

Holy Spirit in the Life of the Believer

by Gerhard Du Toit

Gerhard Du Toit explores the vital role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, emphasizing personal encounters and empowerment for witness.

Duration: 52:07

Scripture: Acts 1:1-11

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the early disciples of the church and how they were able to evangelize the world. He emphasizes that their success was due to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The sermon focuses on the founding of the early church and the personal preparation of the disciples. The speaker also highlights the importance of the promise of the Holy Spirit, which brought about a personal encounter with God for the disciples.

Transcript

I would like to speak to you this afternoon, if I may, on the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life or your life as a believer. So, turn with me to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. We are going to read a few verses from Acts chapter 1, if you will, and then we go from there.

Acts chapter 1, and let's begin to read from verse number 1. You know, sometimes people ask me and say, why do you read so many verses in the pulpit? And I say, well, one of the reasons why I do that is because of the fact that that's sometimes the only place where some of God's people hear the Word of God. It's incredible. Maybe you don't appreciate me saying this, but it's incredible to find out how much time we as God's people spend in the Bible.

I couldn't speak English about 12 years ago. I had to learn the English language, and the first thing I ever did, I memorized 400 verses from the Bible in the realm of personal evangelism. And I got hold of an old King James Bible, and then I did that.

There are 31,101 verses in the Bible. They reckon there are 5,466,405 letters in the Bible. Every one of those is inspired.

I trust you know. But then I bought myself the Bible and cassette. I had 48 C90 cassettes of the Old Testament, and I think it was 14 C90 cassettes of the New Testament.

And I learned the English language by listening to the Bible for seven years. The first 90 minutes of every morning, I listened to the Old Testament. And the last 45 minutes of every night, I listened to the New Testament.

And I think if I remember correctly, in those seven years, I went through the Old Testament something like 49 times and 87 times through the New Testament. And it became very precious to me. In fact, it became my dictionary.

When I went to Britain and I was trying to find a word which I had to spell, I never went to a dictionary. I always went to the Bible because I knew that word was in the Bible. So that's why God's word is so precious to us.

So let's turn to Acts chapter 1, and we will read from verse number 1. I wonder if I can ask whoever is responsible for this, if you could maybe turn it down a little. If we can, someone just check that up, please. Thank you so much.

Acts chapter 1, reading from verse number 1. The former treatise hath I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To him also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs been seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, He hath heard of me.

For John truly baptized with water, but he shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days since. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And Jesus said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and also unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when Jesus hath spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them, and white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? The same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olavet, which is from Jerusalem, and sabbath day's journey.

Shall we just bow for a moment of prayer? Our Father, it is such a tremendous privilege for us today to sense the presence of God in our midst. We thank Thee for the way in which it is possible for us to respond to the voice of Thy Spirit. We thank Thee for what Thou hast been saying to us through Thy Word since the beginning of this conference.

But we thank Thee most of all this afternoon as men, can we again examine ourselves and realize that we are precious in the sight of God. Lord, Thou didst say to us in Thy Word that it is not by might, nor is it by power, but it is by Thy Spirit. We confess this afternoon our absolute inadequacy.

We confess our sins of insignificance. We realize that we are but dust. And yet, Father, in the midst of this, it is tremendous to know that we are precious in the sight of God.

We ask for the covering of Thy precious blood. We ask that as we ponder upon Thy Word, that the Spirit of God today will come and breathe upon Thy Word and touch us in such a way that we would not only know that Thou had spoken to us collectively as a group of men, but that in our hearts that we would know that God had spoken to us in a personal way. Father, I want to respond to Thee this afternoon.

And what I pray for myself, I pray for my brethren in this session. And I ask that You will give us an openness of heart, a willingness of spirit, a submissiveness of mind, so that we can submit ourselves to God's plan for our lives. Reveal to us today the areas in which we need to allow Thy Spirit to work within our hearts and our lives, because we ask it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Amen. It's quite significant if you would study the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in both the Old and the New Testament, that you will discover that there are only three references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Once in the 51st Psalm, you remember how the psalmist prayed and said, Take not Thy Holy Spirit away from me.

And twice in the prophecy of Isaiah will you read about the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. But that does not mean that there are not references to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament. In fact, the Hebrew word for spirit is a very significant word, is the Hebrew word ruach.

And that word is found at no less than 87 places within the Old Testament. And it's translated by between five and six different words in our English translation of the Bible. For instance, when God came to speak to Adam and Eve in the opening chapters of the book of Genesis, you will discover that the Bible says that God came to speak to them in the cool of the evening.

And the word cool in the Hebrew tongue is exactly the same word for spirit. So the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit was very relevant within the Old Testament. But my brethren, it's really when we come to the New Testament that you and I began to deal with the work and the ministry of the Spirit of God as a person.

In fact, let me say this, there are no less than 260 references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. And there are just about a reference to the Holy Spirit in every one of those wonderful chapters within our New Testament. And it's quite significant when you study the Holy Spirit.

A few years ago, I was doing a chaplain's camp on the borders of Southern Africa, where I'm from, and I was spending three months ministering to the soldiers on that specific place. And I, between 12 and 15 hours every day, which I had time to spend, gave myself to the Word of God. And I began to study the Holy Spirit and His ministry.

And I came to the conclusion that in the four Gospels are there something like 54 references to the Holy Spirit. And the epistles of the Apostle Paul are something like 113, something like 37 within the general epistles, and no less than 59 references to the Holy Spirit within the Acts of the Apostles. I love reading the works of John Calvin, although if I may say so, I'm not an extreme Calvinist.

In other words, someone came to me the other day and said, well, where exactly do you stand? He said, are you an Arminianist or are you a Calvinist? I said, brother, I'm a Christian. And that saves me from the issue. But let me mention to you this wonderful statement that John Calvin made that I came across some

time ago.

He said the greatest sin within the Old Testament was rejection of God the Father. The greatest sin within the dispensation of the Gospels, if I may use that word, was rejection of God the Son. And then Calvin made this statement.

He said the greatest sin in the time of the outpouring of God's Spirit up till I believe where we find ourselves now is the rejection of God the Holy Spirit. My friends, I'm absolutely amazed as I travel from one place to the other to come across the incredible iteration that we see today about the work and the ministry of the Spirit of God. And as I look at the Church of the Lord Jesus today, I think we find ourselves in two very interesting schools.

I sometimes find myself, I must say, not more than three or four services of the year in places where there is an incredible emphasis upon the Spirit of God, and yet I miss so much about this real deep walking with God the Holy Spirit. Then I find myself in other circles within the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ where there is very little emphasis putting upon the Holy Spirit and an incredible emphasis putting upon aspects of the Word of God. Now, I would like you to understand this afternoon because we are dealing with the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit and there is so much confusion.

In fact, some time ago I read about a man, and this man had a tie around his neck and on his tie were the words B-A-I-K. And someone went to him and said to him, Sir, what does that mean? He said, Well, those letters, rather, simply means voice. Am I confused? And this guy looked at him and said, Well, don't you realize that you don't spell confused to the K, but you spell it to the C? And the man turned to him in astonishment and said to him, Well, don't you realize that I'm confused? You see, my friends, if you look upon the Spirit of God today, my brethren, there is so much, so much ignorance about the Holy Spirit.

Now, let me mention to you about the Acts of the Apostles because the Acts of the Apostles has also been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit because there is so many references to the work and the ministry of the Spirit of God. We don't know a lot about the man to whom Luke wrote this wonderful treatise, but we do know something about his name. The name Theophilus is a combination of two Greek words in the New Testament.

The word for God is the word theos, and one of the four words for love is the Greek word phileo. And Theophilus means someone who is a lover of God or someone who is dear to God. Tradition is saying to us that this man was a very important individual during the Roman government of those days, and Luke who was a slave of Theophilus was sent to Tarsus or Alexandria to study medicine, and he came to the Lord Jesus Christ, and as a result of that he came back to share with his master his newfound faith in the Savior, and he himself, Theophilus, gave his life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing that we do know about this man, my brethren, we know that here was a man who was not only concerned about that which happened in the life and the ministry of the Lord Jesus, but here was a man who was tremendously concerned about that which happened after the Lord Jesus Christ died for us on the cross. I want us this afternoon to focus our attention on what I would consider as the key verse, or rather the key word of the Acts of the Apostles. And you will discover when you study the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that the key verse is found in verse number 8. And the Lord Jesus turned to his disciples, and he said to his disciples, You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and Judea, Samaria, and eventually unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

And the first eight chapters of the Acts of the Apostles cover the period of witnessing in and around Jerusalem. Then they took the gospel into Judea and Samaria, and then they took the gospel right unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And this first period, and what we in theological terms would say the church was established, well you discover it was a period that covered approximately something like 7 years.

The second period covered about 10 years, and the third period of witnessing covered something like 16 years. And my brethren, we are speaking about 31 years of history in the early church, and do you know what we discover? Listen, those early disciples then and those days evangelized the then known world as we know it during those days. You sit there this afternoon and you say, How did those early disciples do that? I would like to suggest to you it was simply because of the mighty work and the ministry of the Spirit of God.

Chapter 1 and chapter 2 is speaking to us about what I would call the founding of this early church, and in the first chapter we are dealing with these days of personal preparation. Chapter 2 is speaking to us about this marvelous day of Pentecost when God poured out His Spirit upon those early disciples. So we are concerned about this aspect of this first chapter where Jesus manifested Himself in the first three verses, where He instructed them, then He ascended to be with His Father, and the Bible says that from verse number 13, those early disciples went up into the upper room, and for a period of ten days were they waiting upon the promise of the Father.

Maybe I'm allowed to say this to you because it's a very significant word in those verses in the sense that the Bible says when they were those ten days in the upper room, do you know what we discover? There's a beautiful word, and the Bible says they were fervently or earnestly waiting. That's a beautiful word in the Greek New Testament because you know what it speaks of, especially in the classical Greek. Listen to this.

It speaks, my brethren, of a ship that was in the harbor, and that ship has set its sails, and the ship is waiting for the wind to come. It also can speak to us about a hunter who's got his bow and his arrow, and he has seen his target, and he has stretched that bow up to the uttermost limit just before he would let that arrow go. That's what that word earnestly or fervently is speaking about.

I ministered for eight years in the British Isles, and if I was in Northern Ireland today, you know what I would say to the Irish people? I would say to them that specific Greek word is speaking to us about a boiling hot Irish prayer meeting. You see, there was a spirit of expectation. Now why was there that spirit of expectation? Simply because of the promise of the Lord Jesus.

Now listen, men. There are something like 8,748 promises in the Bible, but my brethren, this promise was not just another promise. This was the promise of the Father.

It was the promise of the coming of God the Holy Spirit upon the lives of those early disciples. There are four things that I would like to mention to you about this promise of the Holy Spirit. And the first thing that I want to bring under your attention is that this promise of the Spirit of God was a promise, my friends, that brought them to the realization of a personal encounter with God the Holy Spirit.

Can I ask you this afternoon, and this session for men, my brethren, when you think about the Holy Spirit today, how do you see the Spirit of God? Is God the Holy Spirit simply some influence upon your life? Is God the Holy Spirit some experience in your relationship with God? Is God the Holy Spirit some

manifestation about your life? Or do you realize this afternoon that whenever the Lord Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit, that He never referred to the Holy Spirit as an experience or a manifestation, but listen, my friends, He always referred to the Holy Spirit as a person. And I would like to suggest to you today that the Spirit of God, listen, never speaks of Himself, neither does He speak about Himself. The Holy Spirit in His ministry always brings me back to the blessed life of the Lord Jesus, and He brings me back, listen men, brings me back to the preciousness of the work of God.

Whatsoever is outside of that, I would go so far as to say that I've got reservations if it's the Spirit of God at all. But that's what the Holy Spirit does. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, when my Spirit is going to come to you, He said you will come to that place where you realize the personal encounter with the Spirit of God.

I would like to make a distinction here, because I think it's necessary for us to clarify ourselves when we speak about the Holy Spirit. You see, when I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior, when you ask Christ to come into your life, and God the Holy Spirit came into your life, how do you know that you were saved? Well, we say to people that the Spirit of God, be a witness of my Spirit, that I'm a child of God. In other words, when God the Holy Spirit comes into my life, God gives me the witness of His Spirit, and that witness of the Spirit of God is not only an experience, but that witness of the Spirit of God comes from the Word of God.

And you sit here today and you say, well, what happened? Well, you receive the Holy Spirit as a person. The day when Jesus came into your life, because listen, my brethren, we cannot divide our personality. I cannot receive a little part of the Spirit of God.

And yet in saying that to you this afternoon, I would like to say to you that there is the distinct possibility today that the Spirit of God could have come into your life as a person, and you could say, well, Gerard, the Spirit of God is resident in my life, but it's quite possible that the Spirit of God is not present in your relationship with God. That's why I sometimes go so far as to say to people, I'm almost tempted to say today to you, that there is a distinction in one sense between being born of the Spirit of God and being filled of all the fullness of God. You say, why do you say that? Oh, my brethren, you travel from one church to the other in this beautiful continent in which God has put us.

But you know what I discovered today? I discovered that one of the greatest needs today is for us to come to grips with this sense of the Lordship of the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus turned to His disciples, and He said, when my Spirit is going to come, He said, you will sense a personal encounter with God the Holy Spirit. I often say to people, you know, the Holy Spirit in many of our lives is nothing else like a little bird in a cage, and it reminds me of the days when I was pastoring my own congregation.

They were a wonderful group of country folk. I was a bachelor those days, and I lived in this large parsonage, and the only company in my parsonage was a white cockatiel. I remember one day I stepped into my living room and I opened the little door of his cage, and I said to him, now listen, you are allowed to fly into this parsonage, and the only two places where I don't want you to fly is into my fireplace and into my microbe.

Do you know what happened to that white cockatiel? He sat for days gazing out of that little cage. He never took the step. It was open.

The little gate was open. He could fly into this large parsonage. He never did that.

There were times that he came close to that little gate, and he sort of looked out of it, but he never took the step to fly. I don't know if I should say this to you today, but you know what happened? The only way that I got him out of that little cage was one morning I was cleaning my house with my vacuum cleaner, and being a bachelor, I was too lazy to do a proper job, and I took that vacuum cleaner and I put it right into his cage to clean it, and within a matter of seconds, he was flying for his life right through my parsonage. Do you know it was the only way that I got him out? In fact, let me say this to you.

He never looked at me for a week after that, but there was no other way that I got him out. And I want to say to you this afternoon, my brethren, listen, there are so many of us, and I believe maybe many of us, who sit here at this very conference, we have been in meetings of revival nature, we have responded to the Word of God, we have listened to what God has been saying to us, and let me ask you today, do we know what it means to come to grips with the sins of the Lordship of the Spirit of God? Do we know what it means to come to grips with the liberty of the Spirit of God? Do we know what it means to come to grips with the leadership of God the Holy Spirit? You say, the Lordship of the Holy Spirit? Yes! You read 2 Corinthians 3, and you hear the great apostle Paul say, he said, where the Spirit of God is Lord. Do you know what I have discovered about the Lordship of the Holy Spirit? I have discovered, my friends, that when it comes to the Lordship of God's Spirit, that we as God's people have got a free-fold responsibility to the Holy Spirit.

There are two things that Paul mentioned that we can do negatively about the Spirit of God, and there is one that we need to respond in a positive way. Do you know what the great apostle Paul said? He said, grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, unto which you are sealed, unto the day of redemption. He said, quench not the Holy Spirit of God.

He said in Ephesians chapter 5, he said, be full to the Holy Spirit of God. We sit here this afternoon and say, how do I grieve the Spirit of God? Listen, my brethren, I grieve the Holy Spirit because of His sanctity. He is that Holy Spirit of God.

I grieve the Spirit of God because of His sensitivity. I grieve the Spirit of God because of His sufficiency in my life as a believer. Quite often now and again when I look at this whole concept of Ephesians chapter 4, that speaks to us about the Holy Spirit and His ministry.

Do you know what I've discovered about Ephesians 4? My friends, do you know what it speaks of when it says, grieve not the Spirit of God? It's speaking about the deity of the Holy Spirit. It's speaking about that third Person of God, the Holy Spirit. Do you realize today that He is God? Do you realize that He is omnipresent? Do you realize that He is omnipotent? He is powerful? Do you realize the sins of His presence in our relationships with God? I was speaking at a theological seminary some time ago and one of the professors told us, and he was illustrating this concept, that sometimes, you know, we do things and we say, well, you know, other people haven't seen it, but God said, I've seen that.

And this man said to us, you know, the matron of a theological college, they were together at this seminary in fact, and they were in the dining room. There were two tables and on the one table there was a basket full of apples, and on another table there was a basket full of biscuits, and she wrote next to the basket, which was full of apples, a note to the students, because there weren't too many, and she said to him, now listen students, you are only allowed to take one apple. So one of those naughty students went and he wrote under that list, and this is what he said.

He said, and remember, God is watching. Then you know there was the next table and there was a basket full of biscuits, and another student went and he wrote a note, and do you know what he wrote? He wrote on that note, you are allowed to take as many biscuits as you want, because God is in the process of watching the apples. You see my friends, this is the kind of lifestyle that we find ourselves today.

Oh my brethren, wherever I go, you know what I come across? I come across people that say to me, I've lived that place of worship, I don't want to worship there, I've gone to another place, and I turn to them and I say, now listen, how does God in His heart feel about the attitude in which you lived that place? You see, the Spirit of God is grief because of His deity. He is that Holy Spirit of God. And I wonder this afternoon my brethren, can I ask you today, are we still sensitive to God, the Holy Spirit? You know, I think it's so easy for us, especially when we are sat under the deep sins of the ministry of the Word of God.

My friends, listen, it's so easy for us to develop that sense of an attitude to say, well, you know, God has given me great life, surely this is not for me. We grieve the Spirit of God because of His sensitivity. I had a friend in South Africa, he has gone to be with the Lord, and I remember he said to us once, he said, you know, I stood in the kitchen with my wife, and I said something to my wife, and I knew I hurt my wife, and he said, I went to the town to pick up the mail, he was in full-time ministry, and he said, when I picked up the mail, I came home, but before I came home, I bought this beautiful bunch of flowers, and he said, I came into the kitchen, and there was my wife, and I turned to her, and I said, mommy, I said, look at these flowers, I bought you these wonderful flowers, and he said, my wife took the flowers, and the tears began to stream down her cheeks, and he said, I turned to my wife, and I said, what's wrong? Aren't you glad that I brought you the flowers? She turned to me, and she said, daddy, she said, thank you for the flowers, but she said, daddy, I don't want the flowers.

She said, daddy, you know what I want. Daddy, I want you to say that I'm sorry. Amen.

Let me say to you this afternoon, you know, you and I as a husband, as a father to our children, listen, we cannot take people further spiritually than that we are ourselves. Do you know what's our first congregation? Listen, men, my first congregation is my immediate family, my wife and my children. If I'm not successful, if I'm not blessed within my immediate family, do you know what happens? It will not reach the lives of other people.

It's simply a biblical principle. My wife and myself, you know, we are different in temperaments, and we are different in our constitutions in many ways, and I love getting up early in the morning. I try normally to get up between 5, sometimes 5, between 5 and 6 o'clock, because I know if I don't meet with God in those early hours of the morning, I sit, then when 8 o'clock comes in my study and the phone begins to ring, and I've got appointments, and to see people, those are the hours that I see God.

But I need to be in bed. I need about 6 hours of sleep at night. But my wife is just the opposite.

My wife could be up there until about 12, 1 o'clock in the morning or so. I spoke at the weekend retreat a few weeks ago, and my Friday night service ended up by 20 past 11. We began at 9 o'clock, and God broke in and worked in a wonderful way, and I phoned her about 12 o'clock because I knew she was still up.

But I'm just the opposite. But she's the opposite in the things that when I am up in the mornings, you know, I said to her some time ago, and forgive me for saying this, but I went to wake her up, and the second time when I woke her up about 8 or half past 8 in the morning, I turned to her and I said, my darling, I said, the

fat of those six brain cells has just woken up. You see, we're so different in our temperament.

And yet, my brethren, isn't it wonderful for us to realize that God has given us a sense of responsibility? Let me ask you this afternoon in this session, have you got a family altar where you read God's Word with your wife and your children? Where you're expounding God's Word to them? Where they sit under the ministry of the preciousness of the Word of God? When I passed through that congregation, that's the first thing I ever did. Brought the family altar back into the church. Being a bachelor those days, I had three times of great visitation in my country congregation.

It was 8 o'clock in the morning and 12 o'clock at noon and 5 o'clock in the afternoon. I guess you know why. I had marvelous times around the meal table, very seldom made myself a meal.

But we brought the family altar back. My, will I ever forget, there was a guy in the church, he was a Dutch fellow, and he had 12 children. And I guess you need to be Dutch to have 12 children.

But there we were sitting around the table. And after that beautiful meal, you know what happened? One of those kids would bring that big family Bible. And the father would put that family Bible in front of me.

And I would read a chapter from that Bible. And for about 20-30 minutes, I found that chapter. And we sit around the table as a family.

And then as a family, we would go on our knees to pray. And listen, my brethren, many of those times we were sobbing in the very presence of God. You say, why? Because of the sense of responsibility.

I wonder this afternoon if you would go to your wife or if I would go to my wife. I quite often do that with my wife. In fact, we were in a service some time ago and God's Spirit broke into that service.

And as God broke in, I was one of the first ones to respond. I sensed God was speaking to me. We got into the car and I turned to my wife in great brokenness.

And I said, my darling, if there were any area of us last week in which I failed to be the husband that God wanted me to be, I ask you now that you will forgive me. And there in that car, we just sat and we wept in the presence of God. Let me ask you men this afternoon, when last have we been broken in the presence of our wives? When last have we been broken in the very presence of our children seeking the face of God? The Lord Jesus turned to me and He said, He said, it's going to become personal.

Personal. We were in our house some time ago and I turned to the kids and I said to them, I said, is your daddy a Christian? And your mommy a Christian? Oh, yes, they said they are. I said, how do you know your mommy is a Christian? You know what I said? Little boy turned to me and he said to me, Sir, he said, I know my mommy is a Christian because whenever she did anything wrong, she'd come to me and she'd say to me, I'm sorry, my son.

I wonder this afternoon if you realize, my friends, I tell you, do you realize that many times it's the times when God is working. Those are the times when God is using circumstances to humble us and the very presence of our children. And maybe some of us this afternoon need to bow in shame and say, dear Lord Jesus, a saint in the church, nothing else, nothing wrong in my service for God, but when it comes to my relationship to my wife and my children, Lord, there are some areas in my life where I need to allow Your Spirit to work in my life.

What does it mean? It's an encounter with God the Holy Spirit. A pastor in the United States, some time ago, he got involved in an argument with his wife in the kitchen. And when that took place, he said to his wife, he said, I don't have time to waste here.

He said, I've got a sermon to prepare for Sunday. And he left his wife in a broken state. And he got onto his bicycle and he cycled towards the church.

And as he was cycling towards the church, suddenly the Holy Spirit of God said to him, where are you going? I said, I'm on my way to prepare my sermon. God said, ha ha, you're wasting your time. I'm not in your study.

I'm there in the kitchen with your wife. And he had to turn that bicycle and cycle back. Listen.

And he came back to the kitchen and he got on the bicycle and got into the kitchen. And there was his wife, you know, on her knees, sobbing, broken up because of it. He stepped into that kitchen and there on the floor of that kitchen, God met with husband and wife.

Do you know, my brethren, what was the result? It was the beginning of a wonderful working of God's Spirit in the life of the pastor and then in the life of the congregation. Can I ask you today, you know what Howard Hendricks said some time ago? He said one of our greatest problems today when it comes to leadership is the fact that the men within our country, those who know Jesus as their personal Savior, they are not willing to submit to the leadership of the Spirit of God. And because of the fact they're not willing to submit to that, it's because of the fact there is no leadership in the relationships with their families.

Are we the leader of the house? Have we come to that encounter with God the Holy Spirit? Is He working in my life as a father? Is He working in your life as a father, as a husband this afternoon? That's the secret you see. And as God works in my life, I can expect God the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of those immediately in my circle. My brethren, let me ask you this afternoon, when last have you met with God? When last have you sat in a meeting where you sensed the deep searchings of God the Holy Spirit upon your heart and upon your life as a believer in the Savior? That's what Jesus said to them.

Then it became a penetrating promise. You say penetrating? Yes. Jesus said to them, you shall receive power.

Oh, can I ask you this afternoon in this session, my dear brethren, when last have you and I sat under this penetrating power of God the Holy Spirit? When last has He come upon us as His children? When last has He searched my mind and its thoughts? When last has He searched my heart and its affections? When last has He searched my life and its relationships? When last has He searched my will and its choices? You see, the Spirit of God searched every area of my life as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why I think it's so vital for you and me to have a personal devotional life. You know why? Why? Because I think it's quite possible that we can be diligent in work and negligent when it comes to watching and waiting in the presence of God.

You sit here today and you ask me and say, where are the places where God meets you? Do you know when? Those times in the morning hours when I find myself on my knees open in the very presence of God. He searched us, you see. Can I ask you, my brethren, is He searching you today? Maybe you sit in this meeting and there is a sense of rebellion.

You sit here in this meeting and there is a sense of resistance. You say, no, I did not come to this conference to hear this kind of preaching. I did not come to be challenged in such a way.

Listen, my friends, there are no shortcuts to the blessings of God. My brethren, we cannot work the power of God the Holy Spirit up. We can only be in His presence and humble ourselves and say, God, is it possible that You can come and search my heart? He penetrates, you know.

My wife and myself were in a Baptist church not too long ago. And that Sunday morning in that Baptist church, it was one of those wonderful meetings. I was half way through my simple little insignificant sermon when suddenly this sovereign God whom we are serving decided that it was time for Him to come upon that service.

One moment I was preaching and ah, it was wonderful to be there. And the next moment, my friends, I stood there just sobbing, couldn't get a word out. And I felt so embarrassed.

And I thought, well, maybe this is just me. And I look and those other men were broken, broken in the presence of God. And then I look over this congregation and people began to sob in the presence of God.

Didn't make an offer that Sunday morning. Sometimes I think the Holy Spirit is the very best counselor. Sometimes we run to counselors because we just want Him to say the things that we want to hear from Him.

No, my friends, you know what happened that Sunday morning? The first one to respond when we sang that closing the first time in the history of that Baptist church was that tall pastor as he came down and sobbed in the presence of his congregation. You say, what happened? God, the Holy Spirit, began to penetrate. Can I ask you this afternoon, what is the reason why we have come to this conference? My brethren, have we come to meet with God? Or have we come because we are sermon tasters? Have we come because we want to hear another biblical truth? And then I tell them, listen, let me tell you today, you will not be able to remember what these speakers have been saying over these days.

But listen, my brethren, you and I will remember the moment when God, the Holy Spirit, penetrated the very depths of our hearts. That's the difference, you know. Why is it? Because it became personal.

I read about a man, 1631, one of the old Puritans. His name was John Livingston, not the Livingston that went to Africa. He was a very insignificant Church of Scotland minister.

Preached at the communion service between Glasgow and Edinburgh at the place with the name of Shots. My wife and myself passed the place some time ago and I turned and I said, my darling, watch this. You see that church? That's where the revival came in 1631.

Livingston began to speak on the first day night. Friday night the Spirit of God began to breathe upon those meetings. They realized God was going to break in.

God was going to do something in the midst of those people. Sunday night came. You know what Livingston said? He said, I walk into the fields of Scotland.

He said, I was afraid to come back to speak this on the Monday morning. He said, early Monday morning. He said, I walk into the heather of Scotland.

He said, I could not face the people because of the awesomeness of the burden of God. Monday morning God took him back into the pulpit about 10 o'clock. John Livingston began to preach.

He said, as I began to preach, he said, I found myself preaching for an hour or so and I began to apply the sermon that God has given to me. And he said, I applied for another hour and a half. And my friends, as he did that, listen, suddenly God, the Holy Spirit, began to move into that service.

Listen, my brethren, in that Monday morning service in Scotland, 1631, 500 people were swept into the Kingdom of God for an experience, a mighty experience of conversion. You say, what happened? God, the Holy Spirit, came to the life of one man. Oh, I wonder this afternoon, do we sit here? Is our hearts open before God? If God has challenged you at this very moment of this simple little message, can I ask you, my brethren, are you willing to respond to God in your heart? And are you willing to say, Blessed Lord Jesus, let Your Spirit come and search every aspect of my relationship with God? Have you heard that hymn that we sometimes sing, this beautiful hymn of the Old Salvation Army? O Christ of cleansing, burning flame, send the fire, send the fire.

Thy blood, Lord, give, today we claim, send the fire, send the fire. Look down upon this waiting host. See us and visit us by Thy Holy Ghost.

That's what it said. It's that, you see. My time is just about gone.

Let me end with my last point. Do you know what it is? It's not only a personal realization of the Spirit of God. It's not only a penetrating influence, but my brethren, it's a powerful endowment.

Do you know why I say that? Because the Lord Jesus said, You shall receive power. Now today in the church of the Lord Jesus, you know what we hear? We hear an incredible amount about this power of the Holy Spirit. But let me define, let me explain this word to you.

You know there are three Greek words that explain to us the concept of power. One of those words is only found at one place in the New Testament. And then those other two words are very prominent.

And there is the Greek word exousia. And there is the Greek word dunamis in the New Testament. Now the word exousia is quite different from the Greek word dunamis.

Because the word exousia had to do with my experience of becoming a Christian. Let me give you a verse of Scripture. The Bible says in John 1, verse 12, But as many as received Him, to them gave He the authority to become the child of God.

It's the Greek word exousia. It speaks of the authority to be adopted into the family of God. Yet it's not the same word that we come across in Acts 1, verse 8. This is the word dunamis, where we get our English word dynamite from.

It comes from this concept of the dynamic power of the Spirit of God. Let me illustrate this to you. You know, a farmer once told me of this man who came to look at a farm and he was from the government official in the north of Ireland.

And when he came to look at his farm, the old farmer was very upset. And he said to him, Where is your authority? And the man said, Well, this is my authority. And he showed him his paper.

So the old farmer looked at that and he realized he didn't have much of a choice. And he said to him, OK, you're welcome to go. He said, but this is the way that I want you to go.

And that government official went, got over the wall, and about five minutes later he came flying over the wall with one of the old farmer's bulls behind him. Landed next to the old man. And the old man looked at him and laughed.

He said, My boy, you've got the authority, but boy, you don't possess the power. You see, there is a difference, my brethren, between the authority to become a child of God and to know this dynamic power of the Spirit of God. Let me explain to you what I'm trying to say.

The Greek word *dunamis* is found at 119 places in our English translation of the Bible. And do you know what I've discovered? From that one Greek word, *dunamis*, are there no less than 16 words that has been translated in the English language to explain to us the concept of the dynamic power of the Spirit of God and at 119 places within the New Testament. Can I mention to you a few? Matthew chapter 25.

The Lord Jesus is speaking about the parable of the talents. And the Bible says He gave unto them talents according to their several ability. That's the word, you see, *dunamis*.

My brethren, have you asked God what is your ability and the work that He has called you to do for Him? I read of a man some time ago, and you know this man couldn't preach, but God gave him the ability to give out little gospel tracts, and that's exactly what he did. And one day he passed out, and God said to him, go to that house. And he began to knock at the door of his house, and a man opened the door.

He said, please. The seventh time that he knocked, the man opened the door. He said, please, sir, take this and read it.

Two weeks later, he came and he passed the house again. And the Holy Spirit said, go back to that house. And the man went.

And he knocked on the door and the man opened the house. He said, please come. Took him right into the kitchen.

You know what he said? He said, sir, he said, 14 days ago when you passed my house, you see that box? I was standing in that box with a rope around my neck. He said, I was to the point of committing suicide. He said, you began to knock at the door of my house.

And I said to myself, I will not go to the door. He said, you continue to knock the seventh time after you knock. He said, I went to this door.

He said, I took this gospel tract. He said, I came back. I sat in this box.

I read through this gospel tract. I asked God to save me. He said, today, sir, he said, I'm born of the Spirit of God.

Precious in His sight, aren't we? God wants to give us the ability. You say, what is responsibility? Do you know what's responsibility? It's my response to God's mighty ability. Can I give you another word? I shouldn't give you too many Greek words.

I've got a friend, you know, and he was converted and his pastor was constantly doing this. And he went one day to his pastor. He said to his pastor, who's this Greek who's saying all these things, you know? He was thinking it was some guy that he knows.

But let me just mention this to you. Do you know there's a beautiful another word? Do you remember the woman in Mark's gospel and in Luke's gospel? And the Bible says, she said to herself, if I can but touch the hem of His garment. And do you remember, my brethren, what happened? She got through the crowds to the Lord Jesus, and the moment that she touched the Lord Jesus, that moment the Lord Jesus saw.

He said, someone has touched me. And the disciples now... Here I go again. The Greek word is emphatic.

Do you know what He said? The disciples said, that's what it means. They said, Lord, You are mobbed by people. Why do You say that someone is touching You? And Jesus said, just a moment.

He said, someone has touched Me. Do you know why? He said, I sense that virtue has gone from Me. Do you know what's that word virtue? It's the word dunamis.

Brethren, listen. We are touching the lives of people every day. Every day.

And there is a fragrance about this relationship with God. Can I ask you this afternoon, as I ask myself this question, is my relationship with God asking or demanding a supernatural explanation from my neighbor, the people that I face every day? Is there an unction, a presence, an anointing about my relationship with God? Jesus said, virtue has gone from Me. Oh, can I ask you, my brethren, do we know that presence? Sometimes we sing that beautiful hymn, there is a sweet, sweet presence in this place.

And I know that it's the presence of the Lord. Do you know what's one of the most awesome statements in the Bible? Moses wished not that his face was shining. Samson wished not that the Lord has departed from him.

Virtue has gone from Him. Do you know what this word means? Listen. Not power to do great and mighty things for God.

No, do you know what J.C. Rowe said? He said, if we want to get high, he said we need to begin low. Do you know what this word means, my brethren? Power to be broken in the presence of God. Can I ask you this afternoon, has God began that process of brokenness? You see, God works through broken vessels, flowing through broken lives.

Lives that are yielded to God. Yielded to God. Brokenness.

Then you know what it means? Power. Power to pray. Power to pray.

Ah, my brethren, can I ask you today, do we know something of this working of God's Spirit in my life as a believer? Are we responsible, responsive before God? Or do you sit here this afternoon and say, I'm not sure about this. I'm not sure if I'm ready for this. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we thank Thee today for the privilege which is ours to know God's presence in our midst as men. We believe, Lord, that the same presence that has been with us in this afternoon's session, and Father, time has slipped by so quickly, but we believe that this same presence this afternoon is in every other room where we have found ourselves today. We thank Thee for the speaking voice of God's Holy Spirit in

our lives as men.

I pray that Thou would help us to be responsive, to allow God's Spirit to search us and to work within us.

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