

# The Power and Presence of God

by Michael L. Brown

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*Michael L. Brown's sermon highlights the essential need for the ongoing power and presence of God in the lives of believers and their ministries.*

**Duration:** 1:06:16

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 2:1

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Gods Power"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's strength rather than our own. He highlights the tendency to focus on methods and resources rather than the power of the Holy Spirit. The speaker quotes Hudson Taylor and John G. Lake to emphasize the supernatural nature of the Christian faith and the need for God's power in fulfilling the Great Commission. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's wisdom and the ability to deliver His message effectively.

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## Transcript

Are you convinced in my heart that there is a message you want me to bring? And I pray, O God, that you would enable me to be your messenger and deliver your truth, and that it would come, Lord, through your wisdom and in the power and life of your Spirit, and that it would be backed by your own hand as we bring your message, Lord. May I not go on more than what I need to, to deliver what you've given to me, to deliver to your people. Give each of us, whatever state we're in, Lord, you know the many different conditions of your people here this night.

Lord, give each of us, right where we are, ears to hear what your Spirit is saying. In Jesus' name, amen. I just want to speak to you tonight about the absolute, critical, essential need of the power and presence of God in our midst and in our lives.

And although I'll probably say nothing new, and it won't be some big insight for some verse somewhere, these are fundamental truths that we can very easily move away from in the pressure of life, in the pressure of ministry, in the zeal of following the Lord and pursuing our calling and seeking to be effective witnesses in this world. We can, in the process, miss out on one of the most critical, fundamental things, the essential, absolute need for the ongoing visitation of God, for the ongoing power and presence of God in our midst. And when we talk about the goal of going from visitation to habitation, the goal of not just having God visit us in power, but stay with us in an abiding way, we don't mean that it gets less powerful.

We don't mean that His presence gets less intense. We don't mean that the miracles just kind of fade away. We're talking about the ongoing, miraculous reality of God in the midst of His people, which is the New Testament norm, and without which there cannot be any fulfilling of the Great Commission, any Jesus revolution, any authentic New Testament, anything without the presence and power of God.

We know the words of Jesus in Matthew 28. We're just going to look at several well-known passages. We all know His words after His resurrection.

The words are so familiar to us that we forget how overwhelming they really are. Jesus has His eleven disciples in Galilee, some worshipping, some still doubting. Jesus came to them and said, Matthew 28, 18, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. Those words spoken by the resurrected Jesus are overwhelmingly bold words and large words.

All authority in heaven and earth is given to me. There's no appeal to a higher authority. There's no power that's greater.

There's no possible resistance to the will of God asserted on the earth in the name of Jesus. And I was remembering some quotes that I put at the beginning of the last chapter of a book I wrote some years ago, It's Time to Rock the Boat. And these words were written by pioneers, by people who went out into difficult, hostile territory, one into South Africa, another into other parts of Africa, another into China.

And they went into situations that in the natural were impossible, but they went based on what King Jesus said. David Livingstone, pioneer missionary in Africa. He said, on the following words, I stake everything and they never failed.

Lo, I am with you always, even into the end of the world. Not just some sentimental fact that Jesus is with us, not just some feeling that we have, I know the Lord is with me. But the reality of his presence and authority in the midst of every kind of hostile territory and demonic situation with no believers often around for miles and miles and miles as far as you can go.

But he staked everything on the fact that Jesus said, I'm with you and all authority is with me. Now, go listen to what Hudson Taylor said. Missionary to China, founder of the China Inland Mission, a man whose life and sacrifice directly ties in with the multiplied tens of millions of Chinese born again today.

Hudson Taylor was a man who was so consumed with the burden. So one of his quotes again the other day, he said, perishing China so filled my heart and mind that I had no rest by day and a little rest by night till health gave way. No rest by day, little sleep by night till health gave way.

The burden was so consuming and yet the burden alone is not going to change the people. The burden alone is not going to break down demonic strongholds. The burden alone is not going to change a single life unless there's the anointing and the power and grace of God coming down and bringing about the change.

Hudson Taylor said this, we are a supernatural people born again by a supernatural birth. We wage a supernatural fight and are taught by a supernatural teacher, led by a supernatural captain to assured

victory. Should I read that again? We are a supernatural people born again by a supernatural birth.

We wage a supernatural fight and are taught by a supernatural teacher, led by a supernatural captain to assured victory. That's the power of the gospel. That's the heart and soul of the great commission.

Listen to what John G. Lake said, mightily used by God in healing miracles, the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Pioneer missionary in South Africa, mightily used by God in the States as well. He said, a true Christian is unique.

He stands alone. He supersedes all who have gone before. He will not have a successor.

He is man at his best in God's best effort for mankind. In other words, it's through the believer that God's going to get the job done. There's no plan B if it fails.

There's no other commission than the great commission. There's no other resource than the power of the Holy Spirit. There's no other people but the people of God who are going to get it done.

It's not that we all just check out and fail because we fall short and God sends in the angels to finish. It's going to be God working through his people, period. It's reality.

There's no other plan, no other way it's going to happen. And it's not because of our strength, it's because of his strength. And the largeness of the task and the weakness of our own flesh reminds us it's only by his might and only by his power.

Hudson Taylor also said, we've given too much attention to methods and to machinery and to resources and too little attention to the source of power, the filling with the Holy Ghost. It's so easy to do it because we like to be in control and we like to make things happen. And we want another method, we want another formula.

Look, it's just human nature. I can be preaching a message and everyone's absorbing it, taking it in. Then if I say, OK, let me give you three points, everybody immediately starts to write one, two, three, because that's something we can kind of take hold of and grip.

I'm not saying it's wrong, I'm just saying it's human nature. We like to know when it's going to start, when it's going to end, how it's going to operate. And we like to know that we can see a thing go a certain way from beginning to end.

And yet our faith must be absolutely, totally cast on God because of the impossibility of the task to go heal the sick, to go set the captives free. Being back in New York City all the time just reminds me all the more that the city is not just going to bow down because a new ministry starts. The demons are not just going to run because we were part of a move of God.

You go into Muslim nations, you do Jewish ministry, you go into Hindu strongholds, you start to reach out to downtrodden people or people who have been bound by religious hypocrisy. The only thing that's going to work is the power of God coming through. Of course, if it's not lived out through godly lives, if it's not lived out through people with pure hearts, the whole thing's a sham.

But it's never been either or. Listen, in the word of God, there is no tension between character and power if the life is yielded up to God. There's never an emphasis, well, you better just work on one until you get the other.

The thing is, you need both in an essential foundational way. Without godly character, there's no way we can ever make it into the work of ministry. And once we're in the work of ministry, without the power of God, there's no way we can get anything done.

Listen to this little quote. On a tablet in a large church seating a thousand people, this inscription was placed in memory of John Getty. He was a pioneer Presbyterian missionary to the South Sea Islands.

When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here. When he left in 1872, there were no heathen. I want you to turn with me to the book of Acts, the second chapter.

You read through the Old Testament. You read through the Hebrew Bible. It's a very supernatural book.

It's filled with dreams and visions. It's filled with miracles. It's filled with prophetic words.

When God was not working, when there were no signs and wonders, it was taken as a sign of judgment. Where is the presence of God? Where is the power of God? How come He's not speaking and acting in our midst? Psalmists would pray. Others would pray.

Oh God, take your hand out of the folds of your garment and act. They would cry out to God as if He was sleeping. And they would say, God, back up with your hand what you say with your mouth.

God is not a big talker. God backs His Word with His power. You get into the New Testament.

It's a totally supernatural book. You go through the Gospels. It begins with the virgin birth of the Son of God.

Then His miracles, and His death, and His resurrection. And then you get into Acts. And it continues.

It's a supernatural book. And that supernatural presence of power continues right through. It's understood through the epistles.

And then you read the end. And it's going to come back. It's going to be the most supernatural thing of all, absolute visitation.

I mean, the clouds breaking through, and Jesus coming in great power and glory. And the whole earth seeing Him, like lightning flashing from the east to west, the sound of a great trumpet blast. They're like caught up to meet the Lord's extraordinary picture.

And yet somehow we think that in between, it just kind of gets mundane, and every day, and hard work, and effort, and just sweat, and go for it. What happened to the same power? What happened to the same reality? I said again, I'm not telling you anything new. I'm not telling you anything we don't believe and we don't hold to.

I just feel from the Lord that we need to stir ourselves. Because with all of our effort, with all of our works, with all of our desire, with all of our dreams, with all of our visions, we can still forget some of the simple fundamentals. We must have God coming down.

We must have visitation. We must have outpouring. We must have a steady stream of the anointing and flowing of God coming out of us and touching a sick and dying world.

Otherwise, it's not the fullness of the gospel. Otherwise, in many ways, it's a defective, non-New Testament gospel. It's an interesting thing, but you go through phases.

You go through seasons where you're really pursuing one thing. Maybe for years, you're seeking God to demonstrate His power to heal. And then maybe another time, you're just pouring your heart out for greater compassion to touch the poor and the needy.

And then another time, you're just consumed with a world vision and just activating people for mission, et cetera, et cetera. And it's hard to always keep everything equally balanced the same way. And it's hard to not neglect certain areas.

And we need to stir our own hearts honestly and ask, have any of us somehow graduated from the fundamentals? Have we graduated from the school of the power of the Holy Spirit without having that power? Is that kind of old hat or something that we went after more when there was a little different emphasis? Now, we're talking about Jesus' revolution, and we're going to be this force changing the world. And we want to see God touch these people, all these nations. We want to see all these things happen.

The dreams are from God, but they will only be brought to pass by supernatural power, by supernatural voices from God speaking to people in their need and their sin, by the voice of God blaring forth in the midst of His people, by the demonstration of His gifts. It's the only way it's going to happen. Look in the second chapter of the book of Acts.

Notice, God comes with intensity and power when the day of Pentecost, the biblical Jewish feast of Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Notice that God likes to take over when He comes.

Notice that God often announces when He's coming so that we'll take hold of the moment and take hold of the reality. Notice that no matter how fully prepared you are, you can't be fully prepared for God's coming. He still comes suddenly.

Some of you may have remembered this sarcastic little prayer that I wrote in one of my books called Prayer for a Nice Revival. Oh Lord, come and quench this longing of our soul, but please, oh Lord, just leave us in control. Oh God, send Your glory, send Your power, but please, oh Lord, just keep it to an hour.

The reality is God comes with intensity, power, force. Oh, you might say, isn't the Holy Spirit always a gentleman who comes as a dove? Well, it's not just someone like Saul of Tarsus who's persecuting the believers, a Jewish man persecuting fellow Jews who follow Jesus that has an encounter with the Lord that is not quite dove-like. It's also people who love the Lord and who are hand-picked disciples and who are waiting for His coming and still have an intense experience with God.

Why? Because God is intense for human beings. Hey, Big Daddy, this is Chapman. What's going on today? Yeah, my dude.

He's not your dude or my dude or your Big Daddy or my Big Daddy. You say, hey, that's just the way we relate. Well, maybe he relates like that with you just because of extreme immaturity, not necessarily because of extreme intimacy.

I'm not saying you shouldn't relate to him as Daddy and Abba and lean on him and just be intimate and enjoy his presence and pour your heart out to him. When I get close to God, I don't worry about him striking me or smiting me or slapping me or crushing me. I don't think that he's waiting there with the hammer just to see if I come the right way.

Almighty Heavenly Father, hallowed be thy name. And he puts the hammer away. All right, son, you can come.

I don't have any such image, but I don't have the image that in heaven we kind of kick our feet back in a rocking chair and say, so man, what's it been like being here all this time without us? You say, I've heard of people that Jesus just appeared to them and that's the way they talked to him. Yeah, and I've heard of some of those same people messing up later. I wonder if there's something lacking in our appreciation of who he really is.

I wonder sometimes if there's some lack of reverence because of lack of experience. I didn't plan on saying any of that, but being spirit filled and spirit led, that means it was from God. Isn't that the rule? I never planned on saying this.

Therefore, it must be the Holy Spirit. Oh, it only works when you're preaching them. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

God was making it known. You can almost see it in the spiritual realm. If you look on one of those weather maps, the satellite maps or something, and they'll show you, this is a picture of Hurricane Lily coming in off the coast.

And you look at this thing, it's massive. You know, it's going up. The wind is blowing hundreds of miles away, and it's raining states away because this thing's just coming through.

I wonder what it looks like in the spiritual realm when the visitation begins to come near, when the presence of God begins to come near, when the people of God charged with God arrives. I wonder what it looks like. Remember, this is just the earthly sign and symptom of the spiritual reality.

God says that it'll come like the rain. Oh, gentle rain. I just love when you just stand out there and it's just the spring showers.

Oh, Lord, pour it out. Sometimes it's like that. But when the earth is dry and cracked, because there hasn't been any rain, people are dying and animals are dying, and there are no crops, and a whole generation is about to get wiped out, and the people are praying for rain, and God sends the rain.

It's the floods. It's the deluge. It's the outpouring that drenches and soaks the land.

That's what people need and want. And God says, as one of His images, just as I pour out water on the dry and thirsty land, Isaiah 44, a promise to Israel, but with spiritual application to all of God's people, just as I pour out water on the thirsty land, so I pour out my Spirit on you. Drenches of God.

You know, the idea of just sprinkling someone at baptism was not a first-century Jewish concept. When people were immersed, they went under. They would get under the water completely.

And when you go completely under the water, you get completely wet. Have you ever noticed that? When someone is baptized or immersed, they go under and they come out. The hair is wet and everything's wet.

I was baptized February 4th of 1972. I'd only been saved a few months. And at that point, there was still a little flesh left.

And I remember, if you can imagine this, the mercy of God. I remember being excited about being baptized. And you know, one young lady there talked about when I came up out of the water, you know, that it was just all filthy and dark just as it drained out.

Really? And she said, yeah, all your sins were just going down the drain. And I thought, oh, I guess she means that metaphorically. But was it really dirty water? But I remember kind of being excited about being baptized in this fleshly way.

And trust me when I say God had mercy on a foul wretch before I was saved and a real reject before I was saved. I remember thinking, this is getting baptized. So I hadn't cut my hair yet.

I had this long hair. But most people never really knew how long it was because they didn't see it wet. And when it dried, I had this long hair and I had this little flip on the end.

Which is all right for a lady, but not all right. And no one really knew how long my hair was, but I did actually think to myself with some fleshly pride that when I got baptized and came up out of the water that people would see how long my hair really was. Sick.

You say, does that tie in with the message? Well, yes, in two ways. First, it just creates kind of an endearment between us, kind of a love and a sense of commonality. And secondly, it reminds you that you get wet.

I remember when the pastor's mom was getting baptized and she was an old lady and not keen on going in the water. And she just wouldn't quite go in all the way. She didn't speak English, so the pastor's talking to his mom in Italian.

And she didn't quite go. It was just the tiniest bit of her head, because she was just terrified going under the water. Tiniest bit of her head.

It didn't get wet. And I don't know how many times he made her keep going down. He's like, no, that's tiny bit.

I'd see her on the way into heaven. Just everything except the top of your head, lady, because it didn't go under. So you get the point.

You get wet. Saturated wet. Completely wet from head to toe.

Covered. Immersed. Isn't it interesting that that's the image? John immersed you in water, but soon you're going to be immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire.

That's not just symbolized by a dove lighting upon you. There is more that is taking place. Even if a literal dove literally came and sat upon you and it was some kind of a sign, a miracle, the reality is being immersed in God.

Being immersed in the Spirit. Being drenched and saturated in the presence and fire of God. That's not a light image.

Here as God comes in power at Pentecost, there's a reality that's being conveyed to us. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind. Notice it's sudden.

And notice the sound, like the blowing of a violent wind. Came from heaven, filled the whole house where they were sitting. It's not just that when you invite God in, he just kind of takes a quiet back seat.

You know, one of the most ridiculous of many ridiculous Christian bumper stickers through the years was the one, God is my co-pilot. All right, ready to take off, Lord? Ready? There's this Jesus sitting there. You fly that plane, if you have any trouble, as you fly to your chosen destination, he's your co-pilot.

He'll help out. You put that together with some of the rapture ones. You know, if a driver suddenly disappears, you know the rapture's taking place.

Hey, if Jesus is the co-pilot, he'll just take the, well, no. Well, if Jesus comes, maybe that doesn't work. Fills the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. They were not expecting this. There was nothing in their own background that told them to expect something quite like this.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. And notice that immediately when God comes, it brings division. God's not the author of confusion, and He doesn't inspire one person to prophesy one thing and inspire another person to prophesy the opposite among His people.

He's not the author of confusion. He doesn't inspire 10 people to all speak at the same time, contrary messages, and bring confusion. That's not who He is or what He does.

But when He comes, His very coming brings division because it reveals what's really in people's hearts. I was telling a pastor in New York City that before God's going to bring true unity to New York City churches, He's going to bring division. He said, but Jesus wants unity.

I said, correct. And first thing He has to do is destroy superficial false unity, things that are only skin deep. Luke, the second chapter, it says that the coming of Jesus, as Simeon prophesies over the baby Yeshua, that He's appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

You find out what's really in people when Jesus shows up and begins to move, when the power of God begins to be manifest. You can talk. You can have lovely meetings.

You can agree on all kinds of things. But when God comes down, that's when the rubber meets the road. Here, it's a synagogue.

This is a holy place set apart for worship of God and study of His word and prayer. Jesus goes into a synagogue on the Sabbath, a day set aside specially for worship of God and service of God. He goes into what would be considered a holy place for holy purposes on a holy day.

And He heals somebody. And some of the leaders go out and plot how to kill Him. Do you understand that? He announces at another synagogue meeting that the Spirit of God is on Him, that He's the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

Ruach Adonai Elohim alaih. Yad mashach Adonai oti lebaser. The Spirit of the Lord God is on Him because He's anointed me to preach good news to the meek, the poor.

Outraged, they're ready to kill Him. Here at Pentecost, God comes down. Listen, this was not a fabrication.

This was not an imitation. This was not mixed with human carnality. God came down.

And immediately, some said, this is God. Others said, they're drunk. One of the guaranteed things that will break the unity of a coalition of leaders praying for revival is revival.

Did you hear what I said? One of the greatest things that will break the unity of a coalition of leaders praying for revival is revival because He will not come in ways that fit our nice little parameters. And He will not come according to what our traditional experience has been. And His coming will always be on some levels different than what we expect and on other levels more than what we expect.

And the reason that we pray for revival and we pray for visitation is because something is wrong and something is missing and something is off. And when God comes to set those things right, it brings upheaval, holy upheaval, what Jonathan Edwards called holy disorder, because we're getting back into God's order. A few years ago at our younger daughter Megan's wedding, some of you may have met my mom, wonderful mother, as caring, loving, affirming a mother as you could ever ask for, just turned 80, in great shape, goes to the gym three mornings a week and works out.

But she was not a connoisseur Italian cook. That was not one of her strengths. And when I grew up and I had spaghetti and meatballs, my mom cooked spaghetti and meatballs.

She used for the sauce tomato soup. I actually chatted with her about this the other day. We laughed about it, but she says it's delicious.

I still use it. That's who I grew up, spaghetti and meatballs. When she'd make that, that was a highlight meal.

Then I went out, started preaching, traveling around New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut states, preaching in a few different churches here and there at 19 years old. They're almost all Italian, Pentecostal. So I preached at one place, and then after the meeting, we went to the home of this wonderful Italian family to have lunch.

What did they serve but spaghetti and meatballs? And I almost gagged. I put a giant meatball, and it's like, oh, come on. Just a little thing, something I could swallow, something really small.

I remember having to figure out a way to get small enough pieces into my mouth to swallow without chewing, because I didn't want to taste it. You understand? I was so used to the inauthentic. I was so used to the wrong recipe.

You understand that when the real thing came, I almost choked on it. Some of you might be thinking, you have a lot of choking stories. Don't, hey, don't get personal here, all right? I mean, listen, oh God, come and, oh God, send visitation.

We don't know what we're praying for and asking for. Well, some of us have been through, we were in revival for four or five years in Pensacola. We know exactly what to expect.

OK, right. Oh, things will go according to certain patterns. I wrote about the patterns beforehand, and I lived through them on a few different occasions.

And I've read the history of revival and seen what's written in the Word, and the patterns always seem to be the same. And one of the patterns is God comes in unexpected ways. No matter how prepared you are, when He comes, when His Spirit breaks out, when He visits, it's still sudden, and it still overwhelms you, and it still rocks your world.

And notice what happens here, because the purpose of the coming of God is not just the experience. It's not just the tongues, and it's not just the fire. It's not just falling or shaking or some kind of encounter.

It's to glorify the risen Jesus. It's to do the work of God on the earth. I mean, what if you got a job at a cemetery? Someone said, OK, here's your job.

First thing you've got to do is just go through all the roads here, where you see leaves have fallen, branches, different things, you've got to clean all that up, garbage, litter, you've got to clean all that up. Then you've got to go, you've got to rake up around the grave sites and things like that, and just make sure everything is clean and nice. OK, can you handle that? Yeah, OK.

And then go raise the dead. The Great Commission is go raise the dead. And even though most of the time we don't see most people rise from the dead, and there are only a few resurrection accounts in the New Testament, in other words, it's not written that all the dead that Jesus was ever around He raised.

It is written that all the sick that came to Him were healed. Healing the sick by the power of God is just as difficult as raising the dead by the power of God. It's just as difficult as seeing the true salvation of any human being.

It's only by the power of God. You know, I look out and I see people from different nations here. And we may be used, most of us used to what's happening in America and how the Gospels received in America.

You go to other countries with your exact same method and your exact same witnessing techniques and your exact same everything, and you hit a brick wall and nothing happens. And you end up going home discouraged and wondering what's wrong. Well, there are demonic strongholds that are not coming down easily.

And people's eyes that have been blinded for centuries and centuries through their ancestors and traditions. And it's only a visitation from God that will break through. That is reality.

So Peter stands up and immediately says this is a scriptural thing. This is the outpouring of the spirit that Joel prophesied. Peter makes it clear this is a last days event.

And if you are convinced that we are living in the last days, of course, we have been since Jesus died and rose from the dead. It's been the last days according to the New Testament, the last hour. But if you have some other sense, well, aren't these the last of the last days? Well, remember that God says in the last days He'll pour out His spirit on everybody.

Don't buy into a theology that just says the last days get worse and worse and worse. The last days get darker and darker and darker. And the people of God weaker and weaker and weaker until Jesus just comes and rescues us.

Like one dear brother had in a chart in a book written about 75 years ago, the chart was called the failure of Christianity. He didn't mean, listen to me, he didn't mean the failure of human traditional ways trying to imitate the New Testament gospel. By Christianity, he meant the New Testament gospel lived out through the ages.

He had a chart about the failure of it. It all just goes down. And then Jesus just rescues this drowning group before they perish, proving that man's a failure.

Yeah, man's failings have been proven over and over again, which is why we rely on the power of God and the wisdom of God and the resurrection of Jesus. This is not about the failure of people. This is about the failure of God, because His word declares that He will have a people from every nation and that we are to make disciples of the nations.

And this gospel will be preached as a witness to all nations. And He will pour out His spirit on all flesh. Either it's true or it's not.

But look at what Peter goes on to say. He first preaches Jesus, preaches His death, His resurrection, and then he explains what's happening. Verse 29, brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that He would place one of His descendants on His throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

Exalted to the right hand of God, He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. He's alive. And this is the proof.

This is something they gloried in in the book of Acts. We have evidence that Jesus is risen from the dead. It is not only that He lives within my heart.

It is the tangible evidence of the power of God in the name of Jesus today. You know, there's a simple little witch doctor story I heard once, but it's so real. These solid believers, spirit-filled people were talking to a witch doctor in an African nation.

I forget which nation it was. The story is so simple. And they were talking to him and asked him, well, tell us about this power that you have, this power by which you do all these things.

And he said, well, it's not here now. And they said, well, what happened to it? And he said, well, it left when you came in. I mean, ultimately, according to Revelation 12, when Satan's cast out of heaven, it's because he's not strong enough to fight Michael.

It's a power struggle. The reason that Satan doesn't assault the throne of God is not just because God is so loving and Satan says, he's just too good. I don't have it in my heart to do that.

And it's not simply because he thinks he'll be outsmarted. And he'll say, you know, we know the secret entrance into the back of heaven. And when he gets there, God will have it bolted up.

It's not just that. It's the power of God is against him. And there is no wisdom or counsel or might against God's power.

I was meditating on something the other day. I was meditating on at times in my life that I knew God was against me. Maybe when he was dealing with me in conviction before I was saved, or as a new believer, when I was going in a path, some minor thing, and he was just making it clear, don't do it.

I'm not in this. And it would be the most wild thing. Not literally this, but as if you get in your car to drive over to see someone that God doesn't want you to see, and all four tires get flat simultaneously.

And then you put on the radio to hear the news, and instead, a station that you've never put on before, there's a guy preaching at you, and you go to change the channel, and it doesn't change. I remember as a new believer, one of my friends was going with a young lady, and they committed the foolish act of just being alone together in her home while the parents were out. And they started to touch each other and do things that they shouldn't have done.

The phone rang, and of course, there's the immediate sense of guilt, and oh no. I remember when my friend told me, with fear and trembling, he said, we answered the phone, and there was no one on the other end of the line. I mean, they had this distinct feeling that God called them, this very distinct feeling.

Hello? Oh my God. Some of you have seen, when you try to do something, God wasn't in how it failed, and failed, and fell through, and didn't work, because you knew, God is not in this. God is against me.

And I was thinking, how much more powerful, how much more real, how much more dynamic is the fact that God is for us? If God being against us makes it absolutely impossible, you know, God set the law of gravity, and I'm gonna jump up and touch the ceiling. No, the law of gravity is against me. It's not gonna happen.

But I've been exercising. No, it's not gonna happen. It's not gonna happen.

But I got these new Nike sneakers, and I, no, it's not gonna happen, because there's a law of gravity set against me. There are times when God himself, you can have all the resolve that you want, but if you're gonna walk through 145 mile an hour, hurricane wind, you're not gonna walk through that. That's the reality of God being against you.

Whatever you try to do is gonna fail. Whoever tries to back you, they're gonna lose their money, they're gonna lose their reputation, because God's on it, God's against you. What about the reality? God is for us.

God is with us. What does that actually mean, in terms of the work being done? What does that actually mean, in terms of the demonstration of His light and power? God is for us. That's why it's asked quite plainly, who can be against us? What can be against us? Peter gloried in the fact that there was tangible evidence that God was with them, that they were witnesses to the truth, and God was demonstrating it, he said, as you can all see and hear.

You say, doesn't that deny faith? No, he's now saying, put your faith in the one you can't see. The fact that God gives evidence, the fact that God gives reason to believe is not a denial of faith, it's an impetus to faith. And then he promises, notice what he promises, not just they'll repent to be baptized, they'll have their sins forgiven, but he says at the end of verse 38, and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises to you and to your children, to all that are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call, the promise of the Holy Spirit was big stuff, major.

And then you get into the third chapter, and the lame man, man, lame from birth is healed. And crowd comes gathering around and clinging to, you know, the lame man's holding on to Peter and John, and the crowd's coming and gazing at them. And look at what Peter says.

He again preaches Jesus. This is all for the glorification of Jesus. Preaches the gospel, you killed the author of life, God raised him from the dead.

End of 15, we are witnesses of this. Remember, witnesses just testify to what they've seen and heard. Tell us, you're at the scene of the accident, yes.

You're a witness, yes. What did you see? We're witnesses of his death. We're witnesses of his resurrection.

And look at what he says in verse 16. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him as you can all see.

Here it is. He's alive. You can see the reality of it.

Sent his spirit and power. Go to 1 Corinthians, the second chapter. 1 Corinthians chapter two.

None of us are wiser than Paul. None of us have better understanding of God than Paul. None of us have more insight into redemption than Paul.

None of us are better defenders of the faith than Paul. None of us are more experienced soul winners than Paul. None of us understand what apostolic is better than Paul.

None of us debate rabbis better than Paul. I mean, go down the list. Take anything that you do for the kingdom of God.

You know that Paul did, he did it better. He's an extraordinary vessel in the hands of God. And yet, look at what he said.

Chapter two, verse one. When I came to you brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the spirit's power. So that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

We're not gonna improve on the methodology of Paul. We're not gonna improve on the methodology of Jesus and the apostles. The immersion in the spirit, the outpouring of the spirit, the empowering of the spirit, the visitation of the spirit, the ongoing fire and gifts and anointing of the spirit are absolutely essential and foundational.

Go back to Exodus 33. I believe this will be the last passage we read. Exodus 33.

Because God's holiness does not mix well with sin. God could not dwell in the midst of the people of Israel after they worshiped the golden calf. Otherwise, he would have killed them.

It's more or less like saying that fence is electrified. If you touch it, you die. There is no mixing the holy presence of God with willful human sin.

Either God will depart or he will judge the sin. That is what his holiness requires and does. It is an automatic, you could say.

So the people are repenting. Moses is asking God to come in the midst of the camp again because God has departed. And remember, they saw God in the midst of the camp.

They saw the cloud by day and the fire by night. It was a visible, tangible thing. And now, where is he? It's outside the camp.

And God tells Moses, I can't dwell in the midst of the camp because I'll kill the Israelites if I do. Doesn't mean he'll go berserk and go out of control. It's just his holiness will bring judgment on sin.

Verse seven, now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the tent of meeting. Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent.

It's an extraordinary event. As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance while the Lord spoke with Moses. Think of being Moses and having this extraordinary relationship with God.

And the whole nation knew it. Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped each at the entrance to his tent. This, wow, God would worship you.

He's the reality of it all. The Lord would speak to Moses face to face as a man speaks with his friend, not meaning that Moses fully saw the Lord's face, but they just talked back and forth like a man speaks with his friend face to face. Then Moses would return to the camp and his young aide Joshua, son of Nun, did not leave the tent.

If you wonder why Joshua was the one who led the people of Israel into the promised land, this is a good verse to tell you why. He stayed in the presence of God. He was addicted in a sense to the presence of God.

Waiting on Moses was important. Waiting on God was more important. Moses said to the Lord, you've been telling me to lead these people, but you've not let me know whom you will send with me.

And it's an interesting thing if you look back, just to make this point in the 32nd chapter. Remember God had to kind of twist Moses' arm to get him to lead Israel out of Egypt. He fought and he argued, not me, he'd send somebody else and I can't talk.

And finally God had to send Aaron along with him. Moses was very reluctant to go. Well, when they're on Mount Sinai and Moses is receiving the 10 commandments and the laws and the instructions for the building of the tabernacle, Israel sins.

And look at what God says to Moses in Exodus 32.7. Then the Lord said to Moses, go down because your people whom you brought up out of Egypt have become corrupt. There's a Jewish tradition where Moses protests and says, Lord, my people. And God says, yeah, when they're good, they're mine, when they're

bad, they're yours.

I mean, it is a peculiar verse and the only legitimate thing I can make out of it is God's thrusting it back on Moses so Moses will intercede for his people and feel the weight of it and take the responsibility for it and bring it to God, which is exactly what he does. And God says, let me just blot out the whole nation. I'll make a new nation out of you.

And Moses, remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And again, a Jewish tradition says that he appealed to God and says, Lord, if a chair with three legs, the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can't stand, a chair with one leg, just me is not gonna stand. God has mercy.

Moses, the great intercessor. Another Jewish tradition says when Moses died, God wept because he said, who's gonna intercede for Israel? So here Moses, the intercessor. You've been telling me lead these people, verse 12 of chapter 33, but you've not let me know whom you will send with me.

You said, I know you by name and you found favor with me. If you're pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.

So he's throwing it back on God. It's your people. You think, wait, wasn't it enough that Moses just met with God? Wasn't it enough that he was caught up in the presence of God? No, there's a whole nation out there.

There's a whole people. Remember, they were still on their way to the promised land. The golden calf didn't keep them out of the promised land.

It was grumbling and complaining, which led to unbelief and outright rebellion. It kept them out of the promised land. The Lord replied, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest.

Then Moses said to him, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up. And that's gotta be the heart cry of every hungry believer with a burden to see God glorified in the earth. That's gotta be the heart cry of every child of God who wants to see the kingdom of God advance.

That's gotta be the heart cry of everyone who longs for God's reality. If you don't go with us, don't send us. Don't send us.

That's why we pray right at the very birthing of fire, not to be melodramatic. God, if you're not birthing this, don't even let it get off the ground. Don't let the thing start.

Don't let anything happen. Who needs another work? Who needs more people doing more things for God without God initiating it and guiding it and anointing it and blessing it? But if it is a God thing, then we need the God presence and the God anointing and the God gifting and the God grace. Moses said to him, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.

How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth? That remains the reality. And the Lord said to Moses, I will do the very thing you have asked because I'm pleased with you and I know you by name. Then Moses said, now show me your glory.

Then his personal hunger for the visitation and manifest presence of God is absolutely overwhelming. Burst, now show me your glory. What else is going to distinguish us as God's people? What else is going

to distinguish the name and reputation of Jesus? You know, listen, here's a stark reality.

Our foundation is the word of God. We understand that. And if God did not work another miracle, if I never heard the voice of God again, if he never answered another prayer, he remains 100% true.

And by his grace, I'm dedicated to following him until I see him face to face, period. End of subject. There's not some crutch we're trying to lean on.

In fact, many people who don't believe in the gifts and power of God for today, I mean, believers, Christians who question that these things are still for today, they say, oh, you just need a crutch to lean on. They don't understand that this kind of stuff makes it a whole lot harder. It's just easier to walk away and say, hey, we don't have any expectation.

Someone gets sick and dies, we just say, well, I guess that was the will of God. We witness and preach and nothing happens. We say, well, I guess it's not time.

It's a lot harder when you keep going to God and say, God, where's your power? It's harder when you pray for someone that's sick and they die and it leaves you with questions and Father, what about your promises? It's harder, not easier. There's not some crutch that the immature are looking for. This is something that the serious and mature are crying out for because it's reality.

Despite the fact that it's difficult and challenging. What else are we gonna do? Where else are we gonna go? We need fresh encounters with God. We need to have that hunger again for the supernatural.

We need to have that striving after Him in the spirit and seeking His manifest glory and kingdom. To those who have been going after Him, He encourages you to say, press in. To those who have let things fall and go slack, He reminds us of who He is and what His promises are.

Let me read the quote from Hudson Taylor again. We are a supernatural people, born again by a supernatural birth. We wage a supernatural fight and are taught by a supernatural teacher, led by a supernatural captain to assured victory.

I am not saying that we just snap our fingers and miracles happen. I am not saying that we let down on any emphasis that God's put within our hearts. I am saying that without this divine reality, you can build all the altars you want and you can place all the sacrifices on them that you want, but unless we have a God who answers by fire, it's all in vain.

We need the visitation of God. We need the demonstration of the Spirit. We need greater outpouring.

I believe God has caused many here, some we've known for years now, to grow in so many ways and to have so much added to in the wisdom of God and in the understanding of the Word and in spiritual truth and in sacrifice and service. There's been growth in so many. I believe it would be even more wonderful than anything we've known to see God's great visitation.

I believe it would be more wonderful than anything we've known to see a Holy Spirit eruption. I believe the potential fruit in terms of lives that could be ignited in a triggering effect could be staggering. I'm going to end here by just saying that as I look back to the 60s and early 70s to a tumultuous time in American and world history, and I see how many elements came together to bring about, for the most part, negative change.

All of you that have heard us talk about how the church slept its way through the counterculture revolution, et cetera, you understand what I'm talking about. I look at the different forces that came together and a lot of it is supernatural. A lot of it was the mingling of demonic with flesh and something coming together that had a combustive effect and brought about destruction in so many lives.

There must be a holy coming together. There must be a holy moving of forces. There must be a heaven sent thing that happens that causes something to ignite and break in society.

It's just not going to happen any other way. It's not going to happen through any other means. And while we do what we know how to do on a day-to-day basis, and you witness whether or not God gives you prophetic words for people, you witness it with compassion just the same and you preach the Word.

The Word is truth. And the Word itself carries its own anointing. And you pray for the sick, whether you see results or not.

But I'm telling you, we must, we must, we must deepen our passion, our hunger, our desire for the outpouring of God. The third year class the other day, I was just talking about prophets being the biblical description, men of God, to be a man of God, a woman of God. And I said, it's not just someone who is devoted to God, but someone who has God-like qualities.

And that's clearly what the Hebrew referred to. Someone who was endued and endowed with qualities of God. That there was that touch of heaven on their lives.

And I want to encourage you that God's heart is willing. That God has not been deaf to the prayers we have prayed and the fasting and the crying out. He has not been indifferent.

He has birthed it, He has orchestrated it. He's calling us deeper. And to the extent that we have responded to Him to build a house of prayer, to the extent that we have moved forward, to that extent He's answered.

And I believe as we deepen things these days, as we spend this time in prayer and fasting and seeking His face, that He will draw near to His people. I'm not giving a prophecy of what is about to happen because I do not know. I simply know He laid this on my heart tonight.

I was 100% blank before Him with no clue whatsoever what He wanted me to speak on and perfectly happy not to say a word and just let the night go on in worship or other things. I'm convinced that this is what He wants to say to us because He desires to back His Word and His power. And it was the disciples in Acts 4, freshly filled with the Spirit in Acts 2, who prayed, God, stretch out your hand.

And act, glorify Jesus with signs and wonders and miracles. And as a result of that, the place where they were praying was shaken. And they were all filled with the Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.

Let's stand to our feet together. Just going to have Aaron come back and just play quietly at the piano. And we're going to pray a closing prayer.

And those that want to go can go. Those that want to stay and seek God for a while or have us lay hands on you and pray for a fresh touch of the Spirit, feel perfectly free to stay. I just ask that the leadership team, spouses of leaders that feel God's grace and anointing on them just to join us in praying for folks.

And those that want to leave, leave with the blessing and smile of God. Those that want to stay and just seek God on your own or find a corner and pray and seek His face or receive prayer, then by all means do

it. And let's go after Him.

Let's go after Him. Deeper, deeper. The Lord is telling us, dig the wells, your own heart, your own life.

I want to go deeper. Father, I'm almost embarrassed by the simplicity of this message, thinking it's something on a certain level that we all know, but I know for sure it's something you're speaking that we must hear. That in another very real way, we don't know it.

Oh God, come and touch. Oh God, break out in our midst. Living God, stretch out your hand.

Revive us again. Visit us again. Find a place of habitation in our midst.

Manifest your power and your glory. Oh God, we hunger and thirst for you. We long for you.

We desire you. Come and send the fire to fire, that we might become a spreading fire. Oh God, just lift your voices and cry out to Him.

Just cry out to Him. Mighty One, Mighty One, Mighty One, Mighty God, Mighty God, Mighty God, Holy One, Holy One, Holy One. Oh Lord, forgive me, Father, for my own backsliding in these areas, for busyness of life and ministry.

Still not digging the proper wells for the depth of the moving of your spirit. Father, forgive me. Oh God, forgive any of us, Lord, that have grown cold or weary or lukewarm or forgetful in these areas.

Mighty God, we seek your face. We seek your face. Everyone, just your heart's hungry and cry out.

Just step out from where you are and begin to cry out to Him. Begin to seek His face. Begin to go after Him.

Step out from where you are and just begin to go after God tonight. Mighty God, Mighty God, Mighty God, Holy One, Holy One, we long for you. We long for you.

We long for you. In a dry and thirsty land, we long for you, oh God, to come in power and touch. But I'm not able to keep it in the night.

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