

# The Enduement of Power

by Oswald J. Smith

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*The sermon highlights the critical need for the Holy Spirit's power in ministry and the transformative impact of earnest prayer and humility.*

**Scripture:** Zechariah 4:6, Matthew 7:7, John 3:6, John 6:63, Acts 1:8, Romans 8:26-27, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 3:16, 2 Timothy 1:7

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Ministry"

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## Description

Oswald J. Smith emphasizes the necessity of the Holy Spirit's power for effective ministry, arguing that true success in evangelism comes not from talent but from divine empowerment. He reflects on the historical impact of the Spirit on the apostles and the need for modern ministers to seek this same anointing through deep prayer and humility. Smith warns against relying on human abilities, asserting that without the Spirit, ministry is ineffective and lacks spiritual fruit. He calls for a return to earnest prayer and a genuine pursuit of the Holy Spirit's presence to witness true conversions and revival. The sermon serves as a challenge to preachers to evaluate their reliance on the Spirit for their effectiveness in ministry.

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## Transcript

The Holy Spirit is able to make the Word as successful now as in the days of the apostles. He can bring in souls by hundreds and thousands as well as by ones and twos. The reason why we are no more prosperous is that we have not the Holy Spirit with us in might and power as in early times.

"If we had the Spirit sealing our ministry with power it would signify very little about talent. Men might be poor and uneducated, their words might be broken and ungrammatical; but if the might of the Spirit attended them, the humblest evangelist would be more successful than the most learned of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers.

"It is extraordinary power from God, not talent, that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual unction not extraordinary mental power, that we need. Mental power may fill a chapel but spiritual power fills the church with soul anguish. Mental power may gather a large congregation. but only spiritual power will save souls. What we need is spiritual power."--Chas. H. Spurgeon.

"Let the Spirit be lacking, and there may be wisdom of words, but not the wisdom of God; the powers of oratory, but not the power of God; the demonstration of argument and the logic of the schools, but not the demonstration of the Holy Spirit, the all-convincing logic of His lightning flash, such as convinced Saul

before the Damascus gate. When the Spirit was outpoured the disciples were all filled with power from on high, the most unlettered tongue could silence gainsayers, and with its new fire burn its way through obstacles as flames fanned by mighty winds sweep through forests."-Arthur T. Pierson.

"The ministers of the Gospel must needs have this power of the Holy Spirit, because otherwise they are not sufficient for the ministry. For no man is sufficient for the work of the ministry by any natural parts and abilities of his own, nor yet by any acquired parts of human learning and knowledge, but only by this power of the Holy Spirit; till he be endued with this, notwithstanding all his other accomplishments, he is altogether insufficient. And therefore the very apostles were to keep silent, till they were endued with this power; they were to wait at Jerusalem, till they had received the promise of the Spirit, and not to preach till then."

"If they have not this power of the Holy Spirit they have not power at all. And therefore, seeing the ministers of the Gospel have not power from beneath, they must needs have power from on high; seeing they have no fleshly power, they must needs have spiritual power; seeing they have no power from earth and from men, they must needs have power from heaven and from God: that is, the power of the Holy Spirit coming on them; or else they have no power at all."--Wm. Dell.

But who is in the Anointing today? Who has the experience? It is promised; it is indispensable, and yet we labor on without it, working in the flesh like the disciples who toiled all night and caught nothing. And just so will it be with us. An hour's work in the Spirit will accomplish more than a year's work in the flesh. And the Fruit will remain. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." (Jno. 6:63.) "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." (Jno. 3:6.) It is Holy Spirit Fruit we want, pure gold without alloy, and nothing less. Not the kind that comes undone, but the genuine article that stands the test of time and Eternity; the kind we find at the prayer meeting as well as the Sunday services. Is this the kind of Fruit we are bearing? Is there conviction, and do souls come through into the glorious liberty of the children of God?

But have we the Enduement of Power? I don't mean have we "claimed it" and gone forth reckoning it ours, but, have we the experience? If there is no Outcome, we certainly have not. If we are Spirit-filled there will be Holy Spirit Fruit. Men will break down in our meetings and sob out their sins to God. Let us see the Fruit if we are to believe in the Anointing. "Ye shall receive Power." And when Peter got it, 3,000 were saved. And so with John Smith, Samuel Morris, Chas. G. Finney and others--there was Fruit. This is the evidence, this is the test, and only this. If I am a man of God endued with power from on High souls will break down under my preaching; if I am not, nothing out of the ordinary will take place. Let this be the test for every preacher. By this we stand or fall.

"I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 10th of October, 1821," writes Chas. G. Finney. "In the evening of the same day I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer. Multitudes can attest to this. Oftentimes a word dropped without my remembering it would fasten conviction, and often result in almost immediate conversion. Sometimes I would find myself, in a great measure, empty of this power. I would go and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray, with the same result. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer, fearing that this power had departed from me, and would inquire anxiously after the reason of this apparent

emptiness. After humbling myself, and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life.

"This power is a great marvel. I have many times seen people unable to endure the Word. The most simple and ordinary statements would cut men off their seats like a sword, would take away their strength, and render them almost helpless as dead men. Several times it has been true in my experience that I could not raise my voice, or say anything in prayer or exhortation, except in the mildest manner, without overcoming them. This power seems sometimes to pervade the atmosphere of the one who is highly charged with it. Many times great numbers of persons in a community will be clothed with this power when the very atmosphere of the whole place seems to be charged with the life of God. Strangers coming into it, and passing through the place will be instantly smitten with conviction of sin and in many instances converted to Christ. When Christians humble themselves and consecrate their all afresh to Christ, and ask for this power, they will often receive such a baptism that they will be instrumental in converting more souls in one day than in all their lifetime before. While Christians remain humble enough to retain this power, the work of conversion will go on, till whole communities and regions of country are converted to Christ. The same is true of the ministry."

Where is the soul anguish of by-gone days, the wounded conscience, the sleepless nights, the groans and cries, the awful conviction of sin, the sobs and tears of the lost? Would to God we might hear and see it in this generation!

And who is to blame, the people? Do we attribute it to their hardness of heart? Does the fault lie there? Oh, no, my brethren, the fault is ours; we are to blame. Were we what and where we ought to be, the signs would still follow as in the days of old. Then should not every failure, every sermon that fails to break the people down, drive us to our knees and result in deep heart searching, and humiliation. Let us never blame the people. If our churches are cold and unresponsive, it is because we are cold. Like pastor like people.

Oh how many there are who have been robbed of their testimony or who have never known the power of the Holy Spirit in their work! Their service is ineffective and their witness bearing null and void, while they accomplish little or nothing for God. Oh, yes, they go through the motions and sometimes they are very active, but it is all in the energy of the flesh, and no spiritual results follow. Souls are not saved nor are believers edified and built up in the Faith. Their preaching produces no Fruit and their Ministry is a ghastly failure. Oh, what a disappointing experience!

But, thank God, this need not be, for "Ye shall receive power," is His promise, and, "Tarry ye until ye be endued with power from on High," His command.

The passage in Acts 1:8 literally reads: "Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you," so that the Anointing or Enduement of Power is that experience which is the result produced by the Holy Spirit coming upon the believer and equipping him for service.

Such Anointings are only received in the soul-agonies of deep travailing prayer. The nights and days of agonizing prayer for the souls of men, the countless hours of intercession that we find in the life of David Brainerd, the mighty wrestlings with the spiritual powers of darkness until the body is wet with perspiration that were so common to John Smith--this is something that goes much further than present-day teaching, but it is the only thing that will produce the Fruit, and do the work of which we are speaking.

It is from these hours of prevailing prayer that we go forth to our work in the Anointing to wield the Sword of the Spirit with deadly effect. Prayer is the secret. There can be no substitute. And for each special work there must be a special Anointing. It is not merely a matter of yielding and believing now. Ah, no! The glorious supernatural results that I am talking of are not obtained so easily. It costs and costs tremendously.

"They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.' Prayer earnest, prayer united, and prayer persevering, these are the conditions; and, these being fulfilled, we shall assuredly be 'endued with Power from on High.' We should never expect that the Power will fall upon us just because we happen once to awake and ask for it. Nor have any community of Christians a right to look for a great Manifestation of the Spirit, if they are not all ready to join in supplication, and 'with one accord,' to wait and pray as if it were the concern of each one.

"It is only by waiting before that throne of grace that we become endued with the Holy Fire; but he who waits there long and believingly will imbibe that Fire, and come forth from his communion with God, bearing tokens of where he has been. For the individual believer, and, above all, for every labourer in the Lord's vineyard, the only way to gain spiritual Power is by secret waiting at the throne of God, for the Baptism.

"If thou, then, wouldst have thy soul surcharged with the Fire of God, so that those who come nigh to thee shall feel some mysterious influence proceeding out from thee, thou must draw nigh to the source of that Fire, to the throne of God and of the Lamb, and shut thyself out from the world--that cold world, which so swiftly steals our Fire away. Enter into thy closet, and shut to thy door, and there, isolated, before the throne, await the Baptism; then the Fire shall fill thee, and when thou comest forth, holy Power will attend thee, and thou shalt labour not in thine own strength, but 'in demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.'  
"--Wm. Arthur.

There are many in a false experience who think they are in the Anointing when they are not. All I can say is that the evidence, the proof is lacking. If they were there would be the same things happen that those who were truly Anointed always witnessed. If all the professed Baptisms and Fillings of the Holy Spirit in the modern conventions were real the whole country would be on fire. Nay, if just one man or one woman received the Anointing, the towns and villages for miles around might be swept by a mighty Revival, and thousands brought under deep conviction of sin and made to cry for mercy. The proof of the Anointing is the Outcome. The evidence that the spirit of Elijah had fallen on Elisha was the fact that he, too, smote the waters of Jordan and they divided.

"Why is it so hard to get?" you ask. Why? Because God will not pour His Spirit on the flesh. He must do His work in us first, and generally it takes a long time, for we will not let Him have his way with us. The saviour of our own name, love of praise, or some such sinful obstacle blocks Him at every turn. He cannot humble us; He is unable to break our hearts because we will not yield.

Or else, because He cannot trust us with so great an honor. He knows we will only make shipwreck of it. Oh, the sad, heart-rending incidents of men and women who were once used in mighty Revivals, and in the Anointing of the Spirit brought hundreds of souls to God, who lost that cherished blessing and worked in the flesh ever after, accomplishing little or nothing! They counted it too lightly; they became puffed up and proud; they allowed some little sin to come in; the Holy Spirit was grieved away. and they found themselves, like Samson of old, shorn of their strength. At one time when they preached souls cried aloud

for mercy under awful conviction. Now they beg and coax; the meetings are dead and cold, while only a handful respond, and even these are not Holy Spirit Fruit.

It remains only to insert the testimonies of some who have received the Enduement of Power to convince us of the reality of the experience. And if God could give it to one or a dozen He can give it to all.

"For thirteen years," writes Evan Roberts, "I had prayed for the Spirit; and this is the way I was led to pray. William Davies, the deacon, said one night in the society: 'Remember to be faithful. What if the Spirit descended and you were absent? Remember Thomas! What a loss he had!'

"I said to myself: 'I will have the Spirit;' and through every kind of weather and in spite of all difficulties, I went to the meetings. Many times, on seeing other boys with the boats on the tide, I was tempted to turn back and join them. But, no. I said to myself: 'Remember your resolve,' and on I went. I went faithfully to the meetings for prayer throughout the ten or eleven years I prayed for a Revival. It was the Spirit that moved me thus to think."

At a certain morning meeting which Evan Roberts attended, the evangelist in one of his petitions besought that the Lord would "bend us." The Spirit seemed to say to Roberts: "That's what you need, to be bent." And thus he describes his experience: "I felt a living force coming into my bosom. This grew and grew, and I was almost bursting. My bosom was boiling. What boiled in me was that verse: 'God commending His love.' I fell on my knees with my arms over the seat in front of me; the tears and perspiration flowed freely. I thought blood was gushing forth." Certain friends approached to wipe his face. Meanwhile he was crying out, "O Lord, bend me! Bend me!" Then suddenly the glory broke.

Mr. Roberts adds: "After I was bent, a wave of peace came over me, and the audience sang, 'I hear Thy welcome voice.' And as they sang I thought about the bending at the Judgment Day, and I was filled with compassion for those that would have to bend on that day, and I wept.

"Henceforth, the salvation of souls became the burden of my heart. From that time I was on fire with a desire to go through all Wales, and if it were possible, I was willing to pay God for the privilege of going."

Such was the experience of Evan Roberts, God's honored instrument in the great Welsh Revival. Now let us listen to the testimonies of John Wesley and Christmas Evans:

"About three in the morning as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from the awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.' "--John Wesley.

"I was weary of a cold heart towards Christ and His sacrifice, and the work of His Spirit---of a cold heart in the pulpit, in secret prayer, and in study, for fifteen years previously, I had felt my heart burning within, as if going to Emmaus with Jesus.

"On a day ever to be remembered by me, as I was climbing up towards Cadair Idris, I considered it to be incumbent upon me to pray, however hard I felt in my heart, and however worldly the frame of my spirit was. Having begun in the name of Jesus, I soon felt, as it were, the fetters loosening, and the old hardness of heart softening, and, as I thought, mountains of frost and snow dissolving and melting within me.

"This engendered confidence in my soul in the promise of the Holy Ghost. I felt my whole mind relieved from some great bondage; tears flowed copiously, and I was constrained to cry out for the gracious visits of God, by restoring to my soul the joys of His salvation; and that He would visit the churches of the saints, and nearly all the ministers in the principality by their names.

"This struggle lasted for three hours: it rose again and again, like one wave after another, or a high flowing tide, driven by a strong wind, until my nature became faint by weeping and crying. Thus I resigned myself to Christ, body and soul, gifts and labors--all my life---every day, and every hour that remained for me; and all my cares I committed to Christ.

"From this time I was made to expect the goodness of God to churches, and to myself. In the first religious meetings after this, I felt as if I had been removed from the cold and sterile regions of spiritual frost, into the verdant fields of Divine promises. The former striving with God in prayer, and the longing anxiety for the conversion of sinners, which I experienced at Leyn, were now restored. I had a hold of the promises of God.

"The result was, when I returned home, the first thing that arrested my attention was that the Spirit was working also in the brethren in Anglesea, inducing in them a spirit of prayer, especially in two of the deacons, who were particularly importunate that God would visit us in mercy, and render the Word of His grace effectual amongst us for the conversion of sinners."

Now, apparently strengthened as by a new spirit, with "might in the inner man," he labored with renewed energy and zeal; and new and singular blessings descended upon his labors. In two years, his ten preaching places in Anglesea were increased to twenty, and six hundred converts were added to the church under his immediate care.--Christmas Evans.

#### UNCTION

Oh, for the Spirit's mighty pow'r,

The Unction from above!

Oh, for a gracious heav'nly show'r,

The fulness of God's love!

This, only this, our one great need--

Naught else can e'er prevail;

Thus for the Unction now we plead--

It only can avail.

Our sins to God we now confess;

To Him we yield our all,

Believing He will surely bless

As on His name we call.

And so we give ourselves to pray'r  
That God may make us meet;  
For He must first our hearts prepare--  
His work in us complete.  
Then shall men turn to Calv'ry's stream  
With burdened hearts of woe;  
Salvation then shall be our theme,  
And earth be heav'n below.

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