

The Spirit of Power

by Andrew Murray

The Spirit's power is for glorifying Jesus Christ and making us witnesses for Him, and it is received through unconditional submission and obedience to His guidance.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:49, John 15:26, Acts 1:5, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 2:3-5, 2 Corinthians 4:7, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Ephesians 1:17, Ephesians 3:16

Topics: "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "Witnessing for Christ"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the necessity of being baptized with the Holy Spirit to receive divine power for witnessing Christ. He explains that the Holy Spirit empowers believers not just for personal holiness but for effective service in glorifying Jesus and fulfilling the Great Commission. Murray highlights that true power comes from surrendering to the Holy Spirit, who works through our weaknesses to accomplish God's purposes. He urges the Church to seek this power with the intent of being effective witnesses for Christ, as the world awaits the manifestation of God's power through His people. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a deep dependence on the Holy Spirit to enable believers to live out their calling as witnesses of Jesus.

Transcript

Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be my witnesses.'--Acts 1: 5, 8.

'Tarry ye in the city, till ye be clothed with power from on high.'--LUKE 24: 49.

The disciples had heard from John of the Baptism of the Spirit. Jesus had spoken to them of the Father's giving of the Spirit to those that ask Him, and of the Spirit of their Father speaking in them. And on the last night he had spoken of the Spirit dwelling in them, witnessing with them, having come to them to convince the world. All these thoughts of what this coming of the Holy Spirit would be were thus connected in their mind with the work they would have to do and the power for it. When our Lord gathered up all His teaching in the promise, 'Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and shall be my witnesses,' it must have been to them the simple summing up of what they looked for: a new Divine power for the new Divine work of being the witnesses of a Crucified and Risen Jesus.

This was in perfect harmony with all they had seen in Holy Scripture of the Spirit's work. In the days before the flood He had been striving with men. In the ministry of Moses He fitted him, and the seventy who received of his Spirit, for the work of ruling and guiding Israel, and gave wisdom to those who built God's

house. In the days of the Judges He gave the power to fight and conquer the enemies. In the times of Kings and Prophets He gave boldness to testify against sin, and power to proclaim a coming redemption. Every mention of the Spirit in the Old Testament is connected with the honour and Kingdom of God, and the fitting for service in it. In the great prophecy of the Messiah, with which the Son of God opened His ministry at Nazareth, His being anointed with the Spirit had the one object of bringing deliverance to the captives and gladness to the mourners. To the mind of the disciples, as students of the Old Testament and followers of Christ Jesus, the promise of the Spirit could have but one meaning--fitness for the great work they had to do for their Lord when He ascended the Throne. All that the Spirit would be to them personally in His work of comforting and teaching, sanctifying the soul and glorifying Jesus, were but as a means to an end--their induement with power for the service of their departed Lord.

Would God that the Church of Christ understood this in our days ! All prayer for the guiding and gladdening influence of the Holy Spirit in the children of God ought to have this as its aim: fitness to witness for Christ and do effective service in conquering the world for Him. Waste of power is always cause of regret to those who witness it. The economy of power is one of the great moving springs in all organization and industry. The Spirit is the great power of God; the Holy Spirit the great power of God's Redemption, as it comes down from the Throne of Him to whom all power has been given. And can we imagine that God would waste this power on those who seek it only for their own sake, with the desire of being beautifully holy, or wise, or good? Truly no. The Holy Spirit is the power from on high for carrying on the work for which Jesus sacrificed His Throne and His Life. The essential condition for receiving that power is that, we be found ready and fit for doing the work the Spirit has come to accomplish.

'My Witnesses:' these two words do indeed contain, in Divine and inexhaustible wealth of meaning, the most perfect description of the Spirit's Work and our work; the work for which nothing less than His Divine power is needed, the work for which our weakness is just fitted. There is nothing so effective as an honest witness. The learned eloquence of an advocate must give way to it. There is nothing so simple: just telling what we have seen and heard, or, perhaps in silence, witnessing to what has been done in us. It was the great work of Jesus Himself: 'To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.' And yet, simple and easy as it appears, to make us witnesses of Jesus is what the Almighty power of the Spirit is needed for, and what He was sent to work. If we are, in the power of the eternal life, the power of the world to come, in heavenly power, to witness of Jesus as He reigns in heaven, we need nothing less than the Divine power of the heavenly life to animate the testimony of our lips and life.

The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses because He Himself is a witness. 'He shall witness of me,' Jesus said. When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached that Christ, when He had ascended into heaven, had received from 'the Father the Holy Ghost, and had poured Him forth, he spake of what he knew: the Holy Ghost witnessed to him, and in him, of the glory of his exalted Lord. It was this witness of the Spirit to the reality of Christ's power and presence that made him so bold and strong to speak before the council: 'God did exalt Him to be a Prince and a Saviour; and we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Ghost.' It is as the Holy Spirit becomes to us, in a Divine life and power, the witness to what Jesus is at the present moment in His glory, that our witness will be in His power. We may know all that the Gospels record and all that Scripture further teaches of the person and work of Jesus; we may even speak from past experience of what we once knew of the power of Jesus : this is not the witness of power that is promised here, and that will have effect in the world. It is the Presence of the Spirit at the present moment, witnessing to the Presence of the personal Jesus, that gives our witness that breath of life from heaven

that makes it mighty through God to the casting down of strongholds. You can truly witness to just as much of Jesus as the Holy Spirit is witnessing to you in life and truth.

The baptism of power, the indument of power, is sometimes spoken of and sought after as a special gift. If Paul asked very distinctly for the Ephesians who had been sealed with the Holy Spirit, that the Father would still give them 'the Spirit of wisdom' (Eph. 1:17), we cannot be far wrong in praying as definitely for 'the Spirit of power.' He who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, and will give not according to the correctness of our words, but the Spiritbreathed desire of our hearts. Or let us take that other prayer of Paul (Eph.3:16), and plead that ' He would grant us to be mightily strengthened by His Spirit.' However we formulate our prayer, one thing is certain: it is in unceasing prayer, it is in bowing our knees, it is in waiting on God, that from Himself will come what we ask, be it the Spirit of Power or the Power of the Spirit. The Spirit is never anything separate from God; in all His going out and working He still ever is the inmost self of God; it is God Himself who, according to the riches of His glory, is mighty to do above what we ask or think who will in Christ give us to be clothed with the power of the Spirit.

In seeking for this Power of the Spirit, let us note the mode of His working. There is one mistake we must specially beware of. It is that of expecting always to feel the power when it works. Scripture links power and weakness in a wonderful way, not as succeeding each other, but as existing together. 'I was with you in weakness ;my preaching was in power.' 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' (See 1 Cor.2: 3-5 ; 2 Cor. 4:7, 16, 6: 10, 7:10, 13: 3, 4.) The power is the power of God, given to faith; and faith grows strong in the dark. The Holy Spirit hides Himself in the weak things that God hath chosen, that flesh may not glory in His presence. Spiritual power can only be known by the Spirit of faith. The more distinctly we feel and confess our weakness and believe in the power dwelling within us, ready to work as need arises, the more confidently may we expect its Divine operation even when nothing is felt. Christians lose much not only by not waiting for the power, but by waiting in the wrong way. Seek to combine the faithful and ready obedience to every call of duty, however little thy power appears to be, with a deep, dependent waiting and expectation of Power from on high. 'Let thy intervals of repose and communion be the exercise of prayer and faith in the Power of God dwelling in thee, and waiting to work through thee; thy time exertion and effort will bring the 'proof that by faith out of weakness we are made strong.

Let us also see and make no mistake about the condition of the working of this Divine Power. He that would command nature must first, and most absolutely obey her. It does not need much grace to long and ask for power, even the power of the Spirit. Who would not be glad to have power? Man pray earnestly for power in or with their work, and receive it not, because they do not accept the only posture in which the Power can work. We want to get possession of the Power and use it. God wants the Power to get possession of us, and use us. If we give up ourselves to the Power to rule in us, the Power will give itself to us, to rule through us. Unconditional submission and obedience to the Power in our inner life is the one condition of our being clothed with it. God gives the Spirit to the obedient. 'Power belongeth unto God' and remains His for ever. If thou wouldst have His power work in thee, bow very low in reverence before the Holy Presence that dwelleth in thee, that asks thy surrender to His guidance even in the least things. Walk very humbly in holy fear, lest in anything thou shouldst fail in knowing or doing His holy will. Live as one given up to a Power that has the entire mastery over thee, that has complete possession of thy inmost being. Let the Spirit and His Power have possession of thee: thou shalt know that His power worketh in thee.

Let us be clear, too, as to the object of this power, the work it is to do. Men are very careful to economize power, and to gather it there where it can do its work most effectually. God does not give this power for our

own enjoyment,--as little to save us from trouble and effort. He gives it for one purpose, to glorify His Son. Those who in their weakness are faithful to this one object, who in obedience and testimony prove to God that they are ready at any cost to glorify God,-they will receive the power from on high. God seeks for men and women whom He can thus clothe with power. The Church is looking round for them on every side, wondering at the feebleness of so much of its ministry and worship. The world waits for it, to be convinced that God is indeed in the midst of His people. The perishing millions are crying for deliverance, and the Power of God is waiting to work it. Let us not be content with the prayer for God to visit and to bless them, or with the effort to do the best we can for them. Let us give up ourselves, each individual believer, wholly and undividedly, to live as witnesses for Jesus. Let us plead with God to show His people what it means that they are Christ's representatives just as He was the Father's. Let us live in the faith that the Spirit of power is within us, and that the Father will, as we wait on Him, fill us with the power of the Spirit.

Most Blessed Father! we thank Thee for the wonderful provision Thou hast made for Thy children,-that out of weakness they should be made strong, and that just in their feebleness Thy Might Power should be glorified . We thank Thee for the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Power, coming down to make Jesus, to whom all Power is given, present with His Church, and to make His disciples the witnesses of that Presence.

I ask Thee, O my Father, to teach me that I have the power, as I have the Living Jesus. May I not look for it to come with observation. May I consent that it shall ever be a Divine strength in human weakness, so that the glory may be Thine alone. May I learn to receive it in a faith that allows the Mighty Lord Jesus to hold the power and do the work in the midst of weakness. And may, by the Holy Spirit, He be so present with me, that my witness may be of Him alone.

O my Father! I desire to submit my whole being to this Holy Power. I would bow before its rule every day and all the day. I would be its servant, and humble myself to do its meanest command. Father I let the Power rule in me, that I may be made meet for it to use. And may my one object in life be that Thy Blessed Son may receive the honour and the glory. Amen.

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