

“GOD POURS OUT HIS SPIRIT ON US”
I Corinthians 12:3-13, John 7:37-39, Acts 2:1-21
May 27-28, 2023

“Let’s say that you go to the Bitter Neumann Appliance and Furniture Store right down on N. 14th Street here in Sheboygan, and you’re looking for a refrigerator. You go to the appliance section and you see the refrigerator you want. It’s top of the line. We’re talking ten thousand dollars! This is a serious refrigerator. You open the door, and the trays slide out automatically. This refrigerator has some serious features to it. You decide to buy it. They are going to deliver it in a few hours, so you go home to be there for the delivery. On your way home, you stop by the supermarket and you load up, because you want to fill the refrigerator with your goods and items.

“They pull up, and they bring in your refrigerator and put it in place. You load it down with all the goodies that you’ve picked up from the store, and you feel really good about what you have in your home. It’s a NICE refrigerator!

“However, when you get up the next day, and go to the refrigerator for breakfast, you discover something that is very heart wrenching. The milk has turned sour, the ice cream has run all over the floor, and the vegetables are beginning to change colors. It becomes evident to you that this thing does not work - that all of this investment has been for naught, and you are ticked off.

“So you pick up the telephone and call Bitter Neumann to give them a piece of your Christian mind. You get the proprietor on the phone who sold you the refrigerator and you say, “Sir, I bought this refrigerator for ten thousand dollars yesterday, and it does not work. Everything I bought and put in here has gone bad.”

“The proprietor apologizes to you, and says, ‘Listen, do me a favor. Go put your ear to the bottom of the refrigerator and see if you hear the low hum of the motor.’

“You say, ‘I’m standing right in front of it, and I’ve put my ear to the bottom of it, but I don’t hear anything. There’s no noise at all.’

“Then he says, ‘Pull the freezer door open and see if that light comes on.’

“So you open the freezer door, but nothing happens - no light comes on.

“He then says, ‘There is a cord at the back of your refrigerator. Would you tell me whether it has been plugged in?’ You look in the back of the refrigerator, and lo and behold it’s not been plugged in. So you tell the proprietor, ‘I have looked and I saw the cord, and it was not plugged in, but for ten thousand dollars it shouldn’t have to be. For ten thousand dollars this thing ought to work on general principle.’

“The proprietor then explains to you that this expensive, brand-new refrigerator has all the manufactured specifications to do and to be all it was designed to do and be, **but not without power**. It’s got parts, but the parts can’t work **without power**. Just having the parts, as expensive and precious as they are, won’t allow the parts to do what the parts were designed to do **unless it is connected to power.**”¹

Well, folks, I don’t think anyone here could ever expect a refrigerator to operate fully without it being plugged into some kind of power source. And unless there was some internal power that enabled it to run, it was designed to be plugged into the power from the house. It’s the way it works.

But you know, we are like that refrigerator - well designed, precious, costly, AND in need of a source of power to enable us to live our lives here on the earth. Many happen to think that they can go independently without relying upon help from anyone, or anything else, to guide us along life’s way. And we see the results of spoiled lives all around us. **We were made to be connected to our power source that enables us to do what we have been called to do.** And we, like the refrigerator, are meant to be plugged into that source of power that gives us life.

Without a source of power giving us all that we need to function properly, we are left stale, luke-warm, room-temperature, and all that we do and say turns into decaying, rotten and ruined efforts to do what is right and good. Without the right power within us, we say and do the wrong things, we begin to believe things that are not true, we even profess to be one thing and do something completely different.

¹ (Tony Evans, *Tony Evans’ Book of Illustrations*, [Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2009] pg. 153, #461)

Without the right power source within us, we are never able to do what we were created to be and do, and at that point it would be easy for someone to just cast us aside as a failed individual without value, even though we have been created with great care, with much love, and with great precision. Unless we have the right power source giving life to us, we become spoiled in the eyes of God, and we lose any and all value.

That same principle works all around us to greater degrees. When a business opens up, it can have all the aspirations to do great things for people in this world, but without the right power source, it turns into ruin, just another organization wasting space and going through the motions of operation, yet with no good purpose. Governments and agencies are created for doing great work in our world today, but without the right power source, they turn sour, become corrupt and selfish, and bring troubles to the people they were intended to serve. Without the right power source they quickly turn into inefficient, if not even dangerous, organizations. It is essential for every person and every organization to have the right power source so that what was created as beautiful, beneficial and precious, might fulfill its purpose.

Likewise we, as the church, have all the parts we need for effective ministry. God has blessed us with all the resources we need to reach out into the surrounding community to bring life and love to them. BUT unless we have the right power in us, God's power within us to help us live and move and have our being, all that God has given to us is useless, because they cannot operate effectively without His power source. Without His power working in and through us, we become ruined and all the resources we have are wasted and squandered.

The Apostle Paul explains this in his teaching in I Corinthians 12:3-13. He says, "*Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit*" (12:3). Without the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we cannot determine if Jesus is good or bad for us. Without the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we are not able to recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ for us who believe. Without the

power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we lose our value and our effectiveness in the life of the world, and everything within us becomes spoiled.

Paul continues to help us to see that the workings of the church are only possible through the enabling of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit is the One who makes it possible for us to do the work of the Lord in our world today using His gifts to accomplish His service and fulfill His working in our world today (12:4-6). All different kinds of gifts, and services and workings are provided to us, but they are all able to be accomplished and effective only if the power of the Holy Spirit is driving them. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, all of those important parts of ministry are lost because they are just sitting there, with no power to enable them to do the work they were designed to do.

The Holy Spirit provides manifestations of God for us, but they are for the common good of all people. They are not for personal gains, or to selfishly increase the life of only one person. All of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit are meant for the benefit of others around us for the glory of God to the world. And Paul lifts up nine abilities provided by the Holy Spirit: gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking different tongues, and the interpretation of tongues (12:7-10). *"All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He distributes them to each one, just as He determines"* (12:11). And the Holy Spirit is the One who makes them all effective as we let the power of the Holy Spirit work in and through us.

But unless we are connected to the power source of the Holy Spirit, even if we might have been blessed with one or more of these gifts, they are ineffective due to the lack of that power at work in our lives. We must have our lives plugged into the power of the Holy Spirit to be living as God desires.

Jesus made it very clear to us as He spoke to the people in Jerusalem, *"Let anyone who is thirsty come to ME and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* By this He meant the [Holy] Spirit, whom those who believe in Him were later to receive" (John 7:37-39).

Jesus is the power source, and the Holy Spirit is the cord that connects us to all the power we

need as we plug our lives into Him. As we submit our lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ, He gives us the Holy Spirit who channels all the power of the Lord into our lives to do great and mighty things for Him. On our own we're like a single candle shining in the light of day. But plugged into the Holy Spirit, we become like a whole set of stadium lights illuminating thousands around us. The surge of power given to us from Jesus makes a huge difference. Just like a river of water generating millions of kilowatts of electricity as it flows past the turbines and generators, Jesus empowers us to do so much more than we could ever hope to do on our own. But we have to be connected to Him through the Holy Spirit.

Paul Dawson of Pendleton, Oregon, tells it this way. He says, "While visiting Grand Coulee Dam, my family and I were surprised to see that the visitors' center was dark. It was a sunny day, so we thought the center might have tinted windows, but as we got closer we realized there were no lights on. We went in and saw that none of the displays were working. Suddenly it became clear: there was no power to the center. Due to a technical difficulty of some kind, the visitors' center that sat only hundreds of feet from a hydroelectric dam had no power."

Then he asks the vital question for us to consider, "How could something be so close to the power source, yet not be 'plugged in'?"²

Friends, we are the very same way. We have all we need to be plugged into the source of power from Jesus, but until we claim Him as our Lord and Savior, until we allow the Holy Spirit to become active in our lives, we're relying only on our own power and our own strength, and that is not very effective. We have to let the Holy Spirit into our lives if we expect to find any power for our lives to do the work that God has called us to do.

Someone will ask, "Well, how do we do that? How do we connect with the Holy Spirit to get plugged into the power of Jesus?" Glad you asked! Let me share with you the way it worked for the disciples on the day of Pentecost, when they received the power from Jesus. Listen to the difference that

² (PreachingToday.com, *More Perfect Illustrations*, [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2003] pg. 212)

the Holy Spirit made in the lives of these men who had been followers of Jesus. This is Acts 2:1-21.

(READ Acts 2:1-21).

Jesus had been with these men and women for 40 days after His resurrection to encourage them and supply them with their work orders - to go out into all the world and take Him, Jesus, to everyone who would believe. During the 10 days after His ascension, the disciples were doing the work that needed to be done to support each other, but they were still fearful of what the Jews might do to them if they were to publicly show themselves.

So on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover, and after the resurrection of Jesus, the small band of followers of Jesus were gathered together in one place, praying and seeking the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. And God obliged them by pouring out His Holy Spirit upon them. It wasn't a quiet event that no one knew about, but He let all those in Jerusalem know that something marvelous was happening, and it made the sound of a mighty rushing wind, filling the house, and proclaiming to everyone that He was at work in them.

Last June, we experienced an haboob, straight line winds exceeding 70 miles per hour that hit the northern part of Sheboygan. Hundreds of trees came down, power lines with them, knocking out power all over the northern half of the city. I was standing at our front door when the wind came through, and the noise it made was indescribable. The sound of the roar that wind made has been implanted in my brain, and every time I hear this account of the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples in Jerusalem, I think of that sound. Though we were all without power, it drew everyone out into the streets to see what the damage was. It was an attention getter, for sure.

But the Holy Spirit didn't destroy anything in Jerusalem, but He did descend in the form of fire that rested upon each one of those gathered together that day. As the Holy Spirit came to rest upon each one of them, He empowered them, and instead of removing power, as an haboob does by knocking down trees in its path, He gave them power from God as they connected to Jesus Christ.

And having gotten the attention of those in the city because of the sound of the loud violent

wind, these disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit went out to the people and began boldly proclaiming the Word of Jesus to everyone. AND they were empowered to speak in the languages of the 15 different regions where the Jews had assembled from. Though these disciples had never formerly trained in the language of these peoples, the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak so that everyone heard clearly the Word of God proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah of the world. And it was only the beginning of what He would do through these men and women who had put their trust and faith in Jesus as their Messiah and Lord.

Those who heard the disciples were amazed and wondered greatly what was going on. Some even thought that the disciples were drunk with wine. But who ever heard a drunk person speaking intelligently the Word of God in a language they have never been trained in? It may have sounded like gibberish to some, but everyone was hearing God's Word of Jesus in their own language, loud and clear.

Peter addressed the people to explain what was going on. It was the fulfillment of prophecy from Joel: *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out My Spirit in those days and they will prophesy..."* (Acts 2:17-18). All those open to hearing and obeying the Lord God through Jesus Christ were given the ability, AS THE SPIRIT DISCERNED, the gift of speaking in the tongues of the people so that everyone could hear and understand the Scriptures and come to believe that Jesus is our Messiah. And so convincing was their witness to the Word of God, that about three thousand were baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ and became a part of the church that day (Acts 2:47).

And it was only the beginning of the marvelous things that the Holy Spirit would do through them, as they trusted in Jesus and opened their lives to the power of the Holy Spirit. God poured out His Spirit into them so that they could use the gifts that they were given to build the church and bring many into the Kingdom of God as they put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Very soon they were in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and into the remotest parts of the world sharing all that Jesus had done to

bring Salvation to everyone who would believe in Him as the Messiah. They went to Jew and Gentile enabling all those who would put their trust in Jesus to begin the new church called Christianity. People were healed from their diseases; they were transformed from pagan lifestyles to followers of Jesus; they were healed from physical impairments; they were even raised from the dead. The Holy Spirit worked in and through them so that the people could believe in Jesus and find new life in Him.

And we have that same power available to us, as we open up our lives to the power of the Holy Spirit. Don't let anyone tell you that the Holy Spirit doesn't work in the lives of people today, that He only did these miraculous events when the disciples were alive. I have seen it with my own eyes, and heard about it from faithful witnesses, of great healings being done through the work of the Holy Spirit through faithful people who follow Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Being cured of HIV Aids over night after laying hands upon them, being restored from physical injuries, being given new sight after years of blindness, having demons cast out of them, and having their lives transformed from wickedness to civility.

The Holy Spirit desires to plug us into the power of Jesus Christ, but it demands that we humble ourselves before Jesus Christ, confess our sins to Him so that He can wash us clean, and seek to do His work in our world as we faithfully obey the Scriptures of the Bible. Don't limit the power of the Holy Spirit, but open your hearts and lives through Jesus Christ, to be used by Him to boldly proclaim the difference that He makes when we have Jesus Christ as our Savior. God pours out His Spirit on us as we diligently seek to follow Him for His glory. Let's pray:

Father, Thank You for Jesus Christ, who gives us the power we need to live abundant lives for You. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit who supplies us with the gifts and power to do great things for You in our world today. So many people need to hear of Your love and Salvation given to us through Jesus. So humble us before You, and then empower us to do Your great work here and everywhere we go, so that people may be convicted of their sin, turn to You, and then find life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let Your Holy Spirit move here in this place so that we might do Your work, here and everywhere, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN.