

Power Evangelism
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We are in a sermon series on Knowing God and Making Him Known. Today I am preaching a follow up message to last week's sermon Show and tell. Last week I taught you that we should show and tell the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. This involves proclamation and demonstration. Proclamation and demonstration both require the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the power of God, we have nothing to show or tell.

Today's sermon is called Power Evangelism. Power evangelism is Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered outreach that involves a presentation of the good news accompanied by a demonstration of God's power.

The three key elements to power evangelism are the word of God, the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. You see this in the life of Christ. He spoke the word of God. He was moved with compassion – that's a fruit of the Spirit. And He healed the sick and did miracles through the power of the Spirit.

His disciples did the same thing. Mark 16:20 says:

And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

Hebrews 2:3-4 says:

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.

Romans 15:18-19 says:

I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Fully proclaiming Christ requires proclamation and demonstration. New Testament church growth was rarely attributed to proclamation alone – it almost always involved demonstration. For instance, Acts 14:3 says:

Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of His grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

Genuine miracles confirm, validate, and authenticate the message and the messenger.

Some churches want to be a word church. Some want to be a power church. We want to be a word and power church that speaks the Word of God with authority and demonstrates the power of God to authenticate the message preached.

Here's the main point of power evangelism:

1- We need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was ready to ascend into Heaven, He gave the disciples His last instructions, called the Great Commission. It's found in Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...

Most people say the last command of Christ is to Go. But they miss what He said in Acts 1:4-5

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "Go. But Wait! There's More!" He went on to say what that more is in verse 8:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The disciples needed something more than having believed in Jesus and more than the power of spending time with Jesus. They needed the Holy Spirit poured out on them.

And on the day of Pentecost the power of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and they were radically changed.

- Where they had been fearful – they were now bold.
- Where they had been hiding – they were now in the streets.
- Where they had been quiet – they were now speaking.
- Where they had been weak – they were now powerful.

What happened? They received the baptism in the Holy Spirit – which is an experience after the salvation experience that gives us power from on high.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the gateway to a life of miracles!

Please understand that the supernatural power of New Testament living is totally dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized in the Holy, Spirit, something supernatural and powerful will happen. God will impart some spiritual gift to you as He sees fit. It will not always happen right away, but it will happen.

Speaking in tongues is the most common New Testament result, but it is not the only evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is about power - power to witness, power to do the ministry of Jesus. Without the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit, we will not do the works of Christ.

By the way, do you realize Jesus preached no sermons and did no miracles until the Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism? After that, He began to do miracles and operate in the power of God. We are called to do the same.

2- We need the power of God's Word in order to be a witness

The two main sources of the power of God are the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Both are needed. Matthew 22:29 says:

You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.

All Word without the Spirit of God leads to error.

All Spirit without the Word of God leads to error.

We need both.

The supernatural power of transformation requires the spirit and truth. Our words are not enough. Our answers are not enough. We need the supernatural power of God's Word.

When you are speaking with an unbeliever – don't be hesitant to speak the word of God! I know their hearts are hard, but Jeremiah 23:29 says that God's word is like a hammer.

"Is not My word... like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

So – don't be hesitant to speak God's word. Romans 1:16 says:

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Never be ashamed to speak God's Word! The Bible is the only book ever written that is alive! Hebrews 4:12 says:

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Amplified Version says:

The Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective].

So tap into the life and power of God's Word.

3- We need the gifts of the Spirit in order to be a witness

The nine gifts of the Spirit are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 –

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant... There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ...The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Spiritual gifts are special abilities given by God to minister to the needs of the church and to declare God's love and power to the world.

Their purpose is specific—to manifest God in a way that “profits” the church. They are also signs to unbelievers manifesting the power of God. These gifts are specifically available to every believer as the Holy Spirit distributes them. They are not to be merely acknowledged in a passive way, but rather are to be actively sought after and expected.

The gifts of the spirit should be in operation in our church and in our individual lives. 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 says that when the gifts of the spirit are in operation in a church – decently and in order –

...and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

Some churches shy away from the gifts of the spirit because they think it will scare people off – but when they operate biblically in a church – they actually draw people in.

But the gifts of the spirit are not just for church services. I believe any believer can operate in any of the gifts as the need arises. You will predominately operate in one or two gifts, but when you are alone and needs arise – God can impart the gift you need at that time. For instance, when you are witnessing to someone you need discerning of spirits and words of knowledge and wisdom.

I remember a time when I was ministering to someone and I had a word of knowledge that they were lying to me. When I got that word – I needed a word of wisdom to know what to do with it. So, as I was talking to them I was praying in the spirit for direction.

God led me to just outright confront them and say, “You’re lying.” I would never do that on my own – but I had a word from God. They denied it at first, but eventually they admitted they were lying and we were able to minister freedom to them.

So, as you talk to someone, God may lead you to pray for a healing or a miracle. God loves to answer those prayers so that He can reveal His love and power to those who are not yet believers. Don’t let fear hold you back. You do your part and God will do His!

4- We need the fruit of the Spirit in order to be a witness

We’ve seen that the result of being filled with the Spirit is power. This power is more than just power to do something – it is also power to be something. It is the power to do the things Christ did – live the way Christ lived and love the way Christ loved. We cannot do these things without the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

To be truly effective in the kingdom of God, both fruit and gifts are important. The fruit of the Spirit are found in Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Fruit and gifts both involve the power of the Holy Spirit. You can no more manifest the character of Christ than the gift of prophecy without the power of the Holy Spirit.

You cannot have love in the face of hatred without the Holy Spirit.
 You cannot have peace in the midst of chaos without the Holy Spirit.
 You cannot have joy even while disappointed without the Holy Spirit.
 You cannot have self-control without Holy Spirit control!
 Get it?

The gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit are both a work of the Holy Spirit and God has designed the fruit and gifts to work together.

It’s interesting that there are nine gifts of the Spirit and nine fruits of the Spirit. There is some important truth about this in Exodus 28:31-35. These verses give detailed instructions about what the Old Testament priests wore.

Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar around this opening, so that it will not tear.

Make pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn around the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them. The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. Aaron must wear it when he ministers.

This might not say much to you, but these verses give us some important truth about how to minister as New Testament priests. By the way – we are all priests. Revelation 1:6 says:

Jesus has made us a Kingdom of priests for God His Father. All glory and power to Him forever and ever!

1 Peter 2:9 says:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

What do priests do? They minister to the Lord and they minister to people. They represent God to the people and they represent the people to God. In other words – They Know God and Make Him Known! We minister to the Lord with a sacrifice of praise and then we declare His praise to people who need the Lord.

Okay – back to the priestly garment. There are different applications to this, but one of the main ones is that the golden bells represent the gifts of the spirit because they were seen and heard. They were symbols of the revelation and proclamation of the word through the gifts. Between each bell was a pomegranate, a sweet fruit symbolizing the fruit of the spirit.

I see several important truths here:

- There are equal numbers of gifts and fruit and equal numbers of pomegranates and bells. They alternated around the hem of the robe. This shows us that the fruit and gifts of the Spirit should be blended and balanced in every believer's life.
- The fruit was mentioned first, which shows their importance. We should seek to display fruit before the gifts. We show before we tell.
- The bells made a sound, but the fruit softened the sound. Without the fruit, the bells would hit each other and make more of a jangling noise than a pleasing sound. Likewise, without the fruit of the spirit, all our gifts do is make noise.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 says:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of

prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

We need the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit because we give an incomplete portrayal of Christ if we have one without the other. One has the power without character and the other has character without power.

That's why 1 Corinthians 12:31 says:

But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

Then comes 1 Corinthians 13, the chapter on love – the more excellent way. This does not mean to love and exclude gifts; it means love is the way to operate in gifts. 1 Corinthians 14:1 says:

Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts...

What's the difference between gifts and fruit? The gifts of the spirit are manifestations of God's power; the fruit of the spirit are manifestations of God's character. The gifts of the spirit show what God does; the fruit of the spirit show who God is. Our part is to receive the gifts and grow the fruit. It is through them that we have the power to evangelize.

In Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost, the supernatural change in the disciples drew a crowd and gave Peter a chance to preach. Acts 2:37-39 says that when he was done:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Wow – this promise – this power that the first disciples received – is for all who are afar off. For all whom the Lord calls to salvation.

The disciples and the early church needed the power of the Holy Spirit.

But, this is not just for the early church.

This is for everyone who the Lord calls.

This life is for us today - that means this is for you!

If you are going to live the Christian life and be a witness for Christ – you need to receive power from on high – the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We see that throughout the New Testament – we see it in the life every believer in the book of Acts.

There is no biblical mandate that this pattern would ever change.

The Bible never says – Get people saved and baptized, but the baptism in the Holy Spirit will be unnecessary in latter times.

Remember, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. What He did back then He does now.

- If He was the Savior then – He's the Savior now.
- If He was the Healer then, He's the healer now.
- If He baptized in the Holy Spirit then – He baptizes in the Holy Spirit now.

Yes, we have work to do as we share the good news, but we know that we need power that is not from ourselves but from the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 says:

'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

No matter how hurt you are, the power of God can heal you.
No matter how bound up you are, the power of God can free you.
No matter how down you are, the power of God can lift you.
No matter how dry you are, the power of God can refresh you.
No matter how empty you are, the power of God can fill you.
That's the key – being filled with the Spirit of God.

Being filled with the Spirit is not optional for Christians, it's a command!
It's the normal Christian life!

The normal Christian life should be a supernatural life. That's what gives us the power to reach our city for God!