

Receiving the Power of the Spirit

- ✖ Intimacy with the Holy Spirit will ignite your ministry and change your life forever.

At the start of the 20th century, Wales was known for its music and entertainment, its independent spirit and its rich sports heritage, but something was terribly wrong. The bars flourished while the powerless and passionless churches dried up.

Gambling and greed were beginning to dominate virtually every activity and captivate the nation's middle class. Violent crimes increased so quickly that there were not enough police officers in the entire country to restore order.

According to noted revival historians, as the hunger for personal pleasure began to dominate the culture, Evan Roberts, then a coal miner, would carry his beloved Bible into the mines with him. For 13 months Roberts cried out to heaven in intense prayer and intercession as God birthed a desperate need for revival in his heart.

In 1904 God unleashed fiery Roberts on Wales, along with a small ministry team. This young preacher, who delivered an unusual message of "praying in the Spirit," had a vision in which 100,000 souls would come to Christ.

Six weeks into what became known as the Welsh Revival, as many as 20,000 people had come to the Lord. Revival began breaking out in other countries as people read newspaper accounts of what was happening in Wales.

Many of the greatest preachers and Christian leaders of that day, including Rees Howells and G. Campbell Morgan, came to witness the revival. The impact was felt around the world, and

qualifies this as the greatest revival in history.

Jesus' Power Remains on the Earth

Roberts was one of the early pioneers who released God's power like a fire in the dry timber of human hearts. But the real fire was ignited thousands of years ago when the One called Immanuel—God with us—invaded the earth and changed the course of history.

His mission was to turn the direction of the human race away from hell and toward the God of heaven. And when Jesus Christ ascended on high, He made provision for His supernatural presence to remain on Earth in even greater measure.

Many Christians are fond of quoting John 14:12, and I include myself in that number: "'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father'" (KJV).

The only problem I see is that we don't put enough emphasis on the agency of that promise, described by Jesus: "'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever" (v. 16).

I'd love to be part of a church that does even greater works than Jesus did in His lifetime. We know this isn't happening; but it could. Jesus can do more and greater works because He has the opportunity to multiply His miracle-working power through millions of hands instead of using just His own.

God gave us the supernatural baptism of the Holy Spirit to continue the supernatural work of Christ on the earth (see Acts 2:1-4). So why isn't the church demonstrating supernatural power the way Jesus did?

The believers of the first century made such an impact on their societies that they transformed entire nations. Today our churches often don't have enough power to transform the

sinners in their own pews, let alone reach their cities or nations. Why?

I'm convinced that today we have greatly reduced and undervalued the role of the Holy Spirit. According to the theory called cessationism, the supernatural work of the Spirit (apart from regeneration) ceased with the passing of the original apostles. But the Holy Spirit was given to everyone, not just to the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul, among others in the New Testament, wasn't one of the original 12. Yet he demonstrated the power of the Holy Spirit and operated in supernatural gifts that can be attributed only to Him.

Acts 13 recounts the story of a gathering of the church at Antioch. Here people without reputations as apostles heard the voice of the Holy Spirit and were authorized to lay hands on Barnabas and Saul and send them out as apostles.

This speaks of apostolic authority totally separate from the original 12 who were based out of Jerusalem. But none of this makes much sense if you see the Holy Spirit as a powerless entity.

The Problem With the Spirit

The greatest difficulty for those who would discount the Holy Spirit is the number of Old and New Testament passages dealing with His character, mission and power in the latter days. In other words, the problem with the Holy Spirit is that He is so supernatural.

All the biblical references to Him refer to an overtly supernatural work, which is to continue until the completion of God's purposes on the earth (see John 15:16; 20:21-22; Acts 1:8). The power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was so crucial to New Testament Christianity that the apostle Paul asked new converts in Ephesus if they had received it after they believed on Christ (see Acts 19:1-2).

The Holy Spirit of God is the divine delivery system, God's own hand extended to man in the earthly realm. He transfers the riches of heaven to God's vessels on the earth.

He does this so that you and I can be witnesses to the life-changing power of our supernatural Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Never underestimate the power of the Spirit!

God is waiting for us to adjust our sails to the wind of the Holy Spirit and be transported into the center of His purpose. Listen to the promise of God spoken thousands of years ago by the prophet Joel: "'I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit'" (Joel 2:28-29).

If you have said yes to God's fiery baptism in the Spirit, then Someone holy dwells in you—Someone who is the Anointing. His presence brings divine revelation, strength, comfort and power. His strength can be made manifest in your weakness (see 2 Cor. 12:9).

This Power Is for You

God commissioned all of us to preach the gospel and make disciples of all men. Instead, we preach a form of godliness and deny its power.

He anointed us to lay hands on the sick and see them recover but many of us preach (or at least secretly believe) that God doesn't heal anymore. But God wasn't caught off guard by our humanity or by our doubt and unbelief.

Apostolic authority is coming back to the church. The church is again receiving the power to unleash revival because God intends to cover the earth with His glory (see Num. 14:21).

The first time God covered the earth, He flooded it with water unleashed from above and beneath (see Gen. 7:11). I am

convinced it will also take a flood from two directions to cover the earth with revival and release God's glory.

You already know about the anointing of God that falls upon men and women. As for the "fountains of the great deep," Jesus said: "'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:38).

Christ told His disciples in Acts 1:8: "'But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'"

The Greek word for "power" here is *dunamis*. According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, it means, "force, miraculous power, ability, abundance, meaning, might, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work."

Are you prepared to live life without this power just because someone said God stopped keeping His promises? What can the baptism in the Holy Spirit do for you?

The Spirit Will Make You a Wonder

Many of us still believe that if somehow we "pray right" or "do right," then "He might." But God, the Holy Spirit, is out to do nothing less than make you a wonder, by living inside your body and showing up in every area of your life.

I am a bona fide, Holy Spirit-filled, fire-baptized wonder because of Him! I live when I should die, and I shout with joy when I should cry.

He feeds me with spiritual food that the unredeemed know nothing about. I am a wonder of His grace, His mercy, His majesty and His healing power.

Acts 2:1-4 describes the first time the Holy Spirit came in

power: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Once the Holy Spirit touches you and endues you with power, you find it nearly impossible to be quiet and still. Power changes things!

Think about it. That same Spirit that invaded the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and raised to life the crucified body of the Prince of God has taken up residence on the inside of your mortal body! (See Rom. 8:11.)

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is God's method for delivering His divine endowment of power to His people for end-time ministry. The fires of controversy and the fire of God's convicting power seem to be stirred everywhere the Holy Spirit shows up.

Modern religious scorners who join those of the first century by saying, "These are drunk with new wine" (see Acts 2:13), do so at great cost. The loss to the church in terms of power, gifts and the fruit of the Spirit is beyond calculation.

Reclaiming Valuable Gifts

In 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul lists nine spiritual gifts distributed to believers that are of great value to the supernatural church (see vv. 3-11). The motivational gifts, operated by the Holy Spirit out of your natural motivations, are listed in Romans 12.

If you embrace the doctrine that these powerful supernatural gifts ceased operation after the first century, then they must

be blotted out of your Bible. Because of the influence of heresies and compromise, the power of the Holy Spirit seemed to ebb from the first-century church, but the charismatic gifts of the Spirit never died out of the church altogether.

Founders and key leaders of many mainline denominational churches in the United States and the United Kingdom, such as John Wesley (founder of the Wesleyan and Methodist movements) and George Whitefield (a Presbyterian), were personally baptized in the Holy Spirit. These men witnessed the manifestation of the Spirit in countless ways in their revivals. What happened?

Perhaps we should ask the same thing of Pentecostal leaders today! There are many full-gospel or charismatic churches today in which the baptism of the Holy Spirit is rarely mentioned.

Christians who insist on explaining away the validity of God's promises limit themselves to receiving only a portion of His reward. But it is time to reclaim this gift that comes directly from the hands of Jesus Christ, the Great Baptizer.

The cost of rejecting this experience is a lifeless, fruitless, powerless church. But God is searching for people who are willing to lay down their theological arguments and receive His priceless gift of power as He extends it.

As for me and my house, we will believe the Word of the Lord from cover to cover. We will serve Him in the fullness of His promises and divine power. You can too!

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