

From Simon to Peter #28 - the Holy Spirit and Peter's Will

by J. Glyn Owen

The Holy Spirit re-energizes Peter's will, enabling him to maintain unity with his brother Apostle, show loyalty to the Jerusalem temple, and continue the very ministry that Jesus began.

Duration: 36:18

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 9:33, John 1:1-18, John 14:12, Acts 1:8, Acts 3:1-10

Topics: "Simon to Peter"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being witnesses to Jesus Christ in an irreligious world. He highlights the continuity between what Jesus did and what believers are called to do. The speaker mentions the compassion and power of Jesus that continues to work through believers. He shares the story of Peter and John encountering a beggar outside the temple and healing him in the name of Jesus. The beggar, who had been disabled from birth, is miraculously healed and begins to leap and praise God. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the impact of this miracle on the temple and the importance of continuing the work of Jesus in the world.

Transcript

Continuing our theme from Simon to Peter, we are currently looking at the tremendous transformation that came over Simon Peter after the experience of Pentecost. We have already seen evidence of the Spirit's control of Simon's tongue, of his influence upon Simon Peter's jagged, difficult personality, and then upon his mind. We have seen how the Spirit of God enabled him to understand the Scriptures in particular, and then arising out of that, how the same Holy Spirit gave him an entirely new understanding of the Saviour.

And herein, of course, lies the background to the entire ministry of Simon Peter in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. By the Holy Spirit, he has been given a new understanding of the Word. And in a new understanding of the Word, against the background of the Pentecostal experience, he has an entirely new appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died upon the cross and who rose again and ascended to the Father's right hand and proved himself to be both Lord and Christ, made so by God, remaining the Lord of the Church.

Now, today we come, and what I want to underline is the ministry of the Spirit upon Peter's will. I simply want to bring out two or three features which are evident in the passage that was read to us by Mr. Lowe

from Acts chapter 3, verses 1 to 10. Now, let me again say this at the beginning.

I'm not really concerned this morning to expound this passage as a whole, but simply to see some things that are said here about the evident way in which Peter's will was re-energized so that we no longer have a vacillating, uncertain, weakling at the head of things in Jerusalem or elsewhere, but we have a man of resolve. We have a man who knows what his Lord's will is and knowing that, he has pledged to do what God requires of him at any cost to himself. It's this re-energized will of his that I want us particularly to note because, you see, this is the work of the Spirit.

I've no doubt that many of us have, in one way or another, gone Peter's way and have been at times very weak-willed. We know what is right. We know what is required of us, or we have known, but we have been totally unable to operate according to the known will of God.

Now, ultimately, the only answer to that situation is in the might and the power and the grace of the Holy Spirit, working in might and in power in an unhindered way within our hearts, and we see that from Peter's experience. Now, let me just enumerate two or three things, as time permits then, in order to bring out this one main facet. First of all, Peter's re-energized will is reflected in the maintenance of unity with his brother Apostle.

Verse 1 in chapter 3 of Acts says this, Now, Peter and John went up, or were going up together, into the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour. Peter and John were going up. Peter and John.

Some apparently simple statements have very much more to them than meets the eye, and this is a case in point. Were it not for the fact that their wills had been re-energized, as well as their minds illumined by the spirit and the jagged edges of their personalities dealt with and their tongues under control, we would not have what we find here. Peter might be going one way and John another way, but what we do have is Peter and John going together to the temple at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour.

Now, let me repeat then, that Peter and John should be thus intimately bound together is nothing short of a miraculous. A perusal of the relevant facts will not only show that their relationship might have been strained to the point of rupture, but they might very well have been so polarized, the one from the other, that the whole company of believers could well have been harnessed or marshaled, the one behind Peter and the other group behind John. But by the power of the Spirit it was not so.

They're one. Two things only in this connection. I want to suggest that they might well have been at loggerheads, first of all, because of their temperamental differences.

We've seen and said enough about Peter as a man of strong emotion and of quick action and of sudden decision. Not to require saying any more about him. Suffice it now to say that as Peter was such a person, John was the direct opposite.

He was the exact antithesis. John was a sanguine, with one or two recorded exceptions, of course, the exceptions that prove the rule. John was a sanguine as Peter was choleric.

They were exactly opposite. And yet they're one and remaining one. I suppose if we wanted to bring out a typical action of Peter's, we would refer to something like this.

It's very typical. One could go to other places. But take this.

You remember the Mount of Transfiguration? They've seen the glory of the Lord. As there he stood transfigured, with Moses on one side and Elijah on the other side. You remember Peter's reaction? Lord, he says, let us build three tents here and stay here.

Luke tells us that he didn't know what he was talking about. He was so impetuous. In other words, he's forgotten all about the needy, lost, sinful world.

He's forgotten all about everybody apart from himself. And he just wants to go on looking at the glory. That's typical of Peter.

Instinctive, but thoughtless. Now, if we wanted a typical act of John's, or a typical production of the Johannine mind, I think we would point to the first 18 verses of his Gospel. The prologue, as it is called, to John's Gospel.

And here you find John expressing himself in all his nature. He's profound. He's thoughtful.

He delves into the depths of things. He does not say things thoughtlessly. He's thinking his way through.

They're as different as chalk and cheese. Now, Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, which was the ninth hour. Now I say to you that this is indicative of the might and the mercy and the grace of the Holy Spirit alone.

They were united in soul. They were united in spirit. And the reason is not hard to find.

I must repeat it. Brought together initially under the umbrella of their Lord's calling and their Lord's teaching, they have now been infilled and become controlled by the Holy One so that they not only have a Christ outside of them who is reigning on the throne and interceding for them, but they have a Christ who is within them by the Spirit, controlling and enabling. And they're able to maintain the unity with one another and with their fellows by the grace of the Spirit.

Where you have people who differ like this, unity can only be maintained by an act of will. Where there are weak wills, you'll very rarely have the kind of unity that you have here between folk who are temperamentally so different that they might also have separated because of their different vocational roles. Interestingly enough, Peter and John began life as fishermen on the same familiar Sea of Galilee.

In fact, they were neighbors. And not only neighbors, they were partners of sorts. Perhaps we can never fully discover what that meant, but Luke tells us that they were partners.

Now you remember that when it became evident that Jesus was going to be king, when the signs of his miracles and the authority of his teaching was felt to be so mighty and so divine, it became evident to the discerning that he was going to be king. John's mother, mother also of James at that point, decided that she would make a special approach to the Savior. You remember.

And approaching Jesus, she said, Lord, she says, you're going to be king. Right. Wonderful.

When you get there, she says, will you please allow me this favor? See that my two sons are seated one on the left and one on the right. In other words, that they occupy the chiefest positions in your kingdom when it comes. Now whether this was with the connivance of the two fellows, I don't know.

Probably it was, but never mind. The point is this. Our Lord did not grant her request.

Instead, the keys of the kingdom went into the hand of Simon Peter. And there you have all the ingredients necessary for a deep seated family feud and a long continuing grievance between the one and the other. John and James were rejected.

Simon Peter was elevated. This rough diamond, this awkward character was made leader. And my John and my James were rejected.

You can almost hear the echoes, can't you? In order to prove how sensitive relations could be between the two, let me just remind you of one other incident. You remember John 21. Simon Peter has recently acknowledged that he does love his Lord.

By that charcoal fire, our Lord has extracted the confession three times over. Thou knowest that I love thee. Thou knowest that I love thee.

You know all things. You know that I love you. Right.

In the wake of that confession, Jesus told Simon what he was to do and then what was ultimately to happen. He said something like this to him. You know Peter, he says, when you were young, you liked to do just as you pleased.

And you went here and you went there just as you pleased. You were master of yourself. But look, he says, a man who is to follow me will not walk that way very long.

There will come a time when others will bind you. And they'll tie your hands and they'll tie your feet and they'll take you to a place that perhaps you wouldn't choose for yourself, which was our Lord's way of pointing out to his pending martyrdom. And when the penny dropped, what was the first thing that Simon did? Do you remember? Lord, you're not asking me to do this.

No, no, no, that's not what he said. Do you know what he said? Seeing John, he said, what about this fellow? Are you asking me to do that? What about him? All of which, you see, brings out the latent possibilities of disruption, of grievance, of misunderstanding. But listen, now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour, arguing, bickering, or turning their faces away from one another, not wanting to see one another.

No, no, no, no. One in spirit, one in grace, one in the determination to be together in the will of God, irrespective of difference. Hallelujah.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable grace. Then Peter's renewed will is evidenced also in the continuance of his loyalty, at this point, to the Jerusalem temple. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

You remember the temple was the successor to the tabernacle or the tent, a tent of meeting that the Israelites had in the wilderness. This was the place where God had met his people in the wilderness, where they had worshipped him and he had revealed himself to them, and as they moved, so did the tabernacle and the tent, and it was re-erected again. Now, the temple is the permanent structure, the successor of that, the permanent structure that succeeded it, and there it is in the heart of the city of Jerusalem, first built, as you will remember, by Solomon.

Now, Lord Jesus Christ had a tremendous respect for the temple as an institution. He called it the house of God. He said concerning it, it was meant to be a house of prayer for all nations, my Father's house.

He spoke of it. So much so that when he saw people utterly given to the desecration of that house, he did one of the most daring things ever done, even by him. Single-handed, he went into the midst of the desecrators and he whipped them out of the temple.

Now, whether we like it or not, that was a most daring act. The Son of God, the Prince of Peace, judiciously bringing the judgment of God upon the people, not yet upon the place, but upon the people, who had made the house of prayer into a den of thieves. But you see, the Scriptures explain to us why he did that.

The zeal of thine house, he said, has eaten me up. This was my Father's house, and you've made it something else. And because you've made it something else, I cannot other than be angry with you with the anger of my Father.

Such was his respect for the house. Apart from the ritual and the sacrificial activity that went on here, they had set seasons of prayer. A Jewish day began in the morning at six o'clock, and it continued until six o'clock at night, a twelve-hour day.

During that day, there were three set seasons of prayer in the temple, first on the third hour, then the other on the sixth, and the third on the ninth hour. So at nine o'clock in the morning, at twelve midday, and at three o'clock in the afternoon, they met in the temple for the offering of prayer to God, three times each day. You know, Christian people, we talk about our being willing to do so much for the Lord.

Here is the temple without the Messiah, without the knowledge of Pentecost, without the grace of Christ. Three times a day, they kept it going in the temple, prayer without the name of Jesus. And Peter and John are now going up to the temple to pray.

Now this continued respect for and attendance at the set service of the temple betokens great grace in these apostles. For the temple epitomized everything that had opposed their Lord throughout the entirety of his public ministry. The temple was indeed the headquarters of the Sadducean party who had had so much to do with his death and the sufferings that had afflicted his life.

These two apostles, along with the others, might well have washed their hands of the temple and turned their backs upon it. I suggest to you that impulse and carnal reasoning would have done so long ago. But you see, the Lord had not yet finished with the temple.

And this is the important point. He will by and by. He will by and by.

But the Lord had not yet finished with the temple. He had another word to say. He had witness to bear.

He had something to do in the courts of the temple before he washes his hands of the temple. The point I'm getting at is this. Despite all their inclination in an opposite direction, Peter and John knew the mind of God.

And they were determined to do that more than what they were inclined to do themselves. How easily they could have argued something like this. The presence of the Spirit is outside the temple.

So why should we go up there? You see, they had been in the upper room when the Spirit came. And they might well have said, Oh, why should we go up to that spiritually bleak, barren place and join in the prayers of those old people who, we can't always understand what they're saying. But they didn't say that.

The presence of the Spirit had come in power outside the Jerusalem temple. That is true. But they did not make that the excuse for not doing what their Lord required of them.

To have reasoned thus would have been false because, as I've said, God had yet something to say to the temple and to do in the temple. And they were more determined to do what God required than what pleased themselves. In fact, on that very occasion when Peter and John is going up, the Lord was going to gather His elect out of the very heart of that spiritually desolate temple.

You know, we have something to learn here. God does not easily give men up to their sins. Even when they've gone, as we deem, beyond the line of the possibility of redemption.

I find this most challenging. You know, God would be justified at any time to give any of us up because we're sinners. It is not right to infer because God has the right to give men up and could do so justly that He will do so.

He doesn't. Peter could have abandoned this temple a long, long time ago. But he hadn't.

And he's not going to do so just yet. And however eloquently these two might have argued otherwise, that the Spirit's purest and noblest work was outside the temple, it did not follow that they must not go to the temple because God wanted them in the temple that day. So they could have argued that the presence of the Spirit was outside.

They could also have argued, of course, from the other side, that there was no presence of the Spirit inside. It becomes very much the same thing, and yet it's different. Peter and John might well have argued against their going to pray in that temple, saying, the Spirit is not there.

The Spirit passed them by on the day of Pentecost and came to us. Why should we go there? Dominated, as we've indicated, by a Sadducean party that did not believe in the supernatural, did not believe in the resurrection, did not believe in the Holy Spirit. What can there be there for us filled with the Holy Spirit, loyal to a crucified and risen and reigning Lord? What is there there for us? The fact of the moment is this, that God wants us there.

There may come a time, as it did in the year 70 A.D., when God turned His back upon the city and the nation and the temple, but it hasn't come yet. And the thing I want to point out is this, that the total ministry of the Spirit is this. He's worked upon their tongues, He's worked upon their minds, He's worked upon their personalities, that they're together in doing what God requires at that moment.

O mighty Spirit of God, come and do for us what you did for them. Be very careful how you reason at this point then. Had Peter and John reasoned carnally? Had Peter and John reasoned as most men might have reasoned? I suggest to you it would have been a great tragedy that day.

Not only would this man, who was lame from his mother's womb, not only would he have missed divine healing, but the salvation of his soul. And the 5,000 souls that were gathered in in the wake of that episode might still be in the darkness and the cauldron of evil had not Peter and John gone up into the temple to pray at the hour of prayer. Heaven only knows, my dear people, how many souls are in darkness this

morning because men do not join together at the hour of set prayer.

God knows, I do. Lastly, can I say a word about this? Peter's re-energized will is evident also in the continuance by him of the very ministry, the very kind of ministry, the very same ministry, we should say, as was begun by his Lord. What I want to stress here is this.

By the determination of their will to be loyal to the Spirit and loyal to their Lord, we have emerging now in the book of the Acts, not simply a spiritual work, not simply a Christian work, but the continuity of the very work that Jesus himself began. Luke tells us right at the beginning, of course, he says, the former treatise have I written, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. When I wrote my gospel, says Luke, that's what I was writing about, while Jesus began to teach and to do, to do and to teach.

But now he says, while Jesus began, he continued. Well, how could he continue when he's gone to heaven? Ha, ha. By the Holy Spirit's indwelling and by the word of the gospel given to the Spirit-filled man, the very work that Jesus began continued through the apostles.

You see, first of all, here in this connection, the continuity of the same compassion. Peter and John are going up to the temple to pray and they come across this tramp, this beggar, seated here outside the beautiful gate of the temple, begging. It turns out that he's been in this condition from his mother's womb.

He was born like that and he's now over 40 years old. Obviously, he's given up all hope of ever being healed and the only thing now to expect is to ache out a sort of living begging. And there he is.

And Simon and Peter had compassion on him. You know, it's exactly the same as our Lord Jesus as he moved in and out among men. Do you remember the story? There are at least two stories in the gospels which are almost identical with this.

We read of another paralytic that was brought into the presence of our Lord carried by four people, a paralytic man. The complaint was very similar and the language used to describe what happened to him is very similar in Luke chapter 5. Our Lord had compassion on him and healed him and saved him. Neither is this dissimilar to what happened in John chapter 5 around the pool of Bethesda.

Some of those were also paralyzed. Probably the man concerned was a paralytic too. But our Lord had compassion upon him and this is what we see here, you see.

We see the compassion of our Lord carrying on in his people. It's a beautiful sight. But this kind of thing only happens when the wills of men as well as their minds and their hearts are under the power and dominion of the Holy Spirit.

Not only the continuity of compassion but can I say this, the continuity of daring. We can never be loyal to the Lord without a measure of daring here and there. There has to be courage.

There are things that have to be done sometimes and you cannot do them save with a God-given courage. Not only does Peter and John perpetuate the compassionate ministry of our Lord then but also his daring. You notice where this miracle took place? Right outside the door of the temple.

Right outside the headquarters of the enemy. You see that's exactly what Jesus had done. He wrought some of his most mighty miracles under the face and the scrutiny of his bitterest foes.

The one to which I referred for example in Luke chapter 5 he performed when there was a whole gathering of Pharisees and scribes, people who understood and interpreted the law apparently. They were all there. They've come from all parts of Galilee and of Judea and from Jerusalem to scrutinize him.

And what he did was exactly what we read of here in the context. It was this very kind of thing. He healed him in his own power doing it as a sign of his deity and of his messiahship.

Again the pool of Bethesda was just there in the shadow of the temple. And the disciples do exactly the same thing. They go into enemy territory in the power of the Spirit irrespective of consequences.

They must bear testimony so that we have here the continuity of the same power. Jesus is dead but his power lives on. Jesus was crucified but his power lives on.

Jesus has gone to heaven but his power is still upon earth. Where is it then? In these very men. Listen to Peter.

And the beggar sees him coming. He stretches out his hand. Sorry to disappoint you, says Peter.

You have a good look at me and you'll see that I'm not the type of man that has any silver and gold to spare. Look at my garment. Look at me.

Take a good look at me. At us. We're not rich.

We're not opulent. We're probably not like most people that go into the temple that pass this way. They can afford something but we can't.

And just as the dear man was going to take his hand back recognizing how obvious it was that these were not rich men, Peter said, wait a moment. We've got something. Silver and gold have I none but such as I have give I thee.

In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And the man did. Peter gave him a hand and pulled him up with the first jerk and then the man found that his ankle burns and his feet were strong.

And the man began to leap. And he began to rejoice in God. And though the miracle had been wrought in the name of Jesus, he gave God praise.

You know that temple saw something that day it had not seen for a long time before. But a leaping man healed by the power of God and praising the God of Abraham leapt into the temple full of the joy of redemption and of healing. For the power of the Lord Jesus is still present in his people.

Now I close. This is a very important day for us. It is our anniversary day and we're looking out upon a week of missionary conference.

The thing that enforces itself upon me, the truth that grips me these days is this. It is not enough for us to continue as a religious society in an irreligious world. It is not simply enough for us to be good people in a bad world.

We are called upon to be witnesses to the living Lord Jesus Christ. And we can only do that insofar as there is an evident continuity between what he did and the way he did it and what we do and the way we do it. Now I don't care what you make of this principle.

There may have been certain gifts which were specifically for the apostolate. All right. All right.

But if the spirit of Christ lives on in us and if the word of the Christ is given to us and is proclaimed by us and if we believe in that word together then there should be something that was in him living on in us. Something of his compassion. Something of his courage.

Something of his spirit's work. Yes, in many, many respects. Having control of our tongues.

Dealing with our personality problems. Illuminating the mind but strengthening the will. Well, may we say with the writer of the hymn, My heart is weak and poor until it master find.

It has no spring of action, sure it varies with the wind. It cannot freely move till thou hast wrought its chain. Enslave it with thy matchless love and deathless it remains.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1760.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/from-simon-to-peter-28-the-holy-spirit-and-peters-will/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net