

Revitalize: How the Holy Spirit Brings Us Life Part # 5
"The Spirit Empowers" by Pastor Kevin Thiessen
Sunday, May 8, 2016

Over the past few weeks the theme of our Sunday messages has been REVITALISE: How the Holy Spirit bring us life. Today, our focus is on how the Spirit revitalizes our lives by empowering us to live out the mission of God in everyday life.

We're going to unpack this into three pieces:

- Why we NEED the empowering of the Spirit
- What we HAVE in the empowering of the Spirit
- How we LIVE with the empowering of the Spirit

Why we NEED the empowering of the Spirit

Proposal: You can't do anything and have it accomplish anything of eternal value unless the Spirit of God is at work.

In verse 4 of Acts chapter 1, Jesus says before he sends the disciples out to be his witnesses, "Wait for the promise." Don't do this without me. Don't do this without my Spirit.

So, we're going to start by checking out how Jesus did it. At the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry he gets baptized and the Holy Spirit descends on him and he hears the Father say, "This is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased", which you can find in Matthew 3:16-17. Jesus' public ministry on earth began with the approval and confirmation of his Father's voice.

The first question I have for you is have you heard the Father tell you that? Has the Spirit, as Paul says in Romans 5:5, "poured the love of the Father into your hearts". Are you able cry out "Abba (Dad) Father" because of the Spirit of adoption you have received?

Because if you haven't heard that, most of you will live out His mission for your life so that the Father will love you, instead of living out His mission because you know the Father loves you.

Jeff Vanderstelt: "The problem is you will use people to gain love, instead of serve people to give love. The Father has already given you all that he can in his Son. His Spirit has been poured into your heart so that you might have a testimony that you belong to God as a beloved child."

Do you know that? If you don't know that, don't go further. As Jesus tells his disciples, "Wait. Don't do this without me."

SLIDE 2

But let's assume you do know that – and you're ready to put this new identity into action. Do we get shoved out the door and told to go live this out under our own strength, power and wisdom. Absolutely not! As Casear Kalinowski comments in his book Transformed, **"God does not expect us to all of a sudden become perfect, super-Christians—always wise, always gentle, and loving miraculously overnight."** **SLIDE 3**

Rather, the Bible compares this new life to walking on a narrow road, one step at a time. In each step of life's journey we have the opportunity to trust in God and obey, with each step connected to the previous, as God himself grows, guides and matures us to be able to follow in the footsteps of His Son Jesus. As we comprehend and increasingly root ourselves in what is now true of us in Christ, we experience his ongoing renewal and transformation, inside and out. This is the work of the Spirit, not our own effort. **SLIDE 4**

As mentioned in Part 1 of this series, we are not filled with an emotional feeling, a hunch, or more energy. We are filled with a person.

As I was reading Kalinowski's book, one of his comments sparked a realization in my own mind. Like him, I

had never picked up that Jesus' earthly ministry was guided **completely** by the Holy Spirit. I had always thought, "Jesus knew the will of the Father perfectly so he just fixed his eyes on the prize and pressed on."

Jesus is both God and man, and he lived his life without ever sinning. But as a human, like you and me, he fully submitted to and was guided by the Spirit. His life is a picture of the perfect work of the Holy Spirit in man.

SLIDE 5

- *Jesus was born by the work of the Spirit Luke 1:35*
- *Jesus was led by the Spirit to suffer temptation and come out spotless Luke 4:1-2, 14*
- *Jesus was empowered by the Spirit to do the ministry he did Matthew 12:28, Acts 10:38*
- *Jesus was full of wisdom and knowledge by the Holy Spirit Isaiah 11:2-3*
- *Jesus spoke only the words given him by the Spirit John 3:34*
- *Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Spirit Romans 8:11*

So, this is why we had to start with why we NEED the empowering of the Spirit. To think that we, as Christians, can live the life that Jesus has called us to without the Holy Spirit is **utter foolishness**. **SLIDE 6** We absolutely NEED the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Praise God that as he did for Jesus, the Holy Spirit provides the power, authority, guidance and endurance to live out His mission throughout our lifetime.

I hope you are beginning to see why Jesus told his followers to wait until they receive the Spirit's power? He didn't want them to go off on their own steam and fail. Rather, he wanted them to wait, to receive the Spirit's power, so that they would have his power inside them to guide, empower and give them the words to say (or not say).

What we HAVE in the empowering of the Spirit

Continuing in our text Acts 1:6-7 we see the disciples appear to think it going to be a restoration of Israel to prominence – likely earlier distraught at having lost their master – are now thinking it's back on – the conquering King has now conquered even death – so is Jesus going to restore the kingdom to Israel ... but Jesus says, "It is not for you to know times or season that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power..."

Jesus doesn't do what they want ... but he reminds them that although they don't know all of God's sovereign plans – if they wait faithfully, they will receive the Spirit's power.

Have you ever wondered how Jesus spoke with such power and authority?

In the gospel of Luke 4 (v18-22), as Jesus begins his preaching ministry, the people that have known him since he was a little kid go, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" As in, isn't this just the son of a carpenter? For thirty years he was not preaching with power and authority. Yet after his baptism, and after the Spirit of God descended on him, he is now preaching with power and authority.

Why? Because Jesus is showing us how the human life is to be lived. Jesus is showing us that when the Spirit of God comes on men and women, they can proclaim the greatness and goodness of our God with power, in such a way that people will go "Who is this?"

Now, we don't just go declare the Gospel with power, without the power. We need to be filled. We need to be lead. We need to be anointed. And when it happens through us we will have to say, it's not me. It's Christ in me by his Spirit proclaiming to you.

So again, it's not our cleverness, or creativity, or intellect alone – none of these will save people. The Spirit alone must do this.

The power of the Spirit is seen with crystal clarity in our secondary text, Romans 8:11.

"The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you." Romans 8:11

SLIDE 7

The same power that guided Jesus' life and raised him from the dead now lives in us.

That's phenomenal power!

How powerful is it? Well, if the Holy Spirit was powerful enough to raise Jesus, and that very same Spirit now lives in and empowers us, do you think we will have enough power to overcome our bad temper, or a hard day at work, or disobedient kids, or an argument with our spouse, dealing with hurts and shattered dreams, overcoming our lack of love for the lost, and on and on.

You see, this power is not just for preachers, evangelists, or people who work in special ministry; rather, it is available to every believer who willingly surrenders moment by moment in **submission** and **obedience** to the **Holy Spirit**. **SLIDE 8**

That being said, the power of the Holy Spirit is not something we can harness...we don't acquire the power of the Spirit in order to use God for our purposes. Rather, we experience His power when we submit to His plans and purposes and surrender to be used by Him. God releases His power through us as we walk in obedience to Him.

- Here is where many people go astray concerning this event. Many think having or receiving the Spirit is just another spiritual experience to be sought after so they can be more spiritual.
- They are seeking experience or validation of their Christian life. They are inward focused.

But, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is outward focused. SLIDE 9

- Do you remember the primary work of the Holy Spirit? We heard this is Part 1 of this Revitalize series – the primary work of the Holy Spirit is to shine the spotlight on Jesus.
 - The Spirit reveals Jesus in a person's heart and spirit.
 - Barton used the illustration of sap that fills a tree – the Spirit has many roles but his primary work touches everything He does.

SLIDE 10

Therefore, what we have in the empowering of the Spirit within us is the **catalyst** for spiritual **transformation** and ongoing **renewal** in our everyday lives.

How we LIVE with the empowering of the Spirit

As we return to Acts 1, we see a glimpse of how we are to live with the empowering of the Spirit. We see that our mission from Jesus is, "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

What we need to recognize is that this mission is not only for the select few. It wasn't just for the disciples - it's for everyone. How do we know this?

SLIDE 11

Of all the Gospel writers, Luke is the only one who continues to tell the story of the next generation. **The story of Jesus doesn't end with Jesus**. It continued in "the believers" and now it continues in you and I.

Jesus told them not to depart and to wait for the promise of the Father. (v.4) The promise is that the disciples will receive power to be his **witnesses** to the city (Jerusalem), to the nation (Judea and Samaria) and to the world (to the ends of the earth).

SLIDE 12

If you continue reading in Acts you will see a series of examples of people filled by the Holy Spirit who are Jesus' messengers across the world. In Acts 2, we see on the day of Pentecost Jesus' promise was fulfilled and in v.39 the apostle Peter made it clear that the promise was for "all whom the Lord our God will call" This wonderful news is that this includes you and I!

Wonderful, so how do we live, being empowered to be His witnesses?

Let me use an illustration:

A teenager from Cumbria in Northern England felt God calling him. Patrick was poorly educated and

ineloquent and faced significant opposition throughout his ministry from those who felt he wasn't up to the task. Even as an old man he still admitted, "Today I still blush and fear more than anything to have my lack of learning brought out in the open."

Yet, despite all his disadvantages Patrick remained convinced that God had called and anointed him as an evangelist. He wrote, "We are a letter of Christ for salvation even to the back of beyond – and what does it matter if it is not a learned letter? For it is still to be found valid and plain for all to read, written in your very hearts, not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God!"

Today his more eloquent contemporaries have long been forgotten, but the impact of St. Patrick's ministry and mission to Ireland is recognized around the world. Even his weakness was anointed.

The Holy Spirit comes to anoint and empower you – to help and guide you in every aspect of your life – not just the "spiritual" parts. He will use your strengths and your weaknesses, your resources and your limitations. Everything you have belongs to God and he wants to be involved in every aspect of your life. Through the Holy Spirit living within you God wants you to become like Jesus in all your thoughts, attitudes, words and actions.

You are a letter of Christ to the world.

Three ways the Holy Spirit releases His power to us:

1. **SLIDE 13 Through Christ-like Character:** Only through the power of the Holy Spirit are we able to exhibit spiritual "fruit" – love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, which reveal the character of Christ in and through us.
2. **SLIDE 14 Through Glorifying Witness.** Scripture always refers to the power of the Holy Spirit in relationship to witnessing and glorifying God. It is His power through us that gives us boldness and at times, the necessary words.
 - 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 ⁴and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
3. **SLIDE 15 Through Everyday Life.** God will not place you into a position or ask you to accomplish a task for which He will not fully equip and enable you.

Finally, a reminder: It's okay to ASK for the empowering of the Holy Spirit

SLIDE 16

Luke 11:9-13 ⁹And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

What if we *started* our days asking for his power, wisdom, and guidance? Unlike Jesus we are not perfect, so our prayers will often start with repentance – confessing the many times we have tried to live without him. We're forgetful, and if any of you are like me, it is very easy to let the busyness of life crowd out the one thing that would empower me to live with energy, enthusiasm and endurance. The problem is, I return to my old way of living – doing things in my own strength – and I realize that's not only unhealthy, it's sinful. **SLIDE 17**

As we continue in this series on the Holy Spirit – and you sincerely want to be fully revitalized, please recognize – it will not happen on your own strength.

If you're only realizing this for the first time today – please, may I encourage you to repent of your self-sufficiency, and ask the Holy Spirit to do his revitalizing work in your life.

We can no more effectively live out our new identity than we can save ourselves from sin and death. **SLIDE 18**

God saved us. **SLIDE 19**

God transformed us.

God empowers our lives through his Holy Spirit so we can live out his mission.

Charles Stanley: **SLIDE 20**

When we are too weak to withstand temptation or too fearful to pursue the Lord's plan, we must persevere in prayer. **Doing so will draw us closer to Him, build our faith, and invite Him to work His will in and through us.** Then, as we praise our Father for His almighty nature, proclaim His sufficiency for every circumstance, and declare His goodness, His Spirit will help us move past our weaknesses and fears to a place of strength.

Today the body of Christ is experiencing a lack of spiritual power. Believers have a diminishing influence on our culture as our lives often reflect the world's values. To turn this around, we need to ask for and cooperate with the sanctifying work of the Spirit. When we do, He will empower us.

PRAYER: Lord – thank you that your Holy Spirit now lives in us. Thank you that, though we are weak, we are anointed to be your witness. Help us to be the mouthpiece of your Holy Spirit and a letter of Christ worth reading.

Benediction:

Prayer for Spiritual Strength

Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.