

***Be Filled With The Spirit.* by Dr. Lee Roberson**

Preface

We need power—Power for victorious living—power for witnessing—power for winning. This power is available for all of God’s Children. It is obtained through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The sermons in this column were preached in the Wednesday evening, prayer services of the Highland Park Baptist Church.

I well remember the time when I first laid hold upon the words: “Be filled with the Spirit.” A new day came in my ministry, for which I continually thank God.

May your heart be stirred as you read and may you know the fullness of the Spirit.

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Chapter One.

The Secret Of Power

“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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

This is an age of great mechanical power. Upon the earth we see power demonstrated in great trains pulling of scores of heavy box cars. Fast moving trucks on the highways speak of power. In the air above us tremendous four-motored air planes speed through the air, carrying tons of cargo. Upon the ocean move great steamers cutting through the waves with power.

Demonstrations of power are all around us. A level airfield can be made out of a rough and hilly country. Powerful dirt movers are capable of pushing away a hill and filling a swamp in just a few days.

Yes, this is an age of great mechanical power, but it is not an age of great spiritual power. This world has many churches and millions of professing Christians, but not many demonstrations of spiritual power. This is not a day when men are mighty through the power of the Spirit. When we look for illustrations of spiritual power, we must go back a number of years. There we find the names of men, who, though humble, did mighty works in the name of Christ.

This lack of spiritual power today can be traced to three things; First, ***iniquity***. The world is in the grasp of the evil one. Christians are supposed to come out from the world and be separate. Unless they do so, there can be no spiritual power. The ministry has lost its power because of compromise. Someone was telling me this week about a pastor, who goes weekly to the movies, encourages his young people to dance, and spends most of his time presiding at questionable civic functions. A child can understand how such a man could spend an entire twelve months and have only two conversions. There can be no spiritual power in the life of any person who compromises with sin and the world.

Secondly, ignorance of the Word and of what God has for His people keeps many from spiritual power. Many people who believe on Jesus Christ and profess to be saved, do not read the Word of God and do not know that there is a life of abundant and joyous living for them. In their ignorance of the Word and God’s way, they stumble on in skepticism and powerlessness.

Thirdly, indifference toward the matter of spiritual power accounts for much of the present day condition. How many Christians want spiritual power? How many ministers of the gospel truly desire it? How many Sunday School teachers? The great masses of people are content with a form of religion which they have. They are content with the petty functions and works they perform. Because spiritual power costs something, they are not willing to pay the price; therefore, they shrug their shoulders and carry on in a half-hearted, indifferent fashion.

Throughout the length and breadth of our land little or nothing is said about Christians living victorious lives. Nothing is said about the fullness of the Spirit. Instead most of the talk is about this program or the other. Or about some denominational project with the emphasis on pep and enthusiasm. When our man-made programs fail, it does not occur to us why it failed, but we simply make another one and try again.

As we seek to find the secret of power, let us turn to a consideration of the text. It speaks of three things.

I. God's People

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts 1:8).

The promise of our Savior was to an humble band of followers who had gone with Him to the Mount of Olives. There was nothing exceptional about the group except that they were God's people. They had believed on Jesus Christ, and had become members of the family of God through faith in Him.

They did not know everything, but they believed that Christ was the Son of God. They were witnesses of His resurrection. They were ready to do whatever He would command them.

II. God's Program

Jesus said, ***"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" (Acts 1:8).***

Notice the order of God's program for his people. He said, ***"Ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem"*** the city where Christ was crucified, a wicked place because of its rejection of the Savior—***"and in all Judaea"***—the province of which Jerusalem was the capitol—***"and in Samaria"***—the next province where there lived a people whose religion was a mingling of Judaism and idolatry—and finally, ***"unto the uttermost part of the earth."*** This was the divine program laid out by God for His people.

His witnesses were to begin in Jerusalem and tell the people of God's grace. Those who had cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" were to hear the story of redeeming love. After telling the story in Jerusalem, they were to go into the surrounding county of Judaea, witnessing to all the people of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. After covering Judaea, they were to go into Samaria, the people hated by the Jews. They were to tell the Samaritans that Jesus died for them and that He had risen from the grave and ascended into glory and was waiting to forgive all who would believe on Him. Upon finishing in Samaria, they were to go unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This was God's program for the age of grace and this was His commission to His People. They were slow in carrying out this command. Witnessing was done in Jerusalem and Judaea with

great power. Witnesses went into Samaria and revivals were held. Finally Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church in Antioch into the world as missionaries.

Let us keep before us this program of our Savior. It is to be the program of every church. In this day our reach is to be to the uttermost part of the earth.

III. God's Power

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

Before the ascension of Jesus, He said, ***“and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).***

We read that they did tarry in Jerusalem until the day of Pentecost. They waited until the Holy Spirit came to fulfill the promise of Jesus and to fill them and to thrust them forth to carry the gospel to all men everywhere.

These humble men and women received power. There is no other way to explain the marvelous results of those early days aside from the endowment with the power of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the early Christians, they had great spiritual power.

First, They had power to live victoriously. Before the day of Pentecost they were fearful and afraid. No one was more cowardly than the apostle Peter who became the stalwart leader of the Christians from Pentecost on. Peter was afraid of persecution. He was afraid of ridicule, but after Pentecost, he had power to live victoriously. Nothing hindered him from doing his best for Christ.

Secondly, They also had power to die gloriously. No one can read the account of the death of Stephen, the first martyr, without realizing that these men died gloriously. There was no weakness in the hour of death.

There was no consciousness of defeat. There was nothing but victory in death, and Stephen, as he was dying, being full of the Holy Ghost, ***“looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55).***

This is a power which God's Holy Spirit can impart unto all men—power to live victoriously, and power to die gloriously. There is no reason for weakness and fear when we are empowered by the Spirit.

Thirdly, they had power to witness convincingly. On the day of Pentecost, three thousand received Christ and followed Him in believer's baptism. After Peter's sermon, as recorded in Acts 3, we read in the next chapter that ***“the number of the men which heard the word and believed was about five thousand” (Acts 4:4).*** Throughout the book of the Acts we read of the convincing preaching and personal work done by God's empowered people.

Whence came this power? It came from God through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Who received this power? Those who waited in prayer in the upper room, plus those who later received Christ and met the conditions for having the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

What was the secret of this small group? It was not knowledge or wealth, nor prestige. The secret was surrender.

Without reservation and without exception they were surrendered to the Savior they loved, the Savior who was carried out of their sight as He ascended into Heaven; the Savior who promised to return and receive them unto Himself.

They were surrendered completely to Him and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the secret of power.

We cannot enumerate here the many results of the surrendered life, but it will do us all good to consider some of them.

The surrendered life brings knowledge of the truth. In John 7:17 we read. ***“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”***

When the will is surrendered, there will come the knowledge of the truth. Nothing so opens our eyes to spiritual things as a complete surrender unto the Lord. Nothing so blinds the eyes of spiritual vision as self-will or sin. Some people are bothered by doubts and questions through a lifetime until they finally surrender to God.

Back of all skepticism is an unsurrendered will. If questions and doubts fill your mind, you can easily get rid of them by yielding yourself to God and surrendering completely to His plan and purpose.

We often hear people say, “If I could only know the will of God.” This statement can be made honestly for a while, but if it is made over a period of time, one thing is certainly true: The person who says it is unwilling to let go and let God have His way. Many doubts and many uncertainties will vanish with your full surrender to Him.

The surrendered life makes Christ real to us. The Savior will manifest Himself to those who love Him and keep His commandments. This is exactly what He said on the night when He was betrayed. In that wonderful 14th chapter of John, where so many blessed promises are given, the Lord said, ***“He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).*** If Christ is not real to you, the answer is not far away—you are not keeping His commandments and doing His will.

To the surrendered person, Christ will be real in the time of sorrow, trouble, heartaches, discouragement, and death. Christ wants to be real to us when we read the Bible and pray. He desires to manifest Himself when we engage in the greatest of all works—soul winning. He is waiting to manifest Himself to you and will do so when you completely surrender your all to Him.

Finally, the surrendered life will bring the fullness of the Holy Spirit. When Peter was giving an answer to his persecutors, he said, ***“And we are His witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him” (Acts 5:32).*** The surrendered will and life is the great secret of having the power of the Holy Spirit.

The surrender is more than simply giving up certain sins. It is a yielding of yourself to God. It is a matter of placing yourself unreservedly in His hands.

Paul says, ***“Be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).*** The secret of being filled is a broken will and a yielded life.

God’s best is for each one of us. He does not withhold any good thing from us, but waits for us to meet the conditions and then He will flood our souls with power and victory. **Ω**

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