit-filled.

I don't believe they're spirit-filled. They call themselves but I don't believe it. I've had all the experiences they have and I'll tell you a lot of it is counterfeit, what they have.

Because I can see the distinction between the genuine and the counterfeit. The genuine glorifies Christ. The genuine does not exalt a man.

The genuine does not promote the collection of money. That's why I say it's counterfeit. The genuine will not draw attention to an individual.

The genuine will speak more about spiritual healing than physical healing. That's why I know it's counterfeit. Even in the people who claim to have all these gifts and all that.

There's a lot of deception. The Holy Spirit can go away and I tell you healing meetings will continue. People who speak in tongues will still continue to speak in tongues even though the Holy Spirit has departed.

How is that possible? So you need to ask yourself has your background or the theology or terminology that you have used hindered you from coming into the fullness of life that God wants to bring you into

through the Holy Spirit? Has the devil made this sound so complicated that you say, boy, I never will be able to understand this. You don't need to understand brother, sister. You need to have a thirst.

Lord, I want the life of Jesus in me. That's what we need more than anything else. Lord, I'm not living the way I should be living in my home with my wife and children.

I'm not bringing up my children in godly ways the way I should. I don't have the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit in whatever ministry God has called me to fulfill whether as a mother or as a preacher or as an evangelist whatever it is. If you find a lack of power, a lack of boldness Lord, there's something wrong.

If you find yourself constantly in financial difficulties. I don't believe that Jesus in his carpentry business was constantly having financial difficulties. I can't imagine that.

He wasn't the richest carpenter in Nazareth, certainly not because he helped so many poor people. How could he become the richest carpenter in Nazareth? But I don't think that God expects us to live. I don't believe Jesus was in debt for one single day of his life.

He was open to whatever the father told him and he wouldn't buy things he didn't need. He wouldn't spend lavishly such that he had to get into debt. I find many Christians are not careful about these things.

So I want to encourage all of you to be more open to the Holy Spirit because it solves not only our spiritual problems but many practical problems in my life. In our life. I mean, I've never been in debt for a single day in my Christian life.

By the grace of God, the Holy Spirit taught me not to buy what I can't afford. If I can't afford that, live more simply. And when I can afford it, I buy it.

Very simple things. The Holy Spirit's leading is not only for spiritual things. God has placed us on earth.

We are not only spirits. We are spirit, soul and body. God knows that we have to work to earn our living.

God knows we've got to educate our children. We've got to feed our children, clothe our children. God knows we need to have a house to live in.

We need food to eat. He knows all that. And the Holy Spirit's interested in every single area of our life.

So, as I said, avoiding the terminology and the theology. For example, the word baptism in the Holy Spirit. A lot of people have a little problem with that expression.

And the reason is because the word baptize is not an English word. I mean, if I were to use some Indian word here in the pulpit, you wouldn't know what it meant. It's the same way in the original Greek, the word is baptizo.

Today, for Christians, the word baptism has become an English word, but can you think back the first time when the Bible was translated? People had never heard the word baptism before. It is not used. I mean, the average person who has not heard about Christianity knows nothing about the word baptism.

And then, this word baptize was being translated. I've heard the story that when the King James Version was translated, King James, whatever it was, number one or six or something, told all the translators. He gave them a number of rules, and one of the rules was, don't disturb existing church traditions, because I

want to keep on good terms with these priests.

Otherwise, I'll lose my head. So, it was like that in those days in England. So, these people were godly people who translated.

And they came to the word baptize, which they knew is a Greek word, which means immerse. It's a very simple Greek word, which is used in common Greek means immerse people. But how could they translate it as immerse? When nobody was immersing anybody in the Anglican Church.

They were sprinkling water on a baby's head and calling it baptism. But they couldn't honestly translate it as christen them, because that would be wrong. So, they did a very clever thing.

They just used the same word and made it an English word. And put it into the Bible. King James Version.

The version a lot of people think is God's original truth. Baptize. And the first people who got that, they read the King James Version.

They said, baptize. Never heard that word before. Or the Christians were baptized.

Oh, that must be what they do in our churches, right? Sprinkle the children. That's how it started. So, when you talk about baptism in the Holy Spirit, it's the same confusion today.

What does it mean to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? People think of some experience. Some tingling sensation. They've heard testimonies.

Baptism means immersed. Are you immersed in the Holy Spirit? Is that simpler? It was simpler for me when I translated that word. You shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit, not many days from now.

Jesus is the one who immerses you in the Holy Spirit and fire. Now, we understand what it is to be immersed in the fire or John said, I immerse you in water, but he will immerse you in fire. Put you right in the middle of the fire.

Like that burning bush that was on fire. I understand it better. Rather than this word baptism.

So many people get taken up with theology and terminology and miss out on the blessing. Now, the reason I'm explaining this is so that you don't miss out on what God wants you to have. God wants you to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me show you this. In Acts chapter 1, Jesus said this. He says, Wait for what the Father has promised.

This is Acts 1 verse 4. Which you heard from me. John immersed you with water, but you shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. So, they waited and he also told them, when you are immersed in the Holy Spirit, you know what's going to happen? Verse 8, you will receive power.

Not tongues, not healing, but power. Power to do what? Not power to heal the sick or to do miracles or raise the dead. Power to be my witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.

It's so clear. You know, whenever you are in doubt about something in scripture, here's a little principle I can tell you. Go back to the beginning and then you won't go wrong.

That's why we speak about the church described in the New Testament. Go back to the beginning. That's the way God wanted the church to be.

You think of marriage, for example. There were a lot of divorce and all in Jesus' time because people were following the law. And when they came to Jesus and said, is it right to divorce? Jesus said, let's go back to the beginning when God made Adam.

Did he give him two women and say, choose which you want? Did he give him the option of divorcing Eve and looking for another? No. One man, one woman. So Jesus said, go back to the beginning.

Now that's a very important principle. Whenever you're in doubt about all the confused state of human beings or of Christendom today, go back to the beginning. So there's a lot of confusion concerning the evidence of the fullness of the Holy Spirit and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

What shall we do? Go back to the beginning. The beginning is here. You shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit and when you are immersed in the Holy Spirit, you will receive power.

Power for what? Power to be my witnesses in every part of the world. Now, let's read that carefully. Being a witness is different from just bearing witness.

Bearing witness is with my lips. Being a witness means my life and my words. You shall be my witnesses to the outermost parts of the earth.

And the word for witness, by the way, just by way of interest, in the Greek in which the New Testament was originally written, the word for witness is martyr. Martyrs, from which we get the word martyr. You shall be my martyrs after you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Your life and your words will demonstrate me. My witnesses. You shall be witnesses unto me unto the outermost parts of the earth.

That means when I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, I go to different parts of the world. My life will reflect Christ. My words will reflect Christ.

This is why I need the power of the Holy Spirit. This is why I need the power of the Holy Spirit. To reflect Christ in my life.

And if I find I'm unable to reflect the life of Christ, what do I need? The power of the Holy Spirit. If I'm unable to speak forth the words of Christ effectively, powerfully to people, what do I need? The power of the Holy Spirit. I remember when I felt God was calling me to a preaching ministry.

I said, I need the power of the Holy Spirit more than anything else. How in the world can I do this otherwise? You know sometimes in India, in some of our conferences, I have to speak 5 or 6 times a day. 3 or 4 days.

And in between those sessions, there will be so many people who want to talk to me about various things and counsel. And I find myself in all those situations, morning till night, sometimes till way past midnight, you know, just giving out, giving out, giving out, giving out. And I said, Lord, this is impossible unless I have a connection with the river of God, which is always full of water.

Many times when I feel a bit dry, I say, Lord, your river is full of water, right? I want the channel to be clear. Because that river can flow. I want to say to you, my dear brothers and sisters, you may not be called to preach, but whatever you're called to, maybe you're called to be an evangelist, maybe you're called to be a mother, and it can be a strain to be a mother.

You know what you need? The power of the Holy Spirit. I don't care what your calling is, the answer is here. You need to be immersed in the Holy Spirit.

And you shall receive power to be a witness for me as a mother, as a preacher, as an evangelist, as a teacher. Our callings are all different, like different parts of the body of Christ, but we all need power. A paralyzed hand and a paralyzed tongue.

You know what they need? Power. When the tongue is healed of its paralysis, it becomes a powerful tongue, able to speak. Now, if the hand hears that testimony and says, God, give me power, and I'll also become a tongue, it won't.

When it gets power, it'll be a hand. You understand that? Now apply that to the body of Christ. You hear the testimony of some great preacher like D.L. Moody or Charles Finney or somebody, they got baptized in the Holy Spirit, they became very effective evangelists.

You say, boy, if I get it, I'll be an effective evangelist. No. You may be just a better mother, that's all.

You'll be effective in that part of the body of Christ that you are called to be, so fullness of the Holy Spirit will strengthen you to be what you're supposed to be, not what somebody else's gift and ministry is. It's very important to understand this. And so we see here that if you were to go to these people when they were waiting, think of that, I picture this sometimes.

You know, we know now that they had to wait for 10 days, but at that time they didn't know how long they had to wait. He just told them to wait until the Spirit came. So here were these 120 people who obeyed Jesus and were waiting, waiting, waiting.

Supposing you went to one of them on the seventh day and said, hey, what are you fellas waiting for? We are waiting to be immersed in the Holy Spirit because Jesus told us to wait. Uh-huh. How will you know that you've been immersed in the Holy Spirit? Well, Jesus said, we will get power to be witnesses.

Till now we were sitting inside the closed doors, you were scared to witness, but it's all gonna change when the Holy Spirit comes. Not one of them would have told you, we will speak in tongues or we will heal the sick. You see how Christianity has twisted what Jesus told them that they would receive.

And they've got their doctrines from historical sections of scripture and not from the teaching sections of scripture. In the New Testament, there are historical sections and there are teaching sections. Historical sections tell us what happened.

You can't get a doctrine from there. For example, uh, it says in Acts of the Apostles that Paul and Barnabas had a big fight. What doctrine do you get from that? Or Paul circumcised Timothy, what doctrine do you get from that? He himself later on said it was wrong.

Or that he shaved his head once to fulfill a Jewish vow. The historical section, it's the truth, it's the truth that Paul shaved his head, but there's no truth for us to learn from that. Or here's another thing mentioned

in scripture which a lot of people uh, don't speak much about.

Um, in the same chapter where it says Acts chapter 2 they all spoke in tongues. It also says they all sold everything they had. But I never find people taking that part of scripture.

You see, it's dangerous to take a doctrine from the Acts of the Apostles, the historical section. Get your doctrine on any subject from the teaching of Jesus or the teaching of the Epistles, the teaching sections of scripture. The historical sections, for example, there are three places in Acts in Matthew's Gospel.

Matthew chapter 4, chapter 8, and chapter 12, where it says Jesus healed all of them. Sometimes he healed only one person, the pool of Bethesda. Sometimes he healed some.

But in three places it says he healed everybody who came. What doctrine do you get from that? It says in Acts chapter 5, one place, all of them were healed. Now if you get a doctrine from the teaching of scripture, you'll live in a very unrealistic world, like a lot of Christians are living today, where they say every Christian will be healed.

Well, you know it's not true. Even among those who preach it, it's not true. That's what I mean by trying to get a doctrine.

I'm trying to clear out confused ideas you may have about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Go to the words of Jesus. What did he say you would get? Power.

Power for what? To be a witness for Christ. In your own particular gift. When I was a young Christian, I didn't know much about the Bible, I just started reading.

I said, okay, I can share with people what I know. I know how to be saved. I know how to have my sins forgiven.

Like, you know, 101. Lesson number. Christianity 101.

Being born again. Accepting Christ. So I said, okay, I can do that.

So I spent my early days just witnessing. I would witness to people in the train and the bus and stand in the streets and witness. That's all I knew.

Tell people about Jesus. But I found over a period of time that God didn't give me the gift of being an evangelist. I wanted to be.

I wanted to be a missionary, but God didn't call me to be a witness where to another part of the country. I found that God was teaching me to be enabling me to be a teacher. He gave me a love for studying the scriptures.

Now I'll tell you honestly, that was not my first choice. My first choice was much more interesting and exciting to be an evangelist than to be a teacher. Because you have numbers.

You have so many people you brought to Christ. But I found that God was giving me a love to study the word and blessing my teaching ministry in those early days more than my evangelistic ministry. I have to say reluctantly I accepted God's will.

But now when I am more mature and I look back on my life I see that God was preparing me for a particular ministry that He knew was needed in the church at a particular time. I didn't know that. So God will equip you.

I'll tell you He'll do the same for you. I'm no special favorite of God. You're as much a favorite of God as I am.

Because He redeemed you with the same blood that He redeemed me with. So you know if you're both of equal value I hope you remember that. And therefore He will equip you for that particular function in the body of Christ which may not be your first choice.

I mean some of you sisters may like to go as missionaries to Africa when God's given you 5 or 6 children to look after here. That's your ministry then. Don't leave that and run off to Africa.

That's not God's will for you. That particular task God has called you for He'll equip you for it. To be a witness for me unto the ends of the earth.

Now let's look at Jesus' own life. When Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. We read in Acts 10 and verse 38.

Acts of the Apostles chapter 10 verse 38. You know Jesus of Nazareth This is Peter speaking to Cornelius. How when God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power and how He went about doing good and healing all those who were oppressed by the devil.

Delivering people who were oppressed by the devil. That's what Jesus did. He got power.

Jesus never spoke in tongues but He got power. And every one of us needs power. Now God also gives the gift of tongues.

I personally feel the gift of tongues is a help to the limitations of our mind which Jesus did not have. That's why He never needed it. And that's why when we get to heaven we'll never speak in tongues anymore.

We don't need. We don't have the limitations of the mind we have here. But that's another subject.

But the point is this. What Jesus got was power. And what He promised to the apostles was power.

And that's what we need to seek for. Power to be a witness for Christ. A bold witness for Christ wherever I am.

In my shop. In my school or hospital or factory or store or wherever I work. Or in a school or a college or in my home or with my relatives or my neighbors.

Never to be ashamed of Christ. To my unconverted relatives. Never to be ashamed to manifest the life of Christ in a gracious way.

Not in the stubborn religious way. If you don't believe you'll go to hell. No.

You're not going to draw people to heaven like that. To Christ like that. But to be a witness for Christ.

Yeah. That's a tremendous challenge I find and I would say this whenever I've urged people to seek for the power of the Holy Spirit. I usually don't use the phrase baptism of the Holy Spirit because I know

people have a reserve against that.

Some reluctance to accept it. I usually turn them to John 7 38. The verse we saw earlier.

He who believes in me out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. And I go step by step with them. If they are born again I say if your sins are forgiven.

Now if the person's sins are not forgiven then I would tell them that they're sinners and they need to receive Christ and have their sins forgiven. But once their sins are forgiven I would ask them are you a believer? According to this verse. He who believes in me.

And I would say that to you today. Do you believe in Jesus Christ? You say yes. Then here is what the Lord wants to be fulfilled in your life.

As the scripture has said out of your innermost being. That applies to everyone here who believes in Christ. Shall flow rivers of living water.

That means outflow not just one little trickle. But rivers. Think of a picture in your mind of rivers of abundance flowing in different directions.

Blessing people. You know if you look at the old maps of civilization. You know the beginning of human history.

You'll always find people congregated near a river. The great cities were always built around rivers. Because that's where people congregated.

Why did they congregate around rivers? Because they needed water. Why didn't you find people congregating in deserts? They always congregated around rivers. And that's how a Christian should be.

People should be drawn to you because you reflect Christ. And I asked them this question. Dear brother, now be honest with yourself.

Sister. Can you say that rivers of living water are flowing out from you? Let's be honest. I'm telling you exactly the way I went through it.

I looked at this verse as a young man. And I said, Lord, it's not true in my life. I have to be honest.

In India, in many places where they don't have running water, they have what are called hand pumps. They have a bore well which is dug deep into the ground and they have no electricity. You pump it up with your hand.

And you pump and pump and pump and after a great deal of effort you get about a bucket of water. I said, Lord, my ministry is something like that. With a tremendous amount of effort, I managed to get about a bucket.

It's miles away from rivers. Nobody pumps a river. It just flows.

God pumps it. And I said, Lord, I have to face up to the fact this is not a description of my life. But like I said, this is what your word says.

I want to get there. I don't care how. I'm not going to get stuck in terminology and theology and all those types of things.

A lot of Christians are stuck about, I don't know about baptism in the Holy Spirit or fullness of the Holy Spirit. I don't know whether I got something or I got everything when I was converted like some people said. Or I have to wait for something like some people say.

I say, Lord, I don't know. To tell you honestly, I don't know. I'm just a newly born again Christian.

But one thing I tell you, Lord, I want what your word says. That rivers of living water should come out from me. However long it takes.

I want to ask you the same question I faced as a young man. Are you willing to give an honest answer to this question? Are rivers of living water flowing out from you? Are people congregating around you because you got Christ. They got something that they can be drawn to.

Like people congregated around the rivers in the olden days. If not, next question. Do you want it? How desperately do you want it? Do you thirst? Are you willing to pay any price for it? If I were to say, how many of you would like a glass of water right now? I think most of us would say, yeah, I wouldn't mind a glass of water.

But supposing I say, listen, this glass of water costs \$100,000. Would you like it? Oh, well, I'm not that thirsty. Thank you.

But if you were wandering out around in a desert for the last one week and they were dying of thirst and somebody offered you a glass of water for your entire life's fortune, life savings, you'd give it. Because you're desperate. Are you that desperate for the Holy Spirit? Or you say, well, if that ice cream costs \$100,000, I don't want it.

Ice cream is not everything there is to life. I can live without it. You know, that is the reason why many people never receive the power of the Holy Spirit in their life.

They're not desperate. They're not saying, Lord, I can't live without it. I'll never forget the testimony of a great Indian saint.

I mean, his life challenged me more than any other Indian I've ever known. His name was Sadhu Sundar Singh. He was converted way back in the early 1900s and died in 1929.

But he was from a non-Christian religion and when he was a young 14-15 year old boy, he was so desperate in his search for God and he didn't know who the true God was. He was from a Sikh religion and he had torn the Bible and he didn't believe Christianity was the truth. But one day he became so desperate in his search for God, he knelt down in his room early at 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning and said, Oh God, I don't know who you are but whoever you are, reveal yourself to me within the next one hour or so, otherwise I'll go and put my head on those railway tracks before that morning 5.30 train comes by.

He was desperate. He wasn't playing games. He wasn't looking for God like you look for a dime that you've lost in the grass somewhere.

No! He was desperate and he saw a vision and he thought he would see some other heathen God and he saw Jesus and he was converted on the spot and his whole life was transformed. He was the greatest

saint India has ever produced. His life was a constant challenge to me and the hunger that young boy had at the age of 15, I said, Lord, I know that you're a rewarder of those who diligently seek you.

Jeremiah 29.13 says, You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. That was a man who sought God with all his heart. Christianity was not a, you know, knowing God was not an extra option like an ice cream at the end of your meal.

It was everything! If I didn't have it, I couldn't live. And so, he found God. I believe it's something like that when we seek for the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I know it was like that for me. I said, Lord, I want the power of the Holy Spirit in my life. I don't want to... You know, a time came in my life when about 34 years ago when I said, Lord, I'm not going to continue preaching.

You got to really meet with me and fill me with the Holy Spirit. I'm not going to preach because I'm just a hypocrite. I need power and that's when I was desperate, God met with me.

And I want to tell you, if you're desperate, you know, supposing your child were sick and they needed a special injection, which is found very rarely in any pharmaceutical shop, medical shop, you would search all over the country. Call here, search the internet, go here, there to try and get that injection to save your child. I wonder if we feel that need for the Holy Spirit's power like that in our life.

If we did, God would meet with us. Any man thirst, let him come to me, Jesus says. Let's pray.

Let's bow our heads for God. You know, I believe that the Holy Spirit has created a longing in your heart. The question is whether you'll allow the devil to come and quench it in the next few days or you will preserve it and say, Lord, I'm not going to give up until you meet with me.

I've had enough of this third-rate type of hand-pumped type of Christianity. I want the rivers more than anything else in my life. There's no partiality with God, remember this.

Heavenly Father, help us each one. We pray in Jesus' name.

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