

God's Power

Hey guys my name is Marcus Williamosn and I'm one of the pastors here at City Church. Man, that will take some getting use to. During our welcome last week our people actually clapped when I said I was a pastor here. I was sort of taken off guard, and if you were new last week, you probably were too. Just to be clear we don't usually applaud when someone says they are a pastor here. But since our people have walked through the pastor-in-training process with me, I'm sure they were just as happy as I was in that moment. All that to say, thank you to all of you who have walked with me through the past three years. I've learned so much about Jesus and his goodness because of you. So we are in a new series that we kicked off last week called the Holy Ghost Revival. A little inside information here, we have known for over a year that we were going to do some type of series on the Holy Spirit at some point; and I kid you not, ever since knowing this, for over a year, I've been bugging Kent to get me on the dock for this one. I told him it didn't matter which topic he wanted me to teach on I just wanted on. Honestly I don't know where this fascination with the Spirit started, but one thing I know for sure is that I'm excited to be here with you guys. So last week we said that the **Holy Spirit is both God's presence and God's power**. Kent talked about the Spirit as God's presence and how it changes how we talk about God, how we interact with God, and it gives others a way to encounter God. And today we're going to talk about God's power. Now, there's so much to talk about when it comes to God's power when concerning the Holy Spirit; and I feel like we will only be scratching the surface in this talk so if you're wondering about something in particular that we don't talk on today or for the rest of the series, there are resources on our website at citychurchknox.com that might help you understand the Holy Spirit a little more.

So for today, I believe this sermon will be helpful for a few groups of people here: **If you've ever felt like a habit or an addiction just has a grip on you and won't let go, like you want to change but don't know how**; then I believe this sermon is for you. **For those of you who have opened up your Bible time and time again and felt like you've never really gotten anything out of it**, this sermon is for you. **For those of you who have been building relationships with your coworkers, classmates, neighbors, etc. and you don't feel like you've made much progress at all and it's just so overwhelming to a point that you are about to quit**, this sermon is for you. **And lastly, for those of us that have felt overwhelmed and even angry at the injustice in our world, at the brokenness and systemic darkness of the world around us**; I believe this sermon is for you as well. My hope is for you to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. That when you leave here today, you will desire more of the Holy Spirit

and His power. Now, that's a tall task for sure, but I'm ready if you are. And since this is the Holy Ghost Revival series, and it's been a minute since I've been up here, if you can I would love for you guys to give me some Amen's up in here. We've said before that the reason to say Amen outloud is to help show non-believers that we agree with what's being said from stage. That what we are hearing is worth responding to. Now I know we all have various church backgrounds and that may affect how we go about church now. And who knows, maybe your pastors back in the day didn't want you saying Amen. Idk. But feel free to do that today. So if you are a follower of Jesus and the Spirit is telling you to say Amen to something, don't squash Him. Feel free to say Amen. And with that, the church said Amen. Y'all are the best.

Alright, let's do this, if you haven't already done so go ahead and turn with me to **Acts 1:7-9**. So a little backstory before we start, Jesus has resurrected at this point in the story and he's been hang'n with his crew of apostles and followers for a quite a while. And the verse goes like this:

*And while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait [if you like underlining, go ahead and underline that word, **wait**] for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." [Now this phrase, 'but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...' basically means they will be immersed in and overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit.] So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. [Now, be sure to listen to this next part, it's important] **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.**"*

So Jesus tells his disciples, I know you all are ready to kick this thing off, but I'm gonna need y'all to wait until the Father gives you the Holy Spirit. And I believe this tells us something about how essential Jesus sees the Holy Spirit for ministry, right? The fact that Jesus says 'hey don't go anywhere or do anything, don't even pass go and collect \$200 dollars until the Father gifts you with the Holy Spirit.' **It's almost as if Jesus is saying "what I'm about to call you into is absolutely impossible apart from the power you'll receive from the Holy Spirit.**

So what exactly is this power that Jesus is talking about? Because I'm sure for some of us, we've either read this verse or heard it preached on a few times and we've never really thought about it right? Like, have we really thought on this power from the Holy Spirit that Jesus told his disciples to wait on? I know for me, I never really thought about it, so let's do just that. So I want us to spend some time looking at Jesus' own relationship with the Spirit, as well as the things he said about the Spirit.

So let's kick things off with a question. Now you don't have to answer this out loud, but I do want you to think about what your answer would be. So here it is: **How was Jesus able to do the miracles he did while he was on earth?** If you're new to the scriptures, the Bible talks about various times how Jesus healed people, how he cast out demons, feed thousands from a happy meal, and so many other things. So how was Jesus able to do these miracles while on earth? Like, how? I think most people might say something like '...well he was God,' Now, some of that could be true but what if there was a different answer? I feel like, according to the bible, Jesus was able to do miracles—not because he was God—but rather because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Now here's the reason I bring that up. It's not just that I have a theological bone to pick. I think it matters that Jesus did what he did by the power of the Spirit, because of the implications of that for us—for you and I. If Jesus was only able to do the things he did because he was God, then how are you and I supposed to walk in the type of power Acts 1 talks about? If only people named Jesus can cast out demons, can perform miracles, can heal the sick, can proclaim the good news of the kingdom, you and I don't have much of a shot. Because in case you haven't realized yet, we aren't God in the flesh. But—but!—*if Jesus did what he did by the power of the Spirit, and you and I have access to that same Spirit, that means we have an incredible amount of power at our disposal.* Which is precisely what Jesus mentions in [John 14:12](#)...

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater [somebody say greater] works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

So what Jesus says right here is that the Spirit will enable them to do 'greater works' than he did. Now that statement is so strong that it almost sounds like hyperbole, right? Almost sounds like he's exaggerating. 'Jesus raised the dead—how am I gonna do something greater than raising the dead? Jesus healed the multitudes, how am I gonna do something greater than that?'

Now there's plenty of debate as to what Jesus meant by that exactly. The leading theory is that Jesus meant greater as in quantity. As filled with the Spirit as Jesus was, he was still just one person. So obviously, millions of Jesus-followers around the globe, *all* filled with the Spirit are going to be able to do more things by the Spirit than just one person can do.

But regardless of what it means that we are to do "greater things" by the power of the Spirit, here's one thing we know it doesn't mean: it doesn't mean lesser, right. When Jesus says "you're gonna do greater things than I do," he doesn't mean, you're just gonna sort of play church and bide time till I come back for you. And yet I feel like that's where a lot of churches and Christians are today. But I want you to know that God has something better in store for us. In John 16:7, to sort of drive home this point, Jesus says something similar, let's take a look. He says:

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage [someone say advantage] that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

But if I go, I will send him to you. So don't miss what Jesus just implied here. He said if you and I had to pick between walking the earth with Jesus himself in the flesh, or being filled with the Spirit, we should pick the Spirit. He says, If we were to have to pick between having Jesus Christ himself here as the pastor of City Church or having every member of City Church be filled with the Holy Spirit, he says it's to our advantage to pick the Spirit." So what do we do with that? We talk so much about Jesus and rightfully so, but do we believe what Jesus just said? Do we truly believe that we are better off with the Spirit, a Spirit we can't physically see mind you, than we would be with a living breathing, chill'n right beside you, giving happy meals to everyone for free, Jesus? That the Spirit is to our advantage over Jesus himself. If I'm honest, I don't know if we feel any of that. Like that's a hard pill to swallow I feel. If we are comparing right?

See here's the thing, given our talent set, experience, and education, many of us are fairly capable of living rather successful lives by the world's standards or even by modern Christian standards, without any strength from or knowledge of the Holy Spirit.

And if we are honest, like Kent said last week, even our church growth can happen without Him. If you combine a charismatic speaker, a talented worship band, and some hip, creative events, people will attend our church. **Yet this does not mean the Holy Spirit of God is actively working and moving in the lives of the people who are**

coming. It just simply means that we have created a space that is appealing enough to draw people in for an hour or two on Sunday. But, if what Jesus said, about doing greater works and the Spirit being to our advantage is true then that means so many things for us today. Jesus walked in the power of the Spirit, and he says that you and I, when filled with the Spirit, have the ability to do what he did and even greater.

So let's talk about the type of things this power accomplishes exactly. I think there are actually all sorts of things Jesus did in the power of the Spirit in his time on earth and we could easily be here for a whole week, like a true revival talking about all of them, but I don't think yall are ready for that. Back in the day, when my home church would have revival it would be for a solid week. Aint nobody got time for that right. For today though, I want to walk through four things that I think are massively important that the Spirit's power helps us with.

First up, through the Spirit, Jesus was able to and we get to **Resist Temptation and Sin.** I get this from [Luke 4:1](#).

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

So after Jesus was baptized it says that he was full of the Spirit, now that's going to be our key phrase in this passage, and after that he returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil himself. And boy was he tempted. Jesus was tempted for 40 days, in the wilderness. In the wilderness, yall. Just him, the Spirit, and the devil. He was the original marathon camper. And around day 40, let's see what happens in [Luke 4:13](#):

And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

So after tempting Jesus for so long, the devil was like, 'man, I need to come back another day, cause this dude ain't fall'n for noth'n.' Remember how we started the verse in Luke 4:1? **The way Jesus resisted temptation and sin in the wilderness was by the power of the Spirit.** It says he was full of the Spirit and *then* he entered into the wilderness. And **if you and I are going to have any lasting success in resisting sin in our own life, it is going to be by the power of the Spirit.** When it comes to how to fight sin, we all have our favorite methods. Some of us go the counseling route. Some of us go the accountability group or partner route. Some of us go for just plain ol'

confession and repentance. And to all of those I say yes and amen. But without the power of the Spirit, those things can only be so helpful. It could be that what you need is not more accountability or more counseling or different counseling, or even more confession—but rather you need the Spirit's presence. Look, the devil and his cronies want nothing more than to see you not empowered by the Spirit. Best believe, the devil remembers when Jesus was full of the Spirit, because he was like dang, this dude. Ever since the fall, sin has run roughshod over the people of God. It has corrupted and killed. It has poisoned and ruined. **But because Jesus was able to resist the devil and resist temptation you can too.** Because the moment you're empowered by the Spirit, like Jesus was, you will resist temptation to sin. Now I know we can be skeptical and say things like, 'wasn't Jesus God in the flesh? Yes. Wasn't he perfect.' Absolutely. But make no mistake about it, Jesus was filled with the Spirit for a reason before he entered into the wilderness. And if Jesus was empowered by the Spirit before he entered into the wilderness, what do you think we need to be? If you live in this world, you will be tempted. And you will need power to resist sin. You can not do it on your own. To resist the urge to blow up at your spouse or roommates or coworkers because of something silly or something serious. To resist, gossiping at work because it's what everyone else is doing. To stop looking at porn day after day. To stop sleeping around; relationship after relationship. To resist being greedy and not giving. You can't white knuckle this joint. You can only beat sin by the power of the Spirit.

Next, through the Spirit, Jesus was able to and we also get to **Understand the Scriptures**. Moment of honesty here: how many of you have ever found yourself trying to read the scriptures, cued up your Hillsong United playlist, poured your ChemEx coffee, or maybe for you it's an iced mocha double whip latte with extra whip, sat down, read the bible, and after getting done reading something, leaned back in your chair, put your feet on the table, hands behind your head, and wondered, "I don't have the slightest clue what any of that was about." Anyone? Nah? Just me? Or maybe you understood what it meant, but didn't have a clue how it applies to you or what it means for your life?

So apparently, we need something more than just the ability to read the words in our bible. For the things in the bible to take root in us in tangible, transformative ways, we need the Holy Spirit to make these words come alive in us. And that's exactly what the scriptures say the Spirit can do... And for this I want us to check out two scriptures. First, let's look at what Jesus says about understanding the scriptures. Take a look with me at [John 14:26](#):

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things [someone say 'all things'] and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

So Jesus, here, spends some time encouraging his disciples that it's the Spirit that will help us when it comes to teaching us and reminding us of what Jesus has said. He even goes as far to say that the Spirit will teach you all things when it comes to learning about Him. So just in case you thought for a second that you could toot your own horn about knowing anything about the scriptures, Jesus goes ahead and puts it into perspective that it's the Spirit that actually helps us out in this. And just so we drive that point home let's take a look at [Ephesians 1:17–18](#). Paul is writing a letter to the Ephesians and he says this:

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him...

It's so cool to see Paul pray for his people right? Like, praying that his people understand the scriptures. And how he does it is asking the Father to help them through the Spirit. And you'll find this idea throughout the scriptures fam. The Spirit is all about helping you when it comes to the scriptures.

Next, through the Spirit's help, Jesus was able to and we get to **Proclaim the gospel**. I'm getting this from our passage from Acts.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

So not only does Jesus tell them to wait, but he says to wait because afterwards they will be his witnesses in their hometown and everywhere else they go. And the cool thing is that as soon as the Spirit fills those who followed after Jesus for the first time, there happened to be devout Jews from all over the world that came to town to worship. And the Spirit filled the disciples to be able to proclaim Jesus and all his works in each person's own native language. So out the gate, the first act of the Spirit was He gave them all the tools they needed to be able to proclaim Jesus. If you are needing boldness to be able to talk to others about the goodness of the Father, the Spirit can help with that. If you already do this but feel like you are getting nowhere, the Spirit can help. When it

comes to proclaiming good news about what the Lord has done in your life and in the lives of others, who better to ask to help you than the Spirit himself.

Lastly, through the Spirit, Jesus was able to and we get to **Enact Justice**. All my social justice people just said Amen and Amen on that one. Jesus was about enacting justice, and he said as much in [Luke 4:18](#). He said it like this in his first sermon,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus saw that part of his ministry included helping others. Proclaiming liberty or freedom to the captives. Helping those who are blind to have sight. Both physically and spiritually. Helping those who are oppressed. And he did all of this to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Some of us probably feel this more than others, but just so we are all on the same page, this world is full of injustices. And Jesus' first sermon included a lot of justice. For us as followers of Jesus we should also be about justice for others. We should be about helping those less fortunate than us, whether they were born less fortunate, or got themselves into a less fortunate situation. And do you know how we obtain the desire to do this? Jesus kicks off his sermon with it. The Spirit of the Lord. He anoints you to do these things. The Spirit gives you the desire and the ability to do all these things. Now some have correctly noted that social justice should never replace the gospel. And I would totally agree with that. But let me say this to those who would say that, **a gospel that doesn't lead to justice in our world is not a gospel Jesus would be on board with**. I mean, we just saw this in that passage that Jesus read right? Good news to the poor, the prisoner, the blind, the oppressed. So not only does the Spirit help us to care for the injustices of this world, when we are caring for the broken and downtrodden, when we are standing up for the oppressed, when we are helping the abused and the marginalized...if we try to do all that continually on our own strength, we will be exhausted and burnt out in no time. See what we need is the power of the Spirit of God to help us to both start and sustain us through enacting justice. The Spirit can help us to not lose heart.

So with the power of the Spirit, we can do all these things.

So how do we tap into this power that the Holy Spirit gives right? Because if we're honest, there are plenty of times where we don't feel this type of power right? We give

into temptation and sin, we never proclaim the good news to anyone, understand the scriptures, pshhh, nah fam, and we often or never feel the weight of the brokenness of this world. Like if you told me that there is this power inside of me that can do all those things, I would be kicking down the door asking, teach me to tap into this power.

Now like Kent said last week, the Spirit is not a force that you can just wield with some intense training like you're a Jedi master or anything like that. Because the Spirit is God, the Spirit is not an "it." He's not something you summon. Let me see if I can illustrate it like this...I have a guy in my LifeGroup named Hayden, and he does CrossFit, some would say he's very strong. Now let's say that I needed help moving something super heavy in my house, would I start stretching and suddenly get my muscle man stance and say, I summon the power of Hayden to help me lift this heavy object? No, because I would strain my back or worse, break it. Then what would I do? I would just text Hayden right? I would just say, hey Hayden, do you mind helping me with this? And because Hayden is my friend and we live in relationship with one another on a regular basis, he would just text back and say sure, when can I help?

So with that being said, here is the key to tapping into the power that the Holy Spirit has already given to you because of Jesus, you ready? To truly tap into this power, **as followers of Jesus, we need to start cultivating a relationship with the Spirit and acknowledging the Spirit's power.** Easier said than done, but that's how we begin tapping into this power.

To be in tune with the Spirit, to know what God is doing in and around us, we need to begin the process of cultivating this relationship.

Ask For Help

One of the ways to cultivate the Spirit inside of us is to ask the Lord to help us to do this. **See, most of us tend to depend on the wrong source of power. Ourselves.** For many of us, it's been ingrained in us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps. It's second nature. We make it our mission to not ask for help right. It's almost like a rite of passage. So here's what I want to offer us this morning: a very simple alternative to relying on ourselves. And it's going to sound so elementary it's almost insulting, but I truly think it can make a difference over time...

I want us to ask for power from the Holy Spirit. And not just a one time thing. I think it's very easy to pray for something once and be done with it right? We've all been there, someone asks you to pray for something, you say sure. Life happens, we maybe did it

once. We've all been there. I believe that in order for you to cultivate a relationship with the Spirit, you need to have regular dialogue on some level with him. **I think setting a reminder on your phone for meal times, or more often, to pray to be filled with power by the Holy Spirit is a perfect way to start.** I think that could be so helpful in this. So setting the reminder to say something like, God, help me to be empowered by your Holy Spirit right now would be great. And then in the moments when you fully realize you can't do something on your own, pray the exact same thing but be specific about it: "God I am unable to (fight sin, proclaim the gospel, love others, etc.). Will you empower me with your Spirit..."

As the band comes on up, hear me say, the Lord would love nothing more than to empower you with the Holy Spirit. Because instead of trying to rely on yourself, you will be asking for help from a Father that loves you deeply and has given you the power of the Spirit to help you to resist temptation and sin, to understand Him more through the scriptures, to talk about His goodness to others, and to enact justice. The God of the universe wants this for you. Do you want this too? That family is how we start cultivating a relationship with the Spirit.