

(Acts) Revealing the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

Philip's ministry in Samaria marked the fulfillment of Jesus' command to take the gospel to the Samaritans and beyond, while Simon's attempt to purchase the gift of the Holy Spirit highlighted the dangers of simony.

Duration: 54:45

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, Acts 4:31, Acts 8:5

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Church Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the pastor shares his experience of preaching the word of God and witnessing a transformation in his fellowship. He emphasizes the importance of evaluating people's motives before placing them in positions of ministry. He also discusses the need for believers to be baptized in the spirit and empowered by God to serve Him effectively. The sermon references the story of Stephen, who was martyred for his faith, and the subsequent persecution of the early church.

Transcript

So we pick up this evening in verse five of the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts, and here we read, Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. Now, here's the second person in that list of deacons that were raised up to help with the administrative aspects of the early church. Here's the second person whose ministry is highlighted beyond that of the distribution that they were involved in.

Remember, the first one was Stephen, and we looked at Stephen's life last week. We looked at how he was basically plotted against by some wicked men, and they brought false witnesses against him, and he went before the council and he gave a powerful testimony and pointed out that those men were guilty of rejecting the Messiah. And then you remember that they became enraged against him and they drove him out of the city and they put him to death.

They killed him. They stoned him. And yet the Lord was there ready to receive him into heaven.

He saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And of course, he was taken up then to be with the Lord. And then we were told that as he was being stoned, those who were killing him, they laid down their clothing at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And then immediately we saw that at that point, Saul began to attack the church. And as he was attacking the church, the church was dispersed and people were fleeing from Jerusalem. But as they fled,

they went everywhere preaching the word.

And you remember we talked about how God will oftentimes stir things up and it's easy for us to get sort of comfortable and settle down and the Lord will stir things up to actually, you know, provoke us and to get us to do the things that he's calling us to do, that sometimes we just get comfortable and a bit lazy and we don't get those things done because the Lord had told them, you remember, to take the gospel out to Judea and to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. At this point, they had just pretty much stayed in Jerusalem. So now as they go out preaching the word, they go out into the region of Judea, which would be the area around Jerusalem.

But Philip now. Philip goes to the city of Samaria and he preached Christ to them, and so that command of Jesus to take the gospel into all of the world is beginning to be fulfilled. Now, Samaria was an interesting place back in the time of the son of Solomon, Rehoboam.

The kingdom was split. You remember Solomon under his reign, the kingdom was glorious and David had paved the way for Solomon to build the temple. And Solomon enjoyed a very prosperous and a peaceful reign.

But you remember that as Solomon got older, he turned away from the Lord. He married many foreign women and he got caught up in idol worship. And because of that, the Lord was determined to judge the nation.

And what he was going to do is he was going to split the nation. And he did not during Solomon's life. But when his son, Rehoboam, came to the throne, the kingdom was split in two.

And there were 10 tribes that followed this man named Jeroboam, and only Judah and Benjamin remained faithful and followed Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Now, Jeroboam took those 10 tribes and they went and made the capital of Israel, which would be the northern kingdom. They made Samaria the capital of Israel.

Now, if you were looking at the country from the very top of it, you would have Galilee first and then you would come to the area of Samaria. And then, of course, further south, you would have Judea and Jerusalem situated there in Judea. But Samaria became the capital of the northern kingdom, which wouldn't have been necessarily a bad thing because God actually was the one behind this split.

But Jeroboam, even though God gave him the northern kingdom, he didn't trust the Lord. And instead of trusting God to maintain his kingdom, he thought, you know, I've got a problem because the temple is in Jerusalem and people are going to be tempted to go back there. And when they do, they might decide to leave my domain and go back to the sons of David.

So what I'm going to do is I'm going to establish a worship center up in this area and I'm going to develop a priesthood and I'm going to do up here in the north, just like what they're doing there in Jerusalem. And so Jeroboam developed a rival worship system which was abominable to God. He didn't use people from the Levitical tribe, as God had declared the priests were to be.

But he just picked out anyone that he thought might be a good candidate for the priesthood and he stuck them in that position and they worshiped God through an image. They made a golden calf and they worshiped the Lord by concentrating on this image. So that is where trouble began in Samaria.

Now, as they went on in that for many years, God sent them prophets and they ignored the prophets and finally God sent the Assyrians to judge them. And so in 721 BC, the Assyrians came and conquered the northern kingdom of Israel and they took the majority of the population and led them off into a dispersion. They did leave some people in the land and then they sent other people to inhabit the land.

And so what happened in Samaria is that you had these Jews that remained and you had these foreigners that came in and they began to cohabit with one another. They began to mingle. They began to intermarry and they actually formed sort of a new race of people, the Samaritans.

During the time of the rebuilding of the temple under Ezra and Nehemiah and all of them, you remember, they were the ones that were trying to get involved in the building of the temple. But because their worship was not according to the scriptures, Nehemiah and Ezra forbid them to do that. Now, as time progressed, the division began to develop between the Jews and the Samaritans, so much so that the Samaritans again developed a rival place of worship, not like Jeroboam, because that was all done away with when the judgment came by the Assyrians.

But now this new race of people, in a sense, that's grown up this this combination of Jewish people, along with people that were brought in by the Assyrians, they co-mingled together and then they decide we need a religion that is comparable to that which is going on in Judah. So they build a temple on Mount Gerizim there in Samaria and they develop a priesthood and they start a system just like they had in Judah. But the one of the sharp distinctions is they only believed in the first five books of the of the what's called in Hebrew the Tanakh, which would be what we would refer to as the Old Testament.

They rejected the prophets. They rejected Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the minor prophets. They rejected the Psalms.

They rejected everything except the five books of Moses. And so they they based everything on sort of a twisted perspective of Moses. And so there are these rival worship centers.

And as time goes on, the animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans just builds and builds, as you would think that it would over a long period of time. So by the time we come to the New Testament period. Jesus, when he goes to Samaria.

Something that a Jew would normally have done, and he meets this woman at the well and he asked her for a drink, she's puzzled because a Jew is asking her a Samaritan woman for a drink. And John tells us the reason why she was puzzled is because Jews and Samaritans have no dealing with one another. So that's the the sharp rift that exists between these two peoples.

And Jesus actually blew the mind of his disciples by first going through Samaria. He didn't actually have to geographically, but he chose to. And then when he ministered to this woman and then no doubt when he stayed two days and ministered to the Samaritans, they were probably shocked.

They were probably blown away thinking, wow, I didn't know the Samaritans were going to be in on this. I mean, you know, we don't like them. Why? You know, God, what do you think? And they're you know, they've got a false worship system and all of that kind of thing.

Jesus addressed that a little bit with the woman. So Jesus ministers in Samaria. And then, you know, later when he's talking on one occasion to the to the proud Levites and the Pharisees and all them, he tells them a story as we know it today, the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Well, that must have really irritated them. Jesus is actually, you know, sort of holding up a Samaritan above a Levite, above a priest, above a devout Jew. But yet the Lord didn't have all those hang ups, all those biases, all those prejudices and those kinds of things, those are all things that happen with people.

And of course, he loved the Samaritans and he had a plan for them and he had told them early on. Remember, the gospel was going to go to Jerusalem, Judea and to Samaria. And then to the outermost parts of the earth.

And so here we are in the story where the gospel now goes to the Samaritans and it's Philip who takes it. Now, remember, Philip is a deacon and a deacon, as we pointed out, the word means servant. He's a servant in the church.

He's a guy who helps out in distributing food for the poor and things like that. But like Stephen, who was also a deacon, he has a powerful ministry as what you might call a layman. Now, remember last week we talked about that unfortunate dichotomy that that developed in the church between the clergy and the laity.

And sadly, that's remained with us even to this very day, but that's not anything that God recognizes at all. Philip was a Christian and as a Christian, he could expect the power of God working in his life, regardless of what his position might have been in the church. And so he's the one who takes the gospel now into Samaria and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

So he performed miracles, much like Stephen again for unclean spirits, crying with loud voice came out of many that were possessed with them and many taken with palsies. And that were lame, were healed, and there was great joy in the city. So Philip just ventures into this area.

Now, interesting, Philip probably wasn't there when Jesus had said to those that were gathered together, those apostles, when he had said, you were you will receive power and the Holy Spirit will come upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and so forth. But but Philip, he just, you know, takes a step of faith and he ends up in Samaria. Maybe he took a wrong turn somewhere and suddenly he realized, oh, no, I'm in Samaria.

How did I get here? But maybe not, because Philip was from that Hellenistic background, so he might not have had that strong prejudice that the more Hebrew oriented Jews had. But however, the case, he ends up there and he just starts sharing with them and people start responding and God begins to move and demons are cast out and people are being healed and all kinds of wonderful and exciting things are happening. And the city is filled with great joy.

But there was a certain man called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that he himself was some. Great one to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying this man is the great power of God, so this man, Simon, had supernatural power, but it wasn't God's power. It was a demonic kind of a power, and through that he was able to bring the people under his influence and to him they had regard because that a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Listen, then Simon himself believed also, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and the signs which were

done. So this guy who has been practicing sorcery, he has supernatural power that is actually coming to him from the demonic realm.

Yet as he sees Philip and he he observes this power coming from Philip's life, he realizes I don't have anything compared to what this guy has. And so he says, I want what he's got. I want to be part of this.

And so he joins in with the rest. It appears that many, many people believed at this point, hundreds, maybe even thousands. And so, Simon, he's going to join in.

He wants to be part of this thing that's going on. And then it says that he. Continued with Philip, so he was very interested, he was intrigued by this power that Philip had, and so.

It says in verse 14, now, when the apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were calmed down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. So word got back to Jerusalem and. This would have been, I think, a bit shocking.

And then, of course, they probably would have remembered, oh, yes, Jesus told us. And then, of course, many of them had been in Samaria with Jesus and seen his ministry there, so they wouldn't have been completely shocked. But they send Peter and John.

And I think the reason they send these two is because they were pillars in the early church and they wanted to send down those that were recognized as key leaders so that the Samaritans would be absolutely certain that they were welcomed into the family, that they were embraced. Now, Philip was a relatively unknown person, but obviously he wasn't unknown to God because God was using him powerfully. But Peter and John were men of reputation.

And so in order for God, I think, to confirm to the Samaritans that, you know, they were very much a part of this new thing that he was doing. Peter and John are the ones that are sent down and they have the privilege of praying for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Now, listen to verse 16.

For as yet he was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Now, we're going to come back to this a bit later. But this particular statement here has caused all kinds of confusion and debate among theologians, and it's caused them to come up with all kinds of really.

Funny interpretations as to what actually happened here, but we'll come back to it and we'll see that it's it's a very simple solution, it's not a it's not a difficulty really at all, and we'll look at that in a moment. But let's continue on verse 17. Then laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles hands, the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power that on whomever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness and pray, God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee, for I perceive that thou art. In the gall of bitterness or poisoned by bitterness and in the bond of iniquity or bound to iniquity. So Simon here, he shows his true colors.

He shows that. He was interested just in the power, and when Peter says you're poisoned by bitterness, no doubt he was bitter that he had lost his position of power over the people, and so he was thinking that he could get it back if he could get the same power. Now, he tried to purchase the gift of God, Peter said, he said, your money perish with you.

This became known in church history as simony. If you ever hear that term simony, simony refers to trying to buy position in the church. That's what this man, Simon, did.

And that's how we come up with this term simony. Now, as time went on, all kinds of interesting legends and things developed about this person, Simon, and that he went on to become a great opponent of the apostles. And he he, you know, contended with Peter and they had these, you know, clashes together and all.

And and that is really just fabricated. There's there's a lot of stuff in the early history of the church. You have to really be careful when you're reading some of that stuff, because it's it's obviously legend and myth, not reality.

The fact of the matter is we know nothing about Simon after the incident here. The scripture doesn't tell us anything about him. And I'm sure if he would have been any kind of a major factor in opposition to the early church, we would have heard about him a bit further on in the text.

But at this point, he just simply fades out of the picture after Peter finishes up dealing with him. But Peter said to him, then answered Simon or Simon said to Peter. Pray ye to the Lord for me that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me and they when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

So Peter rebuked Simon and Simon says, pray for me now. You know, there's all kinds of speculation as to, you know, Simon's heart here. You know, was he sincere? Was he did he really repent? Was he genuinely saying, oh, Peter, please pray for me.

I'm I know I'm wrong. Some people say, oh, no, he wasn't doing that at all. He he remained steadfast in his wickedness.

And this was just sort of a way to, you know, OK, well, you pray for me. And but he never really changed. We don't know what happened to him.

That's that's the reality. So to speculate about it is just a waste of time. But here's something that we do know by observation from the text here.

Going back to verse 13, I want you to notice something it said there specifically, then Simon himself believed also and he was baptized. And so what we do see for sure, because when Peter, you know, calls him on the carpet, it's clear that his heart is not right with God. He said it to him.

He said, your heart is not right in the sight of God. So whatever happened. It was something short of what really needed to happen.

In other words, Simon, although he responded in an outward sense, it doesn't appear that he really was converted at this point. Perhaps he did get converted later. Perhaps when Peter rebuked him, he went back and he he said, you know, Lord, I'm sorry, I want to get right with you.

Maybe he did. We don't know. But we do know that at this point he wasn't.

And that brings up something that is important for us to understand. That people can come to church, people can join a church, people can go through a baptismal ritual, people can actually get involved in doing works of service at a church and not necessarily be saved. And that is a reality, it's a sad reality, but it is a reality.

And people come with all different kinds of motives and you don't always know what their motives are initially. Here we see Simon's motives were revealed very swiftly, but we don't always know what is motivating a person and therefore it's vitally important that we watch a person and evaluate their life before we put them in positions of ministry. You know, people have come with these incredible testimonies about what God did and about, oh, you know what they used to be and all they were the biggest sinner ever.

And they've got a litany of horrible things that they did and they're ready to serve the Lord. You find out later that everything was a lie. There was a guy that was going around for years telling the stories about how when he was a warlock and involved in all of this witchcraft and the power he had and the influence and everything, you know, he did and he went speaking.

Christians embraced him and he was a real humorous guy. So, you know, that kind of opened the door for him and he wrote books and everything. And, you know, what a testimony found out in the end, none of it was true.

It's all fabricated. Just a big liar. That's what he was.

And people will come with all the wrong motives, but we can't necessarily see those as we just look at them. So what we need to do is, as Paul reminded us, we need to be careful not to lay hands on anyone. Too soon.

In other words, we don't take a brand new convert, whatever they've come out of witchcraft or some other religion or some sinful lifestyle and usher them right into ministry. We say, no, you come and you sit down and you just grow in the Lord. And when we see the fruits of the spirit, when we see godly characteristics beginning to develop, when we see humility, when we see those things, that's when we can then say, yes, God has really done something in this person's life.

You see, the true evidence of a relationship with God is a changed life. That's the true evidence it's not. Responding to an invitation, Simon did that, it's not even being baptized, he did that, too.

But what he did not do was surrender his heart to the Lord, and that's where conversion takes place. It's not in these outward things, it's in. Turning away from sin and yielding the heart to God, and so Simon is sort of a warning to us to be careful, even ourselves.

The scriptures admonish us to judge ourselves and make sure we are in the faith, make sure that we're not just going through the motions or we're not just caught up in the church thing because, you know, it's a nice place to socialize or people accept me over there or I feel important there are all kinds of different reasons why people end up at church. But the real reason to be here is because God has touched your life and you've yielded to him and you've received him, verse 16, we're going to concentrate on this for the remainder of our study tonight. The big dilemma that theologians grapple with here is how could it be? That these people responded to the gospel message of Philip and were baptized, but yet somehow didn't

receive the Holy Spirit.

And that's what many commentators have concluded from this particular text. Now, some have gone in their attempts to interpret the text to the point of saying, well, these people didn't they weren't really saved because it says they believed Philip, but it doesn't necessarily say they believe the gospel. Well, that's not a clear reading of the text.

The text clearly says that they believed the message that Philip preached about Jesus Christ. So we immediately dismiss that as. Implausible, others in their desperation to understand this.

They say, well, you know, this was a unique situation. The Samaritans and they go through the whole history that I went through with you earlier about the Samaritans, you know, because they were an outcast people, because there was such a sharp division between them and the Jews, there had to be some real distinct thing that happened with them so everybody else would know that they were really saved. So what God did here, very unusually, yes.

But you know, what he appeared to do here was he withheld the Holy Spirit. So they got saved, but they didn't have the Holy Spirit. But then they say, well, but they really couldn't be saved because you can't be saved without the Holy Spirit.

So it's one of those strange things that just happened at that time where they believed and they were baptized. But God withheld the Holy Spirit so he could give it to him later when Peter and John came down, so then they could really know that they were accepted. Now, to me, that's just inventing a whole lot of things that aren't in the text to come up with an answer.

To the dilemma now, here's the dilemma that they have, the reason why they come up with this elaborate theory is because these particular people I'm talking about who come up with that kind of an idea do not believe that there is a subsequent work of the spirit that takes place in the life of a believer. They they believe the moment you're saved, you get everything you can ever get and you won't get any more. So don't ever ask for any more.

And if you ask for any more than you're in danger of getting the devil. Some of the extremes they'll go to. And some today would say, don't ever ask to pray in tongues, because if you do, the devil will take hold of you and he'll start speaking in tongues through you.

Or don't ever ask for a gift of prophecy because the devil will come in and he will start prophesying through you. These are extreme positions that are held by. People within the church today, and so those people who have that preconceived position that.

Once you're saved, the moment you're saved, you get all the Holy Spirit you'll ever get, they look at this and they say, OK, this is a problem because they appeared to have gotten saved, but then Peter and John come down to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. So the solution must be this, that here's a unique case in history where people get saved but don't get the Holy Spirit. That's ridiculous.

That's altering the whole reality of salvation just to make the scripture go with your preconceived idea. And unfortunately, that's what theologians do sometime. There's a very simple solution, and the interesting thing to me about these guys who come up with this bizarre theory is that they completely neglect to mention the fact that Jesus had already been to Samaria.

Because they build their case on this whole thing about the Samaritans were so disconnected and there was no association and they would have never been accepted in all this, they completely forget Jesus went to Samaria himself. The apostles went to Samaria. Jesus ministered to them.

People got saved in Samaria, not in the masses that did when Philip came, but there was that seed planted by the Lord himself. You see, here's the solution to the problem, it's very simple. Just like everybody else.

When the Samaritans heard the gospel preached by Peter and and believed they were born again, they were regenerated, the spirit of God came into their life. You see, that's what happens the moment you receive Christ. The moment you receive Jesus Christ, the spirit of God comes and dwells in you, takes up residence in you.

And we call that regeneration. The spirit gives you a new life that happens the instant you receive Christ. So they believe the gospel, they receive the message, and then outwardly they were baptized.

Christ had come into their hearts. But what had not yet happened was the same thing that had not yet happened to the apostles who had Christ in dwelling in them, but needed to wait until the day of Pentecost, until they were empowered by the spirit. What happened to the Samaritans is exactly what happened to the apostles.

If you go to the 20th chapter of the Gospel of John, you find that Jesus has died, he's risen again. The apostles are all gathered together in an upper room and Jesus appears to them. And at that time, he corrects Thomas's misunderstanding and so forth.

But then it says. That Jesus breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit, and they did. When Jesus breathed on them in that upper room, they received the Holy Spirit at that time they were born again, they were regenerated, the spirit of God took up residence in them.

But you see, in order for them to fulfill the Great Commission, they needed to be empowered by the spirit. And so the Samaritans, when Philip preached, they believed they received Christ, they were baptized, the spirit took up residence in them, but they hadn't had a baptism in the spirit like the apostles had on the day of Pentecost. And therefore, Peter and John were sent to Samaria so that they might be empowered by the spirit.

Notice what verse 16 says and what it doesn't say. First of all, let me tell you what it doesn't say. It doesn't say, for as yet they had not received the Holy Spirit.

Does it say that in any of your Bibles? If it does, it's a wrong translation. That's not what it says. It says this, for as yet he was fallen upon none of them.

You see, there's a vast difference there when we receive Christ. He comes into us and there's a Greek preposition in spelled *en*, but it's the same as our preposition in *in* when we believe in Christ, he comes into us. But yet there also is this experience where the spirit of God comes upon us and when the spirit of God comes upon us, it comes upon us to empower us to serve the Lord.

Jesus himself had that experience. Now, Jesus, of course, was conceived of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Holy Spirit, he was indwelt by the Holy Spirit. There is no disputing any of that.

But yet when he was 30 years old, he was baptized with the Holy Spirit. Remember when Jesus was baptized in water, he came out from the water and the spirit of God descended upon him like a dove, and that's when his ministry began. And immediately he left that area, went to the synagogue where he had grown up, stood up and said, the spirit of the Lord is upon me and the Lord has anointed me.

Jesus himself was baptized in the Holy Spirit. After he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Indwelt by the spirit, he was indwelt by the spirit from his conception.

But then at 30 years old, he's baptized in the spirit. So what's being described here is not some unusual thing that only happened this one time and will never happen again, like people believing in Jesus and asking him into their life. But he doesn't really come in for a few weeks until the apostles can get there to, you know, seal the deal for him.

You know, John was teaching out at Marietta the other day. And he was talking about theologians and their tendency toward argumentation and things like that, and he said a theologian is like a blindfolded man in a dark room looking for a black cat that isn't there and he finds it. And that's so often is the case with theologians, they just, you know, I mean, there's some great deal, which is not putting all theologians down.

There's some there's some great ones, but, you know, there are some who are so bent on their position that even when it's crystal clear right in front of their face that their position is wrong, they're going to contradict that because they can't be wrong because they're theologians. And so the simple fact of the matter is that these Samaritans were saved, but now they needed to be empowered to serve the Lord, and that's what Peter and John came down to do, to lay hands on them and empower them to receive the Lord. Now, we as Christians, likewise, we can have that same sort of a situation.

Where we have believed in Jesus, we received him in our lives, we're born again, we know we are, there's a transformation that's taken place. But yet. We don't really know anything about serving the Lord, we don't know what our gifts are, we we don't sense the power of God directing us or using us, and although we're really believers, we're just sort of.

To a large degree, spectating. If that's your life, there's a good possibility that you haven't had the spirit of God come upon you. Now, some people get this baptism in the spirit, this infilling, this empowering, whatever you want to call it, some people get it just really simultaneous with salvation.

Why some people get it the moment they're converted and other people get it a little bit later, we don't really know, I don't have an explanation for that. But from scripture, we see that that does happen, it happened right here. And it's happened on other occasions, but when we get a little further down the road in Acts, we're going to find that in the house of Cornelius, they were baptized in the spirit the moment they were saved.

So as to why sometimes it happens simultaneously and sometimes it happens a little bit later on, sometimes it happens maybe a few years down the road, God only knows why it happens that way. Sometimes it might happen simply out of ignorance. People just don't know.

And they go on just sort of wondering. Lord, how come there's, you know, no direction in the sense of service or no sense of empowering and and they don't necessarily know what's going on. Sometimes it needs nothing more than just some instruction.

Years ago, when I was pastoring, I was getting upset that. The same handful of people were the ones doing all the service in the church, you know, you could just almost predict every time you mentioned anything that was coming up, you needed help or anything, the same small number of people would volunteer for the job. And, you know, you're looking out at all of these other hundreds of people and you're wondering what in the world are you guys doing? And I remember one time being really frustrated over that.

And I took my frustration to the Lord. I said, Lord, I'm upset that this is just you know, this is just the way it is all the time. And and, you know, these are the people that are always serving and they're the ones, you know, in the prayer meetings and they're the ones that are there afterward fellowshiping and everybody else just, you know, minute it's over, it's over and they're out the door.

And I'm laying this all out to the Lord and the Lord's evidently listening to me because he spoke back and said, it's your fault. I said, but I mean, it's my fault. You know what? What can I do about it? I'm just the pastor here.

And the Lord, the Lord really did. He spoke to me, said, you know, it is your fault because you have never taught them about. The necessity of the baptism of the spirit, you've never really told them.

And therefore, they don't know what to do because they don't have the power, and I really firmly believe that the baptism of the spirit, that's when the gifts of the spirit come and that's when ministry begins to be discovered. But until we're baptized in the spirit, although we're members of the body of Christ, we're not functioning members, we're just sort of, you know, sitting there limp, paralyzed, but it's when the baptism comes that all of a sudden we're empowered and we begin to function as the body. So the Lord really convicted me about that.

And here's what I did, I took six weeks and for six consecutive Sundays, I taught on the ministry of the spirit, the baptism, the spirit, and every Sunday I gave an invitation for people to receive the baptism of the spirit. And truly, literally every Sunday there was a line from right here all the way out the back door for people to receive. People were starving for it.

People were dying for it. People were just waiting for me, the pastor, to tell them what they needed. And the Lord told me to tell them and I did.

And you know what happened? It revolutionized our fellowship, it was never the same again, completely transformed it. And man, that just vision came in service and new ministries popping up here and there and missions, vision and people going to the mission field and all of this great stuff. The baptism of the spirit, the power of the spirit, and here we are tonight.

And having learned that lesson from a long time ago, I wonder, are there some here tonight, maybe some listening over the radio, but are there some, you know, you're a Christian, there's no question about it. You love the Lord. He's come into your life.

He's changed you. You're not the person that you used to be. But yet at the same time, you don't really know what your part is.

You come to church, you like coming to church. But you're kind of shy, you haven't really met anybody, you don't, you know, basically apart from coming to church, you just kind of have your life and you're over there just doing your job and living and all. But but you couldn't really say about yourself that, man, I'm part

of the body of Christ.

I'm a functioning member. And this is what's. And you sense that something's missing.

Well, it's that baptism of the spirit, it's the spirit of God coming upon your life. And that's just where these people were, and they would have remained, the excitement of their salvation was there initially, but, you know, it would have sort of dissipated after a while and they would have all been Christians, but just probably hanging around there in Samaria. But the power of God came upon them.

And no doubt the gospel went out from them as well. And if you're in a situation like that. Or you just feel like, you know, I don't know what my part is, but I want to serve the Lord.

I'm shy, I'm withdrawn, I don't know what to say, my memory is not that good, I can't remember Bible verses or you need to be baptized in the spirit, you need a touch of the spirit of God upon your life, you need that empowering because that's the way the Lord meant us to live. Now, that doesn't mean that you're just going to, you know, suddenly start floating through life and you're going to be, you know, three feet above everybody else and you're never going to have another problem and everything's just going to, you know, some people kind of present it that way. And that's and that's not the accurate presentation.

But it's if you can just grab hold of this, it's empowering. It's empowering to serve the Lord. And tonight, if you sense, I mean, we all I mean, who's going to stand here? I'm not going to enter and say, no, I don't need any of that.

I've got all the power I need. I need more power. I want more power.

But but maybe there are some that just I mean, it's not a matter of more power. It's a matter of I need power, period, because I got none. And if that's where you're at tonight, then I want to pray for you.

And I want you to know that God wants to empower you. He wants his spirit to come upon you. Just like it came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, remember, Jesus said, go out into the world, take my gospel to every nation, but first wait, wait in Jerusalem.

Why? Until you receive power. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, Jesus said it upon you, just like it says here, he will come upon you and you shall be my witnesses. And you see, that's the thing.

Being a witness is really all about just having the power of God in our lives. And we receive this. Spirit empowering by asking for it.

By recognizing that there's a lack of power in my life and Lord, I want that power. And perhaps there might be some things in your life that the Lord would say, you know, I want to give you that part, but I want to deal with this, too. So let's get this out and.

Perhaps that would happen. But you see, there's a real thing. And when the spirit of God comes upon us.

That's when we begin to function. As a member of the body of Christ, we talk about that all the time, we're part of the body of Christ, each one of us are members individually now, you know, every member of your physical body has some function to to perform. There's nothing.

In your body, there's no part of your body that's without a purpose. Everything has a purpose, everything has a function. And so likewise, in the Christian community, in the family of God, every member has a

function, every member has a purpose, every member has a calling.

But all of that becomes clear. Through this empowering of the spirit. And so tonight I want to give an opportunity for us to do that now here in the text.

The apostles came down and they laid their hands on them and they received the holy spirit, laying hands on to receive the spirit is one way that it occurs. It's not the only way, because as I already alluded to the situation in the house of Cornelius, nobody laid hands on anybody and they were they were empowered, filled, baptized in the spirit. So laying hands on is not mandatory, but it is a means by which God has done it occasionally.

Now, here it was that the apostles laid their hands on them. And there are some instances where it did seem that the apostles had the ability to impart those gifts through the laying on of hands. Paul said to Timothy to stir up the gift that is in you through the laying on of my hands.

And yet. You can easily build a case that. There is no.

Prescribed way. That this occurs apart from asking, that's the prescription, Jesus said, asking you shall receive seeking you shall find knocking the door shall be open. That that's the one biblical requirement asking laid on of hands that that can be part of it, but that's not mandatory.

So we want to ask tonight. That the Lord. Baptize us afresh in his spirit, and I want to ask you.

Any of you that are here tonight that you just you are just bearing witness that this is this is where you're at, this is what you need. You're just sensing that God is speaking to you and you want to be baptized in the spirit. If that's you now, I'm speaking specifically to that group of people.

I'm going to speak to another group of people in a second, but if that's you. Then I want you to just stand up right where you're at and we want to pray for you. Don't be afraid because this is family.

We're all part of God's family. We're here loving each other and part of the fellowship. And that that's great.

Now. Now, is there anyone in here that doesn't feel like they need some sort of a touch of the spirit? I know don't respond by standing up to that, but we're going to pray for that in a second because I know we all do. But for those that are standing, those of you that are near to them, I want you just to put a hand on their shoulder, whoever you are, just put a hand on their shoulder.

And let's pray that God will do this father in Jesus name, we believe your word, Lord, as we're reading it tonight, we see, Lord, the absolute necessity of this baptism with the spirit. And so in Jesus name and for his glory in our lives and for the sake of your church, the body of Christ right here at Costa Mesa, Lord, we pray now that these that have stood desiring and expressing their desire by standing, Lord, come upon them now, we pray, fill them to overflowing with your spirit. Lord, we ask that they would begin to discover the gifts that you've given them.

We pray that you'd begin to place them, Lord, in that functioning place in the body. And father, we pray that they would have power to be your witnesses and to glorify you wherever they are, Lord, right here among the family of God and out where you take them on a daily basis. So in Jesus name, Lord, bless them and fill them.

We pray. Amen. Amen.

All right. So you guys can be seated. Now, let me say this for those of you that we just prayed for.

Some of you might have some sort of, you know, emotional experience occurring right now, some of you might not have anything going on. Don't even worry about that, because that's not an issue. Some people experience things emotionally.

Some people don't. But just know this. You sincerely ask for God to do this in your life and now just go believing that God has touched you and watch and you'll see throughout this week, I guarantee you're going to see changes in your life.

You're going to see new things beginning to happen, new doors opening, new sense of God's leading and clarity and that that's going to be happening this week. So just trust in that. Just believe in that.

And as often as you sense that, Lord, I need more, just ask him. That's the thing that we need to remember as well. And so that's who I want to pray for now.

Those that just feel like they need a fresh, you know, you've had that experience of the baptism of the spirit. But at the same time, you feel like, you know, I need a fresh touch of the Lord. Let's pray for that right now.

You guys don't need to stand. But whoever that is, let's just pray together and ask the Lord to do that. Lord, I think most of us here in this room tonight would just acknowledge that we need all that you have for us, Lord, that we want as much of you as you want to give to us.

And Lord, you know, as we go, we sort of run out of gas along the way a lot of times. And so, Lord, we ask for a fresh filling tonight of your spirit. We pray, Lord, for a fresh touch and that you, Lord, would just.

Reignite our hearts in your power, by your grace and your mercy tonight. So, Lord, here we are. Fill us up, we pray, and we ask this in Jesus name, amen.

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