

(The Power of the Holy Spirit - 1) the Breath of God

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit as the breath of God that empowers believers for a victorious Christian life.

Duration: 56:58

Scripture: Genesis 1:3, Genesis 1:6, 1 Kings 19:12, Job 38:1, Luke 16:29, John 3:8, John 8:32

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins a series of messages on the power of the Holy Spirit. He focuses on the use of word pictures by Jesus to illustrate spiritual truths. The first picture discussed is the comparison of the Holy Spirit to wind or breath. The speaker emphasizes the importance of speaking God's word and the transformative power it has, using the example of Ezekiel prophesying to dry bones. He highlights the need for the breath of God, the Holy Spirit, to bring life and make believers soldiers in the army of the Lord.

Transcript

This morning I want to begin a series of four messages and I'll take it through this day. The subject is the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a master at using word pictures like none of the prophets in the Old Testament.

He used pictures to illustrate deep spiritual truths. And so what I want to do in these four sessions is take some of the pictures that Jesus used to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian. And the first one I want to look at this morning is, we'll begin with a verse in John's Gospel and chapter 3, where He spoke about the Holy Spirit and compared Him to wind or air or breath.

They're all the same thing. The Holy Spirit is the breath of God that blows over the Christian and over the church. In John's Gospel, chapter 3, verse 8, referring to this, He said, The wind blows where it wishes.

And you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So is everyone who is born of the Holy Spirit. So He compared to the Holy Spirit there to wind.

And we know that on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon those 120 waiting disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, He came as a rushing wind, symbolizing the breath of God. When Jesus

was about to leave His disciples, the disciples naturally felt insecure, just like children whose parents have suddenly died or were about to die. That's exactly how they felt.

And that's why Jesus told them that, I'm not going to leave you orphans. He told them in John's Gospel, chapter 14, at the Last Supper. In verse 16, I'm not going to leave you orphans.

Verse 18, verse 16, He said, I'm going to ask the Father and He will give you another helper. Translated as comforter in some versions. Helper here in the NASB.

I believe that's what the Holy Spirit is. But the thing I want you to notice here is that Jesus said another helper. So who was the first one? That was Jesus Himself.

So when He said another helper, what He was saying is, here was that, it's going to be just like me being with you. Exactly the same. The difference will be that as long as I was on earth, Jesus would say, if I was in Galilee, I couldn't be in Jerusalem.

If I was in Jerusalem, I couldn't be in Galilee. But when the Holy Spirit has come, He's going to bring my presence exactly the same as it is right now, with this advantage that I could be everywhere. Another helper.

There is absolutely no difference between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Some people when they pray for the power of the Holy Spirit, they are scared. As to what will happen? What will I receive? All you need to ask yourself is, are you scared of Jesus Christ? It's exactly the same.

Another helper. And through the years, the devil has succeeded in bringing so much confusion concerning the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit, concerning what he does in the life of the Christian. But if we can keep this in mind, He is another helper.

Exactly the same as the first helper, Jesus Himself. Then we won't have any confusion. He cannot do anything that Jesus would not do.

He cannot do anything to us that Jesus would not do. And at the same time, positively, He will do everything for us that Jesus would do. That's the very purpose with which the Holy Spirit has come.

Now, in Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit was not given. He used to come upon people occasionally to empower them for a particular task. Like Samson, you know, to deliver the Israelites.

Gideon, to deliver the Israelites. Usually to lead God's people in delivering them from their enemies. But that would be only one person.

Sometimes He'd come on a prophet to proclaim God's message to His people. But there was something distinctive that was going to take place on the day of Pentecost. And Jesus explained it right here.

He said in John 14, in verse 17, He says, at the moment, in the last part of that verse, it says, He abides with you and in that day He will be in you. And there's a lot of difference between somebody being with us and somebody being inside us. That is the essential difference between the Old Testament ministry of the Holy Spirit and the New Testament.

Now He could be inside. The Old Testament period when God dealt with the Israelites could be called the Age of the Law. The Ten Commandments.

And the New Testament period in which we are living today could be called the Age of the Holy Spirit. And if you want to know the difference when considering this picture that we used of the wind and the breath of God. How could we picture the Old Testament period? It's like a rowing boat.

And you know when you row a boat, you got to put in so much effort to go from one place to another. And that describes life under the law. You do move, but it's pretty slow and with a lot of effort and you get tired pretty soon.

Especially if the sea is rough. And that's how it is in the world generally. But life in the Holy Spirit is like a sailing boat where the breath of God comes and fills the sails.

Of course, you need to cooperate too. You know that you can't let a sailing boat go all by itself in the sea. You got to hold the tiller.

You got to control the sails. But, it's not your power. It's the power of the wind of God.

And you don't get so exhausted like in a rowing boat. A lot of Christians are still living under the Old Covenant. Their life is a struggle.

And Jesus spoke to such Christians and said, come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden. Trying to pull this rowing boat. And I will give you rest.

That was the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And I believe there is something we have missed. I've often thought of it like this.

It's like if you were to go into some jungle and give a man a gift of a motor car. A person who has never seen a car. And tell him that your whole family can travel in this.

And he has never seen a car. But, it looks nice. And he puts his family inside.

And begins to push the car. And it moves slowly, but it does move. That is life under the law.

There is a secret. He has not understood about that motor car. Till somebody who knows the truth comes and releases him.

And tells him that's not the way to use a car. And that's what we need to tell a lot of Christians. That's not the way you are supposed to live the Christian life.

There is a power. And when you explain that to him and he gets inside and turns on the engine. He says, boy, I never knew that all these years.

How different from what it was before. Many Christians have struggled along after being born again. Through many years, I know it was like that in my life for many, many years after being born again.

I was pushing the car. I moved, but it was a struggle. Most of the time, I was too tired to push anymore.

Till I understood the secret of new covenant Christianity. That God never intended us to live pulling this rowing boat. But to allow the breath of God to come and fill our lives.

Strengthen us from within. So that we can live as he calls us to live. You know, we could also go back to the beginning of creation.

When God made man, it says he made man unlike the animals. The animals, he just spoke a word and the animals were created. But when it came to man, he made him from the dust of the earth.

And picture this in your mind. Once when God has completed Adam. Everything is there.

Eyes, 10 fingers. And they looked exactly like our fingers and our eyes. Legs, everything.

There was only one thing missing. Breath. And what would the use of that man have been if he didn't get that one most important thing.

And so often many a Christian is like that. Everything is there. The right doctrines.

Religious activity. Giving money for God's work. Reading the Bible every day.

Following the rules. The one thing is missing. The breath of God.

And it makes all the difference. It makes all the difference. When the apostle Paul once went to a city called Ephesus.

We read in the next book. Acts chapter 19. Acts to the apostles in chapter 19.

Paul came to Ephesus and he found some disciples there. And after spending a little while with them. Maybe just a few hours.

He felt something is missing in these folk. Yeah, they believe in Jesus. They love Jesus.

But something is missing. And Paul as a man who was walking with God could discern something was missing. Maybe they didn't seem to have that joy and abundance.

Abundant, overflowing life that he expected to find in Christians. And he asked them a question. He said, did you fellows receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? He said, we haven't even heard about the Holy Spirit.

We heard about Jesus, but he says in verse 4 that in verse 3 they were baptized in John's baptism. And John had preached about Jesus so they knew about Jesus, but they didn't know about the Holy Spirit's power. I think a lot of Christians are like that.

They know about Jesus dying for their sins. And they know that God expects them to live up to a certain standard of the Christian life. But they don't know how to drive the car.

There is something they haven't understood. And they are like the people in the rowing boat, struggling, struggling, very sincere. But they haven't understood something.

Jesus said, you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. You know, we would wonder, why doesn't God proclaim from heaven to all Christians, be filled with the Holy Spirit. I think of the answer that Abraham gave to the rich man who was in hell.

The rich man asked Abraham, could you please send Lazarus down to earth to tell my four brothers, my five brothers to repent. And do you know what Abraham said? You read that in the last verse of Luke 16. They've got the Bible.

If they read it, they'll know. There is no need for somebody to go from heaven and tell them again. There is no need for God to speak from heaven to Christians saying, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's there in the Bible. If they read it, they would know that they need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If they don't, if they're too lazy to read what God took the trouble to write and give us, then they've got only themselves to blame for living their old Christian life at a substandard level.

My dear brothers and sisters, don't let the devil rob us of our birthright. It's God's will that every single person who is born again be filled with the Holy Spirit and live continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. And don't get turned off from this because of the extremes that you may see in some people who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I know there are many people who get turned off from being when you tell them about being born again. Because they say, hey, I know a few fellows who claim to be born again and I know how they behave. And what do we tell them? We say, yes, there are counterfeits.

There is counterfeit currency, there's counterfeit diamonds, there are counterfeit pearls, there are counterfeit Christians. And there are counterfeit spirit-filled Christians. You see, nothing cheap is counterfeited, right? Nobody counterfeits brown paper or newspaper.

People only counterfeit diamonds and currency and valuable things. So, a spirit-filled Christian must be very valuable if the devil is trying to counterfeit that experience. There must be something real if there is a counterfeit.

There are plenty of counterfeits. But that proves to me there's something real and that that something real is valuable. And what is the difference between a really spirit-filled Christian and one who is not spirit-filled? The difference would be between Adam without the breath and Adam with breath.

I trust you see there is some difference between the two of them, Adam with breath and without breath. That's what we see right at the beginning. And when Jesus came, came out of the grave and met his disciples.

We read of an instance where we read in John chapter 20 that when he met them, no doubt he taught them many things and that's important for us to understand what Jesus teaches. But we read here in John chapter 20 and verse 22. John's gospel chapter 20 verse 22.

He breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. All the teaching he gave them for three and a half years was not enough. He needed to breathe on them.

And these are folks who have been with Jesus day and night for three and a half years and heard hundreds of the best sermons from the best preacher that ever walked on this earth. And imagine if you and I had walked with Jesus for three and a half years and given up everything to follow him like Peter and James and John and been taught by him and walked with him. We would think we're ready now.

We're not. He still needs to breathe on us. Just the same way he breathed on Adam thousands of years earlier that made Adam a living soul.

He breathed on these disciples as it were to say, all the teaching I gave you has gotten to your head. That's okay but you need something in your heart now. You need a power.

You need the breath of God. And Jesus breathed on them the breath of God. And what did we read in the beginning in John chapter 3? He said, the wind blows where it wishes.

You hear the sound of it but you don't know where it comes from and where it's going. So is everyone who is born of the spirit. Now Jesus was saying that there's a variety in the way the wind blows.

It doesn't always blow from the southwest or the north or the east. It can blow from 360 degrees from different directions. We know that that the wind doesn't always blow from one direction.

And notice this, I believe this can deliver us from a lot of confusion concerning how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of Christians. Just like the wind blows where it wishes and you can't explain where it comes from, where it's going. So is everyone who is born of the spirit.

That means there could be 360 different ways in which the Holy Spirit operates in Christians. And here's the mistake that a lot of Christians have made. They have said, the way he worked with me must be the way he works with you.

Who said that? The wind blows where it wishes. So is everyone who is born of the spirit. And a hundred people who are born of the spirit, the Holy Spirit could work in a hundred different ways in them.

But it will always be the breath of God. But the manifestations of his working can be different. And the mistake a lot of Christians have made through the years is to look for the same experience and manifestation that somebody else had, thinking that's the only way that the Holy Spirit works.

Now I want to use the illustration of breath here and tell you something more about how the Holy Spirit speaks. Let me show you a verse in the book of Job. It's just before the book of Psalms.

In the book of Job we read about a time when God spoke to Job. Now I want you to notice something here. We saw that the Holy Spirit is the breath of God.

Jesus breathed on his disciples. And it's like I said, the difference between rowing a boat and sailing a boat with the wind pushing you along. That's a perfect description.

That comparison is a perfect description of life under the law and life under the power of the Holy Spirit. And when I say life under the law, I'm not just talking about Old Testament Jews. There are a lot of Christians who live under the law.

What do I mean by that? Their Christian life is full of rules and regulations. As long as they keep those rules and regulations, they're good Christians but sometimes they get a bit fed up of keeping them and slacking off and they're not good Christians. They get tired and rest on their oars and the boat stops or backslides in the sea.

But life in the spirit is different. That wind is always blowing. The boat never stops.

It keeps moving. There is a Christian life like that. And some folks have entered into it and every one of us can enter into it.

Remember on the day of Pentecost there were 120 people who believed in Jesus who had seen Him die and believed that His death was for their sins. Who waited and every one of them was filled with the Holy Spirit. Teaching us that God doesn't leave anybody out.

If we wait on Him there is no partiality with God. If 120 children ask Him for bread, He'll give bread to all 120. Not one will be left out.

If you've accepted Christ as your Saviour and you're a child of God and you ask God to give you the power of His Holy Spirit, He cannot say no. We've got to believe that. Don't let the devil make you feel that oh you're not worthy or you're not fit or you've got to go through some many days of fasting and prayer and all that.

There are so many things that the devil tries to tell us to make us feel we'll never make it. The world is full of people who don't receive the forgiveness of sins because they feel they're not worthy enough. Who is worthy to receive the forgiveness of sins? Did you receive forgiveness of sins because you were worthy? Far from it.

We're unworthy. Completely unworthy. Jesus said I came to call sinners, not the righteous.

And He doesn't give the Holy Spirit's power to those who have graduated to some high level in the Christian life. No. He gives the Holy Spirit's power to people who are in the gutter to help them to come higher in the Christian life.

Remember that. Don't ever think this is some reward God gives for faithfulness. No.

Rewards for faithfulness are in heaven. The power of the Holy Spirit is God's gift. It was given, breath was given freely to Adam.

Jesus breathed on those disciples. All 120 received the Holy Spirit's power and every single Christian can live the spiritual life. But as I said, the way He works may be different in different Christians.

Job chapter 38. In Job the book of Job chapter 38 I just want you to see one verse here. Verse 1 The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

That's the breath of God. A whirlwind. I can imagine it stirred up a lot of things and you know tore through the mountains.

Stirred up a lot of dust in that desert. And God spoke. Sometimes the Holy Spirit works like that.

Like a whirlwind. Blowing up things and things that need to be blown out of many churches. Then I want to show you another verse in 1 Kings and chapter 19.

Just a few books earlier. 1 Kings chapter 19 Here we read of the great prophet Elijah. He was waiting up in the mountains for God to speak to him.

And it says here in 1 Kings chapter 19 that Elijah came into a cave. Verse 9. Came into a cave and lodged there. And the word of the Lord came to him.

And the Lord told him, verse 11 Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord. And behold the Lord was passing by and a great and a strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord. But listen to this.

For the Lord was not in the wind. You see how people who follow rules get confused. I am sure Elijah knew all about Job.

How when God spoke to Job he spoke through a whirlwind. And here he saw this mighty whirlwind coming rending the mountains and breaking the rocks in pieces. And if he had lived according to rules he would have said that must be the Lord.

But the Bible says that was not the Lord. Don't think that every commotion you see in Christian churches is of the Lord. It's not.

Sometimes the Holy Spirit works like a whirlwind. But if you try to imitate that, the Lord won't be there. It's so important to understand this.

And then it says after the wind there was an earthquake. Boy, that was even worse. The Lord was not in the earthquake.

And then there was a fire. The Lord was not in the fire. And after this a sound of a gentle blowing.

It's a light breeze. Can the Lord be in a light breeze? He was. And he says as this breeze came along the voice of the Lord came through the gentle breeze.

The mistake that Christians have made, particularly in the last century, has been to think that because the Lord spoke to me through a whirlwind he must speak to everybody through a whirlwind. Or because the Lord spoke to me in a gentle breeze he must speak to everybody in a gentle breeze. This is life under the law.

But Jesus said, the wind blows where it wishes. And it blows how it wishes. And you can't try and control it.

You can't try and lock up the wind into a little box of rules and say this is the only way he must work. Of one thing we can be sure. That the Holy Spirit is the breath of God.

And where he comes and fills a person he will bring forth in that person the nature of Christ. That will be true of all Christians. But the way he works, the way he speaks, the way he operates could be at times like a whirlwind and could be at times like a gentle breeze.

Both are the breath of God. Because God is not limited to work in a particular way alone. One of the wonderful things about God in this universe is variety.

All the planets are not the same size. They rotate around the sun in different orbits and at different speeds. And all the flowers are not the same size or the same color.

Variety is true of all of God's creation. God is a God of variety. And when a Christian demands that other people must have the same experience that they had, they haven't understood the variety that God seeks to manifest in his church.

And that's why it's important to learn to accept one another the way they are. And to allow the Holy Spirit to work differently in different people. Take the matter of sickness for example.

We read in the Bible of many people who were healed miraculously. Even the dead were raised. We also read about the apostle Paul having a thorn in the flesh that was never healed.

We read of Timothy. In 1 Timothy 5.20, having stomach infirmities that were never healed. How do we explain all this? We cannot.

The wind blows where it wishes. But one thing is true. The person who is healed by the Holy Spirit's power and the one whom God does not heal for some other better reason, both if they submit to the Holy Spirit can be Christ-like in their conduct, in their behavior.

The greatest thing in the Christian life is not physical healing. It's becoming like Jesus Christ. The greatest thing in the Christian life is not becoming rich.

It's becoming like Christ. We see Christians who are rich. We see Christians who are poor.

The wind blows where it wishes. There's tremendous variety. I find this particularly in a country like India.

We have extremes in standards of living. A thousand different standards of living. And there are Christians at all these levels.

And like the fingers of a hand, God made them all different size. We're not communists to cut it all off the same size and say we've got to make it all equal. No.

No, we don't. We say we'll leave them the size they are, the size God made them because wonderful functions to be fulfilled when they're different sizes. And God allows us to have different levels of IQ and different levels of wealth and economic standards, etc.

And that's the variety there is. The same principle applies in the way the Holy Spirit works. We shouldn't think that the Holy Spirit's in a meeting only when we all feel emotional.

Or when we make a lot of noise. Or when we are quiet. No.

I'll tell you when the Holy Spirit operates. When we come before God in sincerity with a clear conscience. I remember once in our church meeting back home when a couple of the musicians were not playing in tune and that disturbed me.

Even though I don't have such a musical ear. So it must have been pretty bad. And the Lord said to me, He doesn't disturb me.

And He said, What does disturb me is that there are husband and wife here who are not in tune with each other. There are brothers and sisters who are not in tune with each other. That's what disturbs God more than the music.

Being in tune or not in tune. And I prayed a little prayer that day. And I said, Lord, don't let anything that doesn't disturb you disturb me anymore.

And let the things that disturb you disturb me. For I want to be a servant of God. When can we say the Holy Spirit is in the meeting? When people have come in sincerity with a clear conscience cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

God is delighted. But where there are hidden tensions, bitterness, unresolved conflicts. We can all sing with great emotion and deceive ourselves that the Holy Spirit was there.

He wasn't. Making a lot of noise in a meeting is not the proof of the Holy Spirit's presence. See, some people feel like that.

I want to show you an example in 1 Samuel chapter 4. Some of these Old Testament stories have a tremendous message for us. And if we read them, we can find an application in our lives today. Here is one example of that.

1 Samuel chapter 4 we read of a time when the Philistines were attacking the nation of Israel. Verse 1 Israel in the middle of that verse went out to meet the Philistines in battle. And we read there that they killed the Philistines.

Verse 2, the last part, killed 4,000 Israelites on the battlefield. They were thoroughly defeated. And then the Israelites thought, you know the Israelites were in a very backslidden state at this time.

They had, it's just after the book of Judges. And if you read the book of Judges, you see they were in idolatry and all types of sins. And they were in a very, very backslidden state.

But they thought, hey we haven't done the ritual properly. If we do the ritual properly, God will be with us. And so they said, we better bring the ark into our midst.

The ark was the most sacred part of the tabernacle. And so they brought the ark of the covenant, verse 4, and brought it into the midst. And it says here, this is the part I want you to notice.

Verse 5, when the ark came, Israel shouted with such a great shout, it must have been hallelujahs and praise the Lord, so loudly that it says the earth resounded. Earth shook underneath their feet. I've never been in a meeting where it was so loud that the earth began to shake.

This must have been really loud. And they thought, at last God is here. Because the earth began to shake with our sound.

And the philistines also thought, hey verse 7, God is coming to their camp, the philistines said. Because they had the same idea. That when people make a lot of noise, God has come there.

But God wasn't there at all. Despite all their hallelujahs. The first time they went to battle, they lost 4,000 men.

Now they got the ark of the Lord and shouted hallelujah so loud the earth shook and then went into battle. And we read in verse 10, they lost 30,000 men. They got a worse defeat than before.

Teaching us that it's not noise that brings God's presence into a gathering. It's a clear conscience. By this shall all men know you are my disciples when you love one another.

When there is no bitterness. When I can say that my conscience is absolutely clear before God and men. Get 3 people like that and God is there.

Jesus said if 2 or 3 are gathered together here I am in the midst. So these are things that we need to be aware of when we think of the wind of God blowing. The wind of God can blow in our midst if we come together before him with a clear conscience.

Every one of us can experience that. If we humble ourselves, acknowledge our sin and say Lord Jesus I confess my sin. I don't want to put the blame on somebody else.

I have sinned. Cleanse me. Fill me with your Holy Spirit.

I want to say one more thing here in Genesis chapter 1. It's something interesting that we see right at the beginning of scripture that when God created the heaven and the earth. We know that it's not all written here. It's written Isaiah and Ezekiel.

God first made the angels and the angels sinned. And wherever sin comes in chaos comes into creation. It happened the second time when Adam sinned.

But before that it happened the first time when Lucifer the head of the angels sinned and there was chaos. And that's the chaos we read of in verse 2. The earth was formless, chaotic, void and dark. That's what the devil always does.

He always brings chaos, darkness, emptiness, confusion, ugliness. And how did God restore the earth? I want you to notice that. The breath of God or the Spirit of God began to move over the surface of the waters.

In the original Hebrew language in which this Old Testament is written it's the same thing. The breath of God or the Spirit of God. And when God sees a man or a woman whose life the devil has messed up with chaos, confusion, darkness.

If any of you feel, Lord I've made such a mess of my life. That's verse 2. Do you know God's solution for that? The Spirit of God wants to move over your life. He doesn't wait till you're perfect.

He's come to make you perfect. In that chaotic state, the Spirit of God moved and changed that earth into something so beautiful that at the end of it, you read in Genesis 1 verse 31 that God looked at it and said, it's very good. What an encouragement! I find tremendous encouragement in that first chapter of Genesis that God can take a person whose life is all messed up, completely ruined by the devil and so transform him that almighty God himself, a holy God himself can look at that person and say, it couldn't have been better.

Excellent. Think that God can do that with you. But how does he do it? The Spirit of God moved.

It's not by rules. It's not by following a bunch of laws. Well, those laws and rules are good to live a disciplined life with a lot of people out there in the world who don't have Christ, who don't have the Holy Spirit, who also live a pretty disciplined life with all their rules and regulations.

We had a brother in our church in India who testified that he had overcome anger long before he became a Christian by doing yoga. He was a disciplined non-Christian and in his religion they taught him to do all these yoga exercises and he managed to control himself. What it means is he kept the anger inside.

It didn't come out. That's all that yoga does. Christ does something better.

He gets rid of it from the inside. To control the anger is like saying, well I've hidden the snakes inside the house. Nobody can see them.

They can still sting you in the middle of the night and kill you. But Jesus comes to destroy those snakes. It's not just a question of other people not seeing the snake.

That's the difference between the work of Jesus Christ and the work of yoga. There's a world of difference. They can look the same on the outside two self-controlled people but if you could look inside you'd see the difference is light and darkness.

So the Spirit of God moved upon the waters and God spoke his word. See this book is the only book in the whole world that God himself wrote through the numbers of his servants. At least 40 different people wrote this book.

It's the only book in the world. There's no other book in the whole world that is the word of God. And I think most of us believe that.

But you still haven't read it fully. What is that proof? There are other novels you've picked up and you've finished them. Don't you think there's something inconsistent in saying this is the only book that almighty God wrote and there are number of other books written by other people but I've read them.

I haven't read this. I'll tell you why. Deep down in our heart we don't really believe that this is God's word.

We say it because it's the right thing for Christians to say but if we believed it we'd really get in here and say God what are you saying to me? I remember when I became a Christian I was 19 and a half years old and I decided that in 6 months I must read this book and I did. So I wanted to know what God had to say to me because I was now I was now his child. It says here on all these 6 days we read God said something.

That's why I was talking about God's word. The earth was changed not only by the operation of the Holy Spirit but also by the spoken word of God. On the first day God said something and something happened.

On the second day God said something and something happened. The third day God said something and something happened. So it was the joint operation of the word of God and the Holy Spirit that changed that earth into something beautiful.

And it's the joint operation of God's word and the Holy Spirit that can make your life beautiful. So it's the breath of God and the word of God. The combination of both and we cannot ignore either.

A lot of people if they ignore God's word and only think of the breath of God that's how they get confused. That's how they get all these crazy ideas of what is the Holy Spirit and what's not the Holy Spirit. So many things are happening today which are claimed to be the operation of the Holy Spirit and they're not.

How do I know they're not? Because I can't imagine Jesus doing that. That's a test for me. When I see a man behaving in a certain way and he says, oh that's the result of the Holy Spirit.

I try to picture, can I imagine Jesus doing that? I say no. Well, you can keep it. I don't want that.

Because the Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ. He is another helper. He'll never do anything that Jesus wouldn't do.

And he cannot do anything in me that Jesus wouldn't do. So I'm not going to be confused or deceived by a lot of things that I see around me which claim to be the operation of the Holy Spirit because I know they're not. Let me show you another passage in relation to the breath of God in Ezekiel.

Ezekiel is sort of three quarters of the way down the Old Testament. Ezekiel chapter 37. In Ezekiel 37 we read of a vision that God gave this prophet Ezekiel.

And it's again a picture of the Holy Spirit as the breath of God. That's why I want you to look at this passage. It's a very interesting passage.

It says here, The hand of the Lord, Ezekiel 37 1, brought me by the Holy Spirit into the middle of a valley full of dry bones. And those dry bones are a picture of even many Christians. You know, it's not just that they're dead.

The flesh is disappeared. It's become dust. And then, you know what happens when people die, the flesh begins to disintegrate and gradually it becomes dust and then the bones are left and then when the bones also become dry, you know they're really dead.

And that's what it says here. Full of dry bones. And the Lord brought Ezekiel there and asked him a question.

Verse 3 Do you think these bones can live? Do you think there's any hope for people who have come so low? Who made such a mess of their life? Who are so dead? Do you think there's any hope for them? You know, this is where the devil takes advantage of people who don't know the truth. He tells people, there's no hope for you. You're finished.

As long as we are alive, there's hope. It's only when a man's buried, dead and buried that we say, well, there's no hope for him now. But until that point, even if you're like dry bones, there's hope.

And notice what the Lord told Ezekiel to do. First of all, he said, speak God's word. Prophecy.

Verse 4 Preach God's word to these dead bones. And that does something. Like it's doing something now.

And it says here that the bones, as I prophesied, verse 7, there was a noise and a rattling and bones came together, bone to its bone. They were all lying separate and now they came together. There was unity but no life.

Remember that. Just because there's unity, doesn't mean there's life. The bones came together.

People can belong to one church, one denomination and say we're all united. It could be just a lot of bones coming together. Then it says here, verse 8, something better.

There was an improvement. The flesh began to grow on the bones and the skin covered them. And then of course it was much more beautiful.

It can be beautiful and still there may be no life. There was one more thing God told his people to do. Just these folks, just listening to the word of God is not enough.

That brings a certain unity, brings a certain rattling and a noise and maybe they look a little better now because flesh has covered these bones. But they're still dead. And then he told Ezekiel, now you must prophecy to the breath of God.

In other words you must pray. Till now you've been preaching. Now you've got to pray that the Holy Spirit, the breath of God will come upon these bodies that are lying here.

Notice just like we saw in Genesis chapter 1 the joint operation of the preaching of God's word and the Holy Spirit. And so he prophesied to the breath. In other words he prayed.

He said, oh breath come from the four sides. Breathe on these slain. And they came to life.

That's a picture of what God wants to do for us. If we feel dry and dead. And we have listened and listened and listened and listened to so many wonderful messages, wonderful prophecies through many years.

We need one more thing. We need the breath of God to come over us and bring life. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And it says as he prophesied the breath came and they came to life. And one last thing. Why does God bring us to life? To make us soldiers in the army of the Lord.

That's what we read here. They stood on their feet and they became an exceedingly great army. Do you know my brother sister? That even if you are like a dry bone this morning, God wants you to be a soldier in his army.

If you will submit to what you've heard this morning and you'll say, Lord, I'm a dry bone. I'm a sinner. I want you to come into my heart.

Make me a child of God. I want you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. You don't have to wait for that.

God can do that. All, it's just one after the other. They didn't have to wait for six years after they heard the word of God for the Holy Spirit to come.

No, it was all just one after the other. And so can it be with us. God's greatest gift to us in this day and age is the Holy Spirit of God.

Let's open our beings to him. Let's open our hearts and say, Lord Jesus, come and fill me with your Spirit. Let the breath of God breathe on me like you did on those disciples 2,000 years ago and change my life.

Let's pray. While our heads are bowed in prayer, I want to invite you to respond in your heart to the word of the Lord that you have heard. If you're not a Christian, that's the first thing you need to pray.

Lord, I'm a sinner. Jesus, Lord, you died for me. Come into my heart.

Forgive my sin. And if you are a Christian and you feel dry and dead and lifeless, will you, having confessed your sin, say, Lord, I want to open my whole being to you, to be filled with your Holy Spirit. I surrender every part of my being to you.

Fill me, Lord. Make me a spiritfull Christian. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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