

Greater Power
Pastor Joe Oakley – GFC – 3-17-24

We are in a sermon series called Greater and today I want to begin by asking you a question. **If you had the choice, which would you prefer: to have Jesus Christ Himself living in person next door to you or to have the Holy Spirit living in you as He already is? Which would you pick?**

Many people say, “I would rather have a physically present God in the form of Jesus Christ than an invisible God in the form of the Holy Spirit.” If you picked that, you’d be wrong. How do I know? Because Jesus already answered that question for us. On the night before He was betrayed and arrested, He prepared His disciples for His departure. And here’s what He said in John 16:7

It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

New King James - ***It is to your advantage that I go away...***

The Message - ***It's better for you that I leave.***

I know it’s hard to believe this – but **Jesus said we are better off with Him in heaven and the Holy Spirit on earth than we would be with Jesus on earth and the Holy Spirit in heaven.** Why? Because when Jesus was on earth He could only be in one place at a time. But now, He has sent the Holy Spirit and we can all be indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God at the same time.

I’m preaching today on the topic of Greater Power. Years ago I preached on this and I talked about infomercials where they try to sell you something like a set of kitchen knives. They show you how amazing they are and then say something like: “For a limited time, you get all of this for the low cost of only 19.99.”

Then, when you think they’re done, they say, “But wait! There’s more! Order now and we’ll give you another set absolutely free. That’s 2 entire sets for the low cost of only 19.99. But wait! There’s more. Order in the next 15 minutes and we’ll ship it absolutely free.” I just love hearing them say, “But wait, there’s more!”

That’s basically the same thing Jesus said to His disciples. Throughout His ministry – even after He died and rose again – Jesus said to His disciples: “But wait, there’s more!” Now, don’t get me wrong – **salvation is the greatest miracle of all. But being born again is the beginning of an extraordinary life where we experience more and more of the greatness of God.** Throughout your lifetime there will always be more! And a big part of that is greater power.

Now think about this for a moment. The twelve disciples spent three whole years with Jesus. They walked with Him and talked with Him and learned from Him. They didn’t have to read the Sermon on the Mount; they heard it live! They didn’t just read about miracles; they experienced them first hand.

Wouldn't you think that would totally prepare them for life and ministry? Well you know what – it didn't. Jesus spent three years with His disciples doing those very things and when He finished - what did He tell them, "You're ready to change the world so get after it?" No - He said "BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE! What I've done for you is not enough. You need more. You need the greater power of the Holy Spirit." That's why Jesus said in John 14:16-17

I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever -- the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jesus promised to send a Helper – who is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus sent a Helper because we need help!

We cannot live the Christian life on our own – we need help!

We cannot become like Christ on our own – we need help!

We cannot change ourselves – we need help!

In fact, we need supernatural help and greater power! Fortunately, the Bible promises us that help. Actually - the Bible promises us a Helper – the Holy Spirit.

Notice that Jesus said there are levels of relationship with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "You've had the Holy Spirit WITH you, but He will be IN you."

Thank God the Holy Spirit is with us!

When we are lonely and need a friend, He is with us.

When we are confused, He is with us as our Counselor.

When we need help, He is there as our Helper.

When we are sad, He is there as our Comforter.

That is the "with" relationship. The Holy Spirit never leaves us or forsakes us. In the good times, He's with us. In the bad times, He's with us. When we're up, He's with us. When we're down, He's with us. I'm grateful the Holy Spirit is always with us. BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

There is something much deeper than having the Holy Spirit WITH you and that is having the Holy Spirit IN you. It's like taking your lunch with you to school or work. You can have it with you all day long. It's a comforting thing to know it's there if you need it. But it does a lot more good when it is in you. Because when it is in you, it fills you and nourishes you. It's the same with the Holy Spirit – "with" is great, but "in" is better. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says:

Don't you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Think about that: the Holy Spirit lives in you. God does not live in a building made with hands. He lives in us – dwells in us – makes His home in us. All the power and wisdom of God lives in you! This is not new age – this is not about you

and your power. This is about God Himself living in you in the person of the Holy Spirit. We must learn to yield to the power of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit has a relationship with us - to help us, guide us, coach us. Remember Jesus said this in John 14:17 regarding the Holy Spirit: **...He dwells with you and will be in you.**

Jesus promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit who was with them would one day be in them. When did that happen? After His death and resurrection, Jesus went to His disciples. And the first thing He did is found in John 20:21-22.

Jesus said to them, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Some people say this was merely symbolic – pointing to the fact that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the Day of Pentecost. But this was more than a symbolic act – it was an actual, immediate impartation of the Holy Spirit. In fact – the Wuest translation says: **He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive at once the Holy Spirit."**

So the disciples first had the Holy Spirit with them. Then Jesus said, "BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE!" Now, after Jesus was resurrected, they had the Holy Spirit living in them. And from that moment on – everyone who is born again has the Holy Spirit living in them. Galatians 4:6 says:

Because we are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts...

If you've been born again – the Holy Spirit lives in you! But if you don't have the Spirit you do not yet belong to Christ. Romans 8:9 says:

If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

But the disciples had the Holy Spirit with them and then in them, and they still needed something more. When Jesus was ready to ascend into Heaven, He gave the disciples His last instructions, called the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19 says:

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

He gave them this command: "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.

Evidently, the disciples needed something more than having believed in Jesus and more than the power of spending time with Jesus. They needed something more than having the Holy Spirit with them and more than having the Holy Spirit in them. They needed the greater power of the Holy Spirit poured out on them. And they received it on the day of Pentecost.

Pentecost was one of the 7 Feasts that the Children of Israel were required to celebrate each year. Pentecost is a Greek word meaning 50. That’s because Pentecost occurs 50 days after the Sabbath associated with Passover and the Feast of First Fruits. And 50 days after the resurrection of Christ – the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:1-4 says:

When the Day of Pentecost had 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 the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

It is vitally important for us to understand this 3-fold relationship the Holy Spirit wants to have with us.

Yes - He wants to be with us, come along beside us and help us.

Yes - He wants to live within us.

But He also wants to release His power on us and through us.

This release of power is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The supernatural power of New Testament living is totally dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit. 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 were baptized in the Holy Spirit. It’s one thing to receive the Holy Spirit when you are saved. It’s another thing to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. It’s an experience after the salvation experience that gives us greater power

from on high. **The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the gateway to a life of miracles! It's the gateway to the supernatural!**

Many of you know my father. He's a pastor and he's preached here several times. My father led me to the Lord when I was a child and he baptized me. We were Baptists and we thought that's all there was. But I'll never forget the day when he told me, "But wait, there's more."

Deb and I were newlyweds in 1974 when my Dad showed up at our house and announced, "I'm here to pray for you to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and I'm not leaving until you get it."

I asked what that was and he explained to us how he had been alone in his office praying when he felt the Lord telling him to raise his hands. When he did, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues.

Before he left that day, Deb and I both received this power from on high. And it changed our lives drastically. We received a new love for the Word – a passion for praise and worship – a desire for God's supernatural gifts – and a heavenly prayer language.

You see, **when you encounter the power of the Holy Spirit you change.** Where there is power, things don't remain the same. Where there is power, things change. That's how you know you've encountered the power of the Holy Spirit: you change, you go away different.

Things you couldn't do before, you now have greater power to do.
Things you shouldn't do, you now have the power to actually not do.
The person of the Holy Spirit is that source of greater power.

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, something supernatural and powerful will happen. He 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.

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 needed the greater power of the Holy Spirit.

The early church needed the greater power of the Holy Spirit.

But, this is not just for the early church. This is not just for someone else. This is for everyone who the Lord calls. This is to all who are afar off. This is the normal Christian life. This life is for us today - That means this is for you!

God wants you to repent to be born again – to be water baptized and to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not optional.

The early church did not think it was optional. You will find this pattern all through the book of Acts: When the disciples went to a new place where the Gospel had never gone – they preached, people got saved, baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit.

If they went to a place that had never heard of Jesus, they would say, BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! And they would tell them the Good News of salvation through Jesus.

If they went some place where people had heard the Gospel – they questioned them to be sure they were believers. If they were sure, then they would say, “Good - BUT WAIT! There’s more!”

Then, they asked them if they had been water baptized. Some said – we’ve had John’s baptism. The disciples said – “But wait! There’s more than John’s baptism, you need to be baptized in Jesus’ name.”

If the people had been saved and water baptized – they would say “Good - BUT WAIT! There’s more!”

Then they asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. Some had. Others said – “We’ve never heard of a Holy Spirit.” So the disciples would lay hands on them and they would be filled with the Spirit.

The point is: being saved, water baptized and baptized in the Holy Spirit was the expectation, not the exception.

We see that throughout the Bible. We see it in the life of Jesus Christ, His disciples and all the believers in the book of Acts. But today it is more the exception than the norm!

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.

It's not like the church in Acts is the infant church and now we're the mature church. No way! They needed the greater power of the Holy Spirit and so do we. Being filled with the Spirit changed Jesus and changed the disciples. And it will change us too.

Remember Acts 2:39 - ***The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.***

Last time I checked, God was still calling people to salvation. The question is: Do you want everything God has for you? If you're satisfied with where you are and what you have, okay. Stay that way. For the rest of you – take the next step.

If you are not saved, I say to you BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! Today is the day of salvation. Receiving Jesus as Savior is the greatest thing that can ever happen to you.

If you're a believer, but you've never been water baptized, I say to you BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! I encourage you to follow the Lord's example and obey the Scriptures which tell us to be baptized.

If you've been saved and water baptized, I say to you BUT WAIT! THERE'S MORE! I encourage you to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

How do we get it? The same way the early church did. By asking for it. By believing for it. By expecting it to happen. In Luke 11:9-13, Jesus said:

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

If you do not receive it right away, keep asking, seeking and knocking!

I encourage you to not go one more day without the greater power of the Holy Spirit.

I encourage you to ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit today!
Your life will never be the same!