

# You Can Receive Power from Above

by Zac Poonen

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**Scripture:** Matthew 1:21, Matthew 3:11, Acts 19:2, John 20:22, Acts 1:8, Ephesians 5:18, Luke 24:32, Acts 9:17, John 14:16, Matthew 1:20

**Topics:** "New Covenant", "Baptism in the Holy Spirit"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We have often said in the church that one of the things we stand for, different from other Christians and other churches, is that we emphasize the new covenant. In other words, Jesus didn't come only to forgive our sin, but to save us from our sins, and that is the first promise in the New Testament. So it's significant that the Lord has placed that as the first promise in the New Testament.

Matthew 121, we will call his name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Now, my guess is that more than 90% or 95% of Christians, when they read that verse, they only think of forgiveness and not salvation from sin. There's a lot of difference between being forgiven of our sin and being saved from our sin, but most Christians are ignorant of it, that when they read this verse in Matthew 121, I know that's how I read it for years, and that's how I know all Christians read it.

And if you look at your own past, you'll probably see that you also read it like that, that his name is Jesus because he's going to forgive our sins. And that's how the devil prevents us from experiencing all that there is in salvation. But that is not the only thing.

I mean, the second promise is very closely linked to that. You can't separate the two. The second promise is in Matthew 3:11.

The one who saves you from sin will baptize you or immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire. So just as much as we emphasize that we ought to be saved from our sins, it's one of the distinctive features of the emphasis in our church compared to other churches. Equally, we need to be distinguished by the fact that we believe, experience, and emphasize the baptism or the immersion in the Holy Spirit and fire.

And we must never take that for granted. I think a lot of Christians, even in our churches, I wonder whether they have really entered into the fullness of the Spirit. In Acts of the Apostles in chapter 19, we read of a time when Paul went to Ephesus and he found some disciples and he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They said to him, we haven't even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.

I've often thought about that. How is it when it says he found some disciples? It wasn't out in the street. I think it must have been a meeting.

And it was not a Jewish meeting because these are people who believed in Jesus. And they had been baptized, it says in verse 3, with the baptism of John. And they are called in verse 1, disciples.

So they're not Jewish people. They were, I mean, if they were not born again, you wouldn't call them disciples. But they had not understood even about Christian baptism.

But Paul recognizes that they had believed, they were believers. But what he's asking them is, when you believe, do you receive the Holy Spirit? Now, I think what he meant was, have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? Because later when Paul writes Romans chapter 8, he says, if you do not have the Spirit of Christ, verse 9, you don't even belong to him. Romans 8, 9. So we must remember that the early Christians, their theology was not perfect from day one.

They were just evolving. And as the scriptures got completed, it became more clear. For example, Paul circumcised Timothy at one stage.

But later on in the tribulations, he says, that's completely wrong. You shouldn't be circumcised. So remember, they were in a stage of evolution.

And as things became clear, Paul writes here that when you receive Christ, you're actually receiving the Holy Spirit. Because if you don't have him, you don't even belong to him. So when a person says, Lord Jesus, come into my heart, Jesus himself is in heaven.

It's through the Holy Spirit that he comes in. So if a person does not receive the Spirit, he doesn't even belong to him. He's not even born again.

But beyond that, I think what Paul meant in Acts 19 was, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced what Jesus said in Acts 1:8? In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, there again, when you look at the disciples, their experience of the Holy Spirit. First of all, let's look at John 20. John 20, the disciples were meeting together in a room.

And Jesus came into their midst and said in verse 22, which says here, he breathed on them, John 20:22, and said, receive the Holy Spirit. This is very similar to Jesus breathing on Adam. He didn't have the name Jesus then.

In Genesis chapter 1, it was the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Breathing on Adam. And as soon as that happened, Adam became a living soul, it says.

That was the old creation. And now in the new creation, now Jesus is breathing on them, not to make them a living soul. They're already living souls, all of them.

But now, they were to receive the Holy Spirit. And that is the beginning of the new creation. Because Adam was the beginning of the old creation.

But it was again the same way, breathed on them. So when he breathed on them, and said, receive the Holy Spirit. Well, as I see it, they were born again.

The man received the Spirit of Christ, he's born again. But to such people, Jesus said in Acts 1, wait until you receive power from Christ. In a few days, Acts 1, 5, you will be immersed in the Holy Spirit.

What baptize, we don't understand sometimes. It's a Greek word. It's a very simple word.

And I wish the original translators had not got scared of King James. And I wish they are translated as immersed. Immersed, and be a clearer picture in their mind.

Otherwise, baptizing the Holy Spirit is sort of a...many people don't understand. Immersed, you'll be immersed in the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. And when you're immersed in the Holy Spirit, you will receive power, Acts 1, 8. Now remember, he's saying this to people on whom he has already breathed 40 days earlier, and told them, receive the Holy Spirit.

But now, he's saying, shall receive power in the Holy Spirit's company. So I sometimes picture that when Paul went to Ephesus, as I said, we didn't meet them on the streets. They were in a meeting.

All these people were there and I think as the meeting went on, at the end of it, Paul said, there's something missing here. It's so dead. No life here.

That's what made him ask the question. Hey, you guys know all the doctrine, but did you receive the Holy Spirit? Have you filled in the Holy Spirit? He didn't know anything about it. So I apply that even today.

I've been in meetings where different people are sharing. And I have a question. Have you guys been filled in the Holy Spirit? Same question that Paul had.

Yeah, I know you're believers. I know you believe Jesus died for you. You're born again and you want to give up your sins.

Have you received power? Jesus said, the Holy Spirit will come upon you when the Spirit has come and that will enable you to be my witnesses. And it's especially necessary for men because we are the leaders. The spoken gifts are primarily given to men of preaching and teaching and sharing God's word.

All can witness men and women, but in public proclamation, the primary ministry is for men. And for that, it's important to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. That empowering not only helps us in our ministry, but it also helps us in our life.

So like everything else, if we don't have a sense of a need in our life, we're not going to seek for it. Why is it so many people don't even seek for salvation, basic salvation and the forgiveness of sins? It's because

they don't have a sense of need in their life. And all of us just through a sense of need that we sought the Lord and came to the assurance that our sins are forgiven and that Christ came in.

And I know in my own life, it took a number of years to even be sure that Christ has come into my life, because I was born again, my father was born again, and he always sent us to a good Sunday school where we could hear the gospel. I heard the gospel from childhood and been for meetings as a young teenager. And I must have asked Jesus to come into my heart numerous times, right from the age of 13 or so.

I was never sure. And here and there, here and there, here and there, till one day, five, six years later, I was sure Christ had come. And one single, one single verse in that comment to me, I'll not cast out.

That was 62 years ago. And I've never doubted my forgiveness and my salvation from that day till today, not even one day. Even in times my life was up and down, I never doubted that Christ would come in.

It's amazing when God witnesses in your spirit that you're born again, not that somebody told you you're born again, but you have a witness that you have become a child of God. Every child of God must have that inner witness. It's not a question whether other people think I'm born again or not.

So I'm thankful that I got that assurance from God himself. And then I began to seek for the power of the Holy Spirit, because I found I didn't have power, but I had no doubt of my salvation. Absolutely no doubt.

I wasn't seeking God for forgiveness. I wasn't seeking God to be, who'll save me from hell. No.

I said, Lord, I want power. And I went, somebody, I used to go to my brethren assembly where they never spoke about it. So somebody said, you've got to go to the Pentecostals.

So somebody who was a Pentecostal took me up to a Pentecostal pastor once and he asked me to repeat something. I said, I'm not going to do that. It's not what they did on the day of Pentecost.

When the spirit came upon them and they were filled in, nobody taught them anything. They were not coached into something. Now, what is happening today in a lot of Pentecostal charismatic circles and their eagerness to get people into this experience.

They're trying to coach people into it and counting statistics, how many people are baptized in the spirit. And I've been in a lot of Pentecostal charismatic meetings and my conviction is 95% of them have got a fake experience. Psychological manipulation, human experience, worth nothing.

But it's emotional, it stirs them up. It doesn't give them any victory over sin, doesn't give them any, a lot of excitement, yes. And so when this man tried to teach me that, I said, I don't want it.

I found many of those pastors were all lovers of money. And I said, Lord, I don't want the type of experience which these guys have got, which leave them loving money and defeated by sin and just that they teach people to mumble something. And I'm not interested in that.

To tell you honestly, I was not interested in speaking in tongues. I was interested in receiving power. But that's why Jesus said, you shall receive power, not you shall receive tongues.

And I wish that had been emphasized in those who do preach the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So I said, Lord, I want power. And I did not have it all in one experience.

God met with me in one way, I can say, and it was all in my room, all by myself, because I was disappointed with the Pentecostal church and pastors I met. And I found a tremendous liberty in preaching my life. It was obviously supernatural.

That was not something I produced. I didn't know much of the Bible when I was converted. I just started reading.

I was baptized in 1961. When God met with me, it wasn't any particular experience I had, but I was seeking God, seeking God for the power of the Holy Spirit. And a couple of years later, God met with me.

And then I found I could really preach with power. And I remember even two years after I was baptized, I was preaching in a large conferences with 5,000 people. And they wanted me to speak again.

I knew that God had met with me, does not mean to not natural for me to be like that, because I'm basically a shy person. I've never spoken in public in school or anywhere. So I know that without that power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot fulfill the ministry we have as men in the body of Christ.

We can drift along. And if you're satisfied with that type of experience, then you won't get anything more. But if you are passionate to have more, and you say, Lord, I won't rest until you meet with me, God definitely will meet with any of us.

But then as time went on, I found though had liberty in speaking, I was defeated often in my life, frequently discouraged. I did not have faith for an overcoming life. And so I knew that I had to seek God again.

Now, I don't know what that means. I've never been interested in explaining my experiences theologically. I see I want the reality, not just an explanation.

So again, I was seeking God and seeking God. This is what 10-11 years after my initial experience. And it was just getting worse and worse, repeated, frustrated.

And then it's almost as though when I had hit rock bottom, thoroughly discouraged and defeated, that God suddenly met with me. Of course, I was praying with one or two others, fasting, praying, nothing seemed to happen month after month after month after month. And when nothing happened, you get more and more discouraged and discouraged.

But I still kept praying. I said, Lord, I don't know what's wrong with me. But I will never get an assurance from a man that I'm filled with the Spirit.

That's worth nothing. The opinion of men is fit for the trash can. So I don't want any one man to come and tell me, yes, Brother Zach, you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

I don't want it. Even if he tells me I'm not interested, I won't believe it. I want that assurance from you, just like I got assurance of salvation from you.

No man told me. Some man had told me, Brother Zach, you're born again. I may have doubted it frequently.

But because God told me one day, in July 59, I've never doubted it for 62 years. And I said, it's the same way. I don't want any man to come and tell me I'm filled with the Holy Spirit.

I don't want any, just an external experience. I want you to assure me in my heart that you have given me that same power that the apostles received on the day of Pentecost. I don't want anything less than that.

You have to be desperate about it and serious about it, and you have to deal with God. There's a lovely expression in Hebrews 4 that I love, which says, it's a part of a verse in Hebrews 4. Hebrews 4 and verse 13. There's a title for God here.

I don't know if you've seen it as a title in Hebrews 4, 13. Him with whom we have to do. God is the only one with whom we have to do.

And I've taken that seriously. Lord, you're the only one with whom I have to do. Nobody else.

What people think about me, unimportant, whether they think I'm good or bad. It means nothing to me. It's only you with whom I have to do.

It's all you and me. It's you and me that tells me whether I'm really born again. It's you and me that tells me whether I've really been empowered from on high, not man.

So I would urge you, don't seek reassurance from man, any man, even the best of men. Even if the Apostle Paul were alive here and came and told me, yes, Brother Zach, you're born again, I wouldn't accept it. Or yes, Brother Zach, I believe you're filled with the Holy Spirit, I wouldn't accept it.

He's a man. He could be wrong. I cannot base anything.

These are eternal things. I mean, forgiveness of sins is a matter of eternity. I can't risk it with man's telling me that I'm forgiven and accepted by the Lord.

No. In the same way, being filled with the Spirit is so essential to fulfill our ministry in the body of Christ that I cannot be satisfied with a man telling me, yeah, yeah, I think you are. So I'm thankful that I did not accept the testimony of man.

He's the one with whom I have to do. And so he tested me, no doubt, seeing how eager I was, that even if I was sinking, defeated, I would still say, Lord, you're the man, meet with me. And I think that's the meaning of what Jesus said in John 7, 37.

And he said, if anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. A very well-known verse, which he says here, this he spoke about the Holy Spirit, who those who believe in him would receive.

And what does that thirst mean? To me, that thirst was, I will not be happy until you assure me. That's one part of that thirst. The other is, I don't care how much I'm defeated.

I've still gone along for it. I believe you're going to meet with me. It's thirst.

And the second thing is faith. He who believes in me. Basically, I've discovered there are only two requirements to be filled with the Holy Spirit, generally.

One is thirst, and the other is faith. So thirst is, as I said, that you'll never be satisfied until God actually meets with you and assures you that he's met with you. Thirsty, thirsty, thirsty, and no matter how defeated you are, you're going to seek him.

And I wanted to be also useful for the Lord in his service. I didn't want to just be one who, you know, I knew the Bible pretty well, even at that stage. I think I studied the Bible so well in the first seven, eight years after I was converted, that I knew it very well.

But I wasn't satisfied with that. I wasn't even satisfied with the fact that I could preach and explain and teach. I said, Lord, I want an assurance that you have empowered me, and that must come from you.

Of course, the evidence will be in an overcoming life, and in a freedom and liberty in whatever ministry you have for me. Now, all of us don't have the same ministry, but all of us do have some ministry. And certainly, if you're not called to be an evangelist or a teacher or an apostle or a prophet, you are called to be a witness.

That is for every Christian. Every Christian is meant to be a witness. And Jesus said, you shall receive power to be my witnesses, and the Spirit of God has come upon you.

So, I found that thirst was necessary, and the result would be, it says here in John 7, 38, rivers of living water will flow. And the picture that I had in my mind as I looked at my own life ministry was, even though I could teach and all that, it was very often a struggle with which, you know, a great amount of effort. It's like in India, we have in the, there's no running water in the houses in the villages in India.

But in some public place, there will be a hand pump connected to some well underneath. And all the women in the village will come there with their buckets and vessels to collect water. And they pump and pump and pump and pump, and the water comes.

So, it's not by electricity. And I felt that my ministry, yeah, some water was coming out of the living water, but it is with such tremendous effort. Effort, effort, effort, effort, effort, effort, and then some more thing would come out.

But that's not how a river is. Nobody pumps a river. God himself pumps it.

The flow of a river is effortless. And I said, Lord, that's what I want. Where? From the innermost being, rivers flow.

Is that for every believer? You feel it's for you? That's the question. Is it only for preachers or apostles or prophets? He who believes in me, does that include you? Rivers of living water will flow from his innermost being. It's not from certain special believers.

He who believes in me includes every single believer, really truly born-again believer in the world. But he's got a thirst, verse 37. In other words, if you're satisfied that, yeah, some trickle is coming out of me now and then, I guarantee in the next 50 years, you'll only have a trickle.

I was not happy. I said, Lord, this is not, it's not a river. It's really not a river.

It's with great effort. I fill a bucket. He says, that's not what I see is the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I believe that if you have that type of thirst, he'll meet with you as well. In Acts 1.8, you know, when Jesus said to them, when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you receive power, you shall be, be ye my witnesses. Different from bearing witness for me.

Bearing witness means by word of mouth. Being my witness, Acts 1.8, means by life and by word. And you know, when you think of those early fishermen, they didn't have a Bible.

They hadn't been to any Bible school. They didn't know any theology to be able to impress people. They were, they were not great intellectuals, like many of us are, who've got abilities and educated, and they're not graduates.

And they were supposed to take this strange message to the whole world. I thought of that, you know, in India, for example, we go, we experience some things of trying to witness in primitive situations in the villages in India. And you go to, I've been in some very simple places where, places where there are no Christians at all.

You go and tell a, supposing you go and preach the gospel in a village in India, they're all Hindus. And you want to tell them about Jesus dying for their sins. So you tell them the gospel story.

How do you start? I mean, okay, we're all sinners, and there's a way of forgiveness and salvation. And then you have to explain that, you know, 2000 years ago in a land called Israel, they don't know anything about geography. Somewhere over there, somewhere in the world, a little baby was born.

And he was born with a mother who didn't have a husband. Immediately that guy knows you're a little off your head. When you say that, God came upon him, the Holy Spirit came upon him.

And we're trying to get the gospel across to this person. And anyway, he's patient enough, listens to you. And then he says he grew up, and he went around healing the sick and anybody he touched was healed.

All those things, and then finally, they killed him. Now, the average Hindu is absolutely surprised that anybody can kill God. And you got to, you try it out if you ever go into a village and nobody knows anything about the gospel.

This is exactly what happens. They say, Oh, how can anybody kill him? Anyway, they feel you're a little off your head, because you started off saying that a virgin gave birth. And so this is okay.

I love all that. And then that's not the end. They killed him.

And then three days later, he rose from the dead. They just absolutely convinced you're off your head. And he died there 2000 years ago for your sins, man.

You think he's going to believe it? The power of the Holy Spirit is there. But then in the early days, he had to say, the Lord said it will be confirmed. So this is what happens in many of the villages.

I say, Okay, now, bring your demon possessed people here who could not be delivered. And I'll prove to you that this Jesus is alive. And then in almost every village, there are some demon possessed people.

And then the person comes there, the kicking or screaming or the different types, some are subdued. And in the name of Jesus, you cast out that demon, and the person is freed. They believe he's living.

It's a demonstration of power. That's why Jesus said, these signs will follow those who believe. Now that is, you see, there are two great commissions.

One is in Mark 16, where he said, go into all the world and preach the gospel. This is evangelism, Mark 16:15. He who believes in his baptism will be saved.

And how in the world, I mean, the Lord knows how in the world is that guy going to believe the strange thing you're talking about a virgin birth and resurrection from the dead and all that. It says even in Acts 17, when Paul preached that in Athens, all the Greeks laughed at him when they spoke about the resurrection from the dead. But still, there was a church in Athens one time.

And it says here, these signs will follow those who believe in my name, they'll cast out demons. Then they will see, oh, there's power. See, that is the way the Lord confirmed.

Like it says in the last part of verse 20, they preached and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with the signs that follow. That was the reason why they had to be empowered with the Holy Spirit. I tell you, you go into these villages where they are demon possessed people and do not know anything about Jesus Christ.

Or you can never do anything without the power of the Holy Spirit. The word has to be confirmed with signs that follow. Okay.

But the other great commission is in Matthew 28, where it says make disciples of all nations. This is the next step after they're converted, and they're baptized, then we have to teach them to do. Matthew 28, make disciples of those 19 and teach them to do all that I've commanded you.

Here there's no mention of signs and wonders and no casting out demons or laying hands on the sick, or not even speaking in tongues, nothing here. So when it goes into these new areas, where they don't know anything about Jesus there, the need is for supernatural science to confirm the word spoken. But then when you're making disciples, the need is not for supernatural science.

The need is to teach them to do every single thing Jesus has commanded. And that is particularly Matthew 5, 6 and 7. So for both of these, we need the power of the Holy Spirit. If you're going out to preach the gospel, you need the Lord to confirm the word with signs following, that is part of the Holy Spirit.

And then to teach people to do every single thing that Jesus commanded. You really need the power of the Holy Spirit to build a church like that, where the emphasis is on total obedience to every single thing Jesus said. And it doesn't stop there, because I believe that after the day of Pentecost, Jesus continued to speak through the Holy Spirit, all that is written in the epistles.

So the things written in the epistles are, in a sense, what the Lord continued to do and teach. See Acts 1:1, Luke's gospel and Acts of the Apostles were both written by Luke. As far as I know, he's the only non-Jew who wrote Scripture.

All the other books of Scripture were written by the Jews, except Luke and Acts, which were written by Luke, who is a Greek. And referring to his first gospel, he says in Acts 1:1, the first account I composed of Theopolis. Luke also mentions Theopolis.

That's how we know that Luke wrote this. How does Luke describe his gospel? If you were to ask Luke, give us a heading for your gospel. Here it is.

Everything that Jesus began to do and began to teach. Jesus did not practice what he preached. It says here, he preached what he had already practiced, which is very different.

He had practiced, that means he did it first for 30 years, then preached it for three and a half years. And so that's what he says, my first gospel is about what Jesus did and taught. So if you were to ask him, that's the first verse of Acts.

So Luke, how would you describe the Acts of the Apostles? He would say, well, first gospel, which I wrote was all that Jesus began to do and teach in his physical body. And Acts of the Apostles, which you call Acts of the Apostles, is what Jesus continued to do and teach through his spiritual body. That's it.

So it's again, Jesus doing and teaching, but that was through his physical body. And this is through his spiritual body, the church. That was done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was born of the Spirit and filled with the Spirit. And this spiritual body was also born of the Spirit and filled with the Spirit and continued to do and to teach what Jesus began to do and teach in Nazareth when he was on earth. So for this too, we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

It's central and fundamental to the Christian life. We cannot think of living the Christian life. And it is not a once for all experience because we read here in Acts 2 and verse 4, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in tongues.

But then when you go on to Acts chapter 4, you read there in verse 31, they prayed, the place was gathered and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit again. So obviously this is not a once for all experience. It was not that they just got it on Acts chapter 2 and then it was it.

No, they had to be filled with the Holy Spirit again. And in Acts 5 also we read, then Peter filled with the Spirit. I think it's somewhere further down there I see.

So it was again and again, you find that they were filled with the Holy Spirit. So that shows us that there is something continuous. And when we read about the only place in the Epistles where we are told to be filled with the Spirit is Ephesians 5 18, if you turn there.

The meaning there is, there's a, when it says be filled with the Spirit, in the original language it's present continuous, not once for all. So the correct translation of Ephesians 5 18 would be the last part. Be being filled with the Spirit.

That's the right way to read it. Keep on being filled with the Spirit. You saw Peter's experience.

You see how the Apostle Paul, when he was, the Lord met with him on the road to Damascus, you read in Acts chapter 9. The Lord met with him there and he said, who are you, Lord? He was, I believe he was converted there because he just saw Jesus there and he received, accepted that Jesus was the Messiah immediately. And, but then we read here that he went into Damascus and he's waiting there and Ananias came to him sent by God and said to Paul that you're a chosen instrument. Acts 9 15, the Lord said, go, he's a chosen instrument of mine.

Ananias entered and said to him in verse 17, Jesus has sent me so that you may regain your sight and that you might be filled with the Holy Spirit. So Ananias prayed for Paul and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's how he began his Christian life.

And when Paul was later on sent out by the church in Antioch to go and preach, it says in Acts 13 and verse 4, Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They encountered a magician in verse 8 who was opposing them, who had some supernatural demonic power. And Saul, verse 9, filled with the Holy Spirit, rebuked him.

And that brought faith in the proconsul when he saw, verse 12, when the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, he came to faith. So we see this fullness of the Spirit was the secret by which they did their ministry. And I think the devil has done a tremendous work in devaluing it, but so many Christians will only talk about being born again and right doctrine and his forgiveness of sins.

And it's possible for us also to talk a lot about new covenants and overcoming sin and all that, which is very necessary and very, very important. But it can be academic, dry doctrine, correct doctrine. But apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, it'll be dry and empty, accurate, but dry and empty.

And I've seen a number of believers in CFC churches, I feel like asking the same question, which Paul asked the Ephesians, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? He said something, I mean, he saw all these people in Ephesus and they were, maybe they were sharing nicely and some clever things. And they didn't have a Bible. If they had a Bible, they probably could say even more impressive things, quoting this verse and that verse and the other one.

And we can do all that. And a discerning apostle like Paul would come in and say, Hey, all you have to say is great. Are you guys filled with the Holy Spirit? Very, very, very important.

I really felt like that in some dead meetings. Jesus is not present in this meeting. Something is missing altogether.

I remember, you know, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is called a baptism of fire. So fire gives light and warmth. It's not just light.

And I remember as a young Christian, as I was beginning to preach God's word, I read this passage in Luke 24, where Jesus was going to Emmaus with these two people who were walking there. And little, little things that we can see here, for example, the distance from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Luke 24, 13, was seven miles. And for a leisurely walk, that'll take about three hours.

That's my guess. It'll take about three hours for a leisurely walk, seven miles. And Jesus joined them and they didn't know it was Jesus.

Their eyes were prevented, verse 16, from recognizing him. And he talked to them. And it says here, an amazing verse, he explained the entire Old Testament to them in that three hours.

I mean, the main emphasis, verse 27, beginning with Moses, which means Genesis, the first book of Moses, with all the prophets, means all the way to Malachi. So let me paraphrase it, from Genesis to Malachi, he explained in all the scriptures, and there was only the Old Testament those days, concerning him. That means from Genesis to Malachi, every book is speaking about Jesus.

We need to see Jesus in every book from Genesis to Malachi. And the same Jesus who explained it to them can explain it to us today. You see Jesus in every page.

He explained to them the things concerning himself. It wasn't dry doctrine that he explained to them. It was how he was there in every one of those books.

And the result was, and when Jesus sort of went away, came into the house and then disappeared, they said to one another, this is their testimony, in verse 32, of their three-hour Bible study with Jesus. Were not our hearts on fire when he was speaking to us on that road? During all those three hours, he was explaining the scriptures, but it wasn't just explaining our hearts were burning. Not our minds understood something.

It's possible for us to speak in a way that people's minds understand what we're saying. They didn't say, oh, we really understood something new when Jesus said that. No, our hearts were burning.

And I remember when I read that years ago, I said, Lord, I believe that is the mark of Jesus speaking in a meeting. That people's hearts burn. Not that their minds are instructed, which is also true, but beyond that, their hearts burn.

And when I read that, I found I had a tremendous longing. I said, Lord, that's the way I want to speak. Are you all the same yesterday, today, and forever? You sent the Holy Spirit to be our helper.

When Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit, I mean, he said it to the disciples at the time, and they were all so nervous and frightened. What's going to happen now? Jesus is going away. And he said, sorrow is filled in your heart, filled your heart, because you know that I'm going away.

I mean, that's in John's gospel. He says in chapter 14, when they were feeling, well, we're lost now. Christ says he's going away.

But don't worry. John 14, 16, I'll ask the Father, he'll give you another helper. And he won't be like me that I go through you after three and a half years.

He'll be with you forever. So the Holy Spirit came to replace what Jesus was to them, with them three and a half years, and they knew that, boy, if Jesus is with us, it didn't matter what happened. I mean, whatever problem there was, if Jesus was there, problem solved.

Storm in the lake or anything. And he says, it's going to be the same, another helper, who will not be outside of you like I have been, but inside of you. And he'll be with you forever, the Spirit of truth.

And he will be, verse 17, in you, not with you, like I could only be with you. But he will be, verse 17, in you. And then, verse 18, you will not be an orphan anymore.

Many Christians live like orphans. They don't know where to turn, what to do. It's like exactly like orphans, no father, no mother.

And he says, no, it won't be like that. When you look at the type of life that Jesus promised his apostles, and they really experienced it, you know, the answer to it all is in the Holy Spirit. So I believe that we must seek earnest before this, for a continuous fullness of the Spirit.

I remember my wife, when we got married, we were extremely poor, I would say rock bottom poor. I had given up my job. I'd given away all my earnings for the Lord's work.

My bank account was literally zero. And I would never advertise or ask for money. And sometimes somebody would give me a gift.

Because with very little that we survived in those days, and I didn't couldn't rent a house. My dad allowed us to stay in one room of his house, which is empty. So we stayed there.

It wasn't easy for my wife. And then we had a little baby. And she had been extremely zealous in her college days as a student witnessing for Christ in the jail and prisons and going regularly to the meetings and witnessing to all her fellow students in the medical college.

And here she was now stuck in poverty with a man who had no income and no bank account and uncertain future, what are we going to do? And a baby. He told me that sometimes he wondered whether we'd have enough money to buy milk powder. And but we sought the Lord.

And she was so discouraged. I was discouraged too. And one day, one sister, a little older than her, maybe 10 years older than her.

You know, it was just going house to house. I mean, whenever she saw someone who was probably a Christian home, she'd walk in and find out if there's a lady there she could witness to. Just walking, total stranger.

So she met my wife. She said, can we pray a little? So my wife took her into the room. I wasn't there.

And I prayed there because my dad and mom were in another room. So they didn't feel very free there because it was not our home. So this lady said, listen, why don't you come to my home tomorrow? We'll pray there.

So she came the next day and took my wife to her home. It's just, I mean, the walking distance. And my wife went with the baby.

The baby was asleep. That was our oldest son. So they went and there was nobody else in the house.

The sister's husband was away at work. And so the baby was asleep. So she put the baby on the mat.

They were sitting, with them sitting on the mat. The sister said, let's pray. And my wife began to pray.

And she said, Lord, I don't know what's happened to me. What she told me, I wasn't there. She told me afterwards.

Lord, I was so full of zeal. My life was so delightful when I was in college and witnessing for you and everything. And here it's also discouraging.

I don't know whatever. I seem to have lost my love for you. Repeated, discouraged.

I wish I could come back to that old life. And I want that Lord. And as she began to pray, she suddenly found she could not pray in English.

She suddenly began to pray in another language. She was, she's from a brethren assembly that detests speaking in tongues. She believed it was, she was taught by her father that's of the devil.

And here she was. The very thing she detested. And it kept on like that.

She says, she didn't want to come back to English. It was just so delightful. And God met with her that day.

Changed her life. And I met with the Lord in a similar way. Only about five, six years later.

And I was excited. I believe in the Pentecostal experience. I was not like her.

Unbelieving. I believe in it, but I didn't have it all myself. But I said, I know it's there for some reason.

And when God met with me in a similar way, five, six years later, again, and I was praying and I with another brother. And again, I was only thanking the Lord. I said, Lord, I finally believe that you met with me.

And as I was praising the Lord, I suddenly found myself uttering syllables I had no intention to. And I stopped and I switched back to English. And again, I found myself speaking.

And I knew that, hey. So the brother I was with, when he finished praying, I said, what happened? Did you hear anything? He said, yeah, I heard him speaking in tongues. I said, oh, okay.

And I'll tell you this, my life has changed from that. Not because of speaking in tongues. No, I didn't want it.

I was interested in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That's what changed. And quite honestly, I'd have been quite happy to receive the power of the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues.

But the Lord decided to do that as well. I think part of the reason was because he wanted me to be a witness to Pentecostal churches as well. And they would not accept it if I did not speak in tongues.

It's not the primary thing for me. But for me, the primary thing was that I found I had power. It's inexplainable.

It's something, you know, it's like all of you know what it is to be born again. You know in your heart, Christ has come in, you're forgiven. And that non-Christian wonders, how can you be so sure? The nominal Christians, how can you be so sure? You just ask Jesus to come into your heart and believe.

And you know, it's not just that. Because so many people say that and they don't seem to have that assurance. In the same way, so many people say, yeah, I believe you're filling me with the Holy Spirit.

But there doesn't seem to be much change in my life. I remember meeting a person who was attending a Pentecostal church. He said, Brother Zach, I've been praying for 40 years to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Nothing happened. Yeah, I don't know. But I know one thing.

If you thirst and you believe and you're willing to lay all on the altar, the fire will fall. There's no doubt. There's no respect of persons with God.

He's exactly the same to everyone. It is not a privilege reserved for some special believers or preachers. No.

For every single believer, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses. Is that only some people? Every single person needs to be a witness by our life, by our word. And it's only after that, that I began to understand so many things that I read the Bible for 16 years

before that.

And all the things that I'm preaching today were there, but I never saw it. I never saw the reality of the new covenant. I never saw the reality of an overcoming life or the reality of the new covenant or building the body and things like that.

And it was from there that when I began to preach that in the Baptist church, they threw us out. And that was the beginning of CFC. So I say that CFC was born in Bangalore 46 years ago.

In fact, next Sunday, they're celebrating our 46th anniversary. Not through a new teaching, it was born through baptism in the Holy Spirit. A couple of us who began the work, Brother Ian Robson and I, God met with us and filled us in the Holy Spirit.

That's how it began. So we're very thankful and I see the importance of this and I never want to devalue it. I would encourage all of you to seek God and say, Lord, I want this every day of my life.

I don't care what I don't have. I don't care if the whole world opposes me or whatever they think of me. I know what happened to me immediately was all types of false teaching, false accusations went around.

You know, I was confused the next day. This usually happens. You have an experience the next day, you wonder, was that all made up or was it real? So I went the next morning, I said, Lord, what happened yesterday? I'm not too sure.

But if this is the Holy Spirit, then the Bible will be a new book for me from today because he's the one who wrote it. So let me read it again. So I started reading.

I said, okay, I'm going to start Matthew 1 for the first time now. And give me some assurance that what I had yesterday was a genuine experience. I'm looking for this assurance from God and I read about somebody was the father of so-and-so and somebody was the father of so-and-so and so-and-so.

There's a huge genealogy list and I'm not getting any blessing out of that. Pretty boring. I went on reading.

When you find something boring in the Bible, don't stop. Just continue. So I continued.

And then I suddenly saw this verse. This is from the Holy Spirit. Wow.

I said, Lord, really? This is a direct answer to my prayer. You know, Joseph was wondering whether Mary's birth was, whether she had pregnant through some other man. And the angel said, no, this is from the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1.20. And it was a direct word to my heart. I wonder if there's another verse like that anywhere in the Bible that could have spoken to my heart like that. And from there, the Lord began to give me a whole message that the Holy Spirit had come upon Mary to produce Jesus' body inside.

And the Holy Spirit has come upon you to produce Jesus in you. And just like that baby would gradually become bigger. You're not going to become Christ-like in a moment, but gradually, more and more, the Holy Spirit has come to make you more and more like Christ.

And Christ will be formed in you over a period of time. And everybody misunderstood Mary, except Mary herself knew it was the truth. And the Lord said to me, did He like that with you? People will now start

misunderstanding you.

But you know, it was genuine. You know, you didn't make up anything. You know, it was from God 100%.

Mary knew that she didn't fool around with any man. It was from God. That's a wonderful thing.

I knew it was from God. And you know, when it is of God, you'll know it. You cannot mistake it.

And the Lord said that just like a poor baby was born, Christ will be formed in you. And He also said a word about speaking in tongues. The Lord said to me, the gift of tongues has been so abused and misused in Christendom that I want you to take that gift and adorn it with a Christ-like life.

And so that some people at least will once again have faith in that. It's not for everybody, but it's one of the gifts. So there's so much I got out of that.

So I know from my experience, and I believe that there would have been no CFC if we had not been baptized in the Holy Spirit. We would have been just preaching nice doctrines. You can't build a church without the part of the Holy Spirit.

Nobody can. Every person who wants to do something for the body of Christ anywhere, the answer is, seek God to be filled with the Spirit, be being filled with the Holy Spirit. That is the answer.

Then the new covenant will become real in our life. Amen. I just want to say one more thing.

Don't dictate to God how and when he should meet with you. Leave it in God's hand and don't try to work anything up. You don't have to work anything up.

That is a false way. Be at rest. God loves you.

And if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, they don't have to work themselves up to get a loaf of bread from you. How much more shall your Heavenly Father, how much more give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? The important thing is not how much we ask, it's how much we thirst and believe that the genuine gift can only come from Him. And my working myself up will produce nothing.

It'll only be a baptism of the soul, not of the Spirit. So that's what I would say. And don't dictate to God when he should do it.

They waited on the day up. They were waiting and they didn't even know it. Now we notice 10 days they waited, but they didn't know then.

They just waited. And then God met with them and they knew. It was also like that.

I could not predict. My wife could not predict. But in God's time, He does it.

He'll do that for every one of us. And then after that, we need to just walk with God with a clear conscience, and then the Spirit will keep on filling us. Don't look for an experience, look for the reality.

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