

Monday, June 8, 2026

The Holy Spirit Brings Power

Titus 1:9

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me."

We read today from Titus 1:9. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit giving us strength?

I'm pretty sure that I'm turning into a grumpy old man.

When I was in my 20s, I was excited about new ideas; new technologies, new ideas, new forms of expression in arts and entertainment. I jumped on the music CD bandwagon early and accumulated quite a collection and then moved to my first iPod and downloaded tons of music. I was up on the latest movies, and knew not only mainstream media, but some of the more independent stuff that was pushing the limits of film in the 80s and 90s.

This was carried over into ministry when I started working with students. I was the first to try new ideas in my community and did some crazy things in youth ministry that would probably get me fired today. I felt like theology and church and how we viewed and approached the Bible needed to be updated. I was more than willing to be part of the front lines in doing it. The best ideas about Jesus were the next ones that we were going to figure out.

I don't see things like that so much anymore. While I want to always be open to new things that the Spirit is doing in me and in the community I serve, I approach some of the world's "progress" with cautious eyes. I've seen "progressive ideas" dilute the gospel through approaches to scripture that reject "outdated" truth. I've watched the focus on a purely personal faith that we know more as an individual, move believers away from the church, community, and accountability. I've seen deconstructionists ask so many questions and deconstruct so much, that there is nothing left to stand on. Those folks become disillusioned with faith and walk away from a Jesus they can't believe in.

This is not to say new ideas, asking questions of tradition, and exploring better how we as believers engage with an ever-changing world. But I'm less optimistic that what is 'new' in our ideas and world needs to be fully embraced for us to know the best of what we can know in life.

Like Paul, I'm becoming more committed to remember what we know to be true. Those things that I know to be trustworthy are the things that I hold tight to with a stronger grip.

*"He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."*

Paul is writing to Titus, a Gentile leader in the early church and giving him tools to equip him for ministry. He is sending this letter at a later stage in life. Paul has been around the block, as we well know from the book of Acts. He has fought the battles on the front lines. He has pushed the limits of the church's boundaries. He has taken the Good News of Christ to new cultures and contexts where he has had to engage with new ideas while speaking the eternal truths of Jesus.

And here, he is reminding Titus to seek out leaders in the church who are rooted in the timeless and trustworthy gospel that has been taught to them in the past. Paul wants these leaders to be able to pass on a faith that is rooted in Christ and equips those being disciplined with sound understandings of who Jesus really is.

This is important in Paul's world. Lots of new religious groups are appearing making claims about Jesus and trying to pull new believers into their spheres of belief. The church struggles with Gnosticism, an early heresy about special knowledge reserved for special people. There are those who would impose enough Jewish Law on believers that Jesus would become unimportant to faith. Others invade the church with syncretistic practices that would make believers unrecognizable from everyone around them. In short, Paul is speaking this to a world that really is not that different than ours.

We need to join our leaders who are rooted in the trustworthy teachings that have been passed down to us so that they might be shared with generations to come. I'm not talking about simply traditions that we should retain just because "we've always done it this way". I'm talking about a robust understanding of the scriptures, of theology, of doctrine, of practical theology, that is rooted in God's Word, supported through healthy dialogue, discernment and accountability, and defended against those who dilute or dismiss it simply because its difficult, unpopular, or insensitive to those who remain in their sin.

This is not simple work. This demands something from us and our community. It demands humility that we know we are not always right and should listen to someone more mature and wise than we are. It demands a willingness to get off the world's treadmill of acceptance and compliance with the mores of the day to embrace a Christlikeness that the world rejects or ignores. It demands that we hunger less after what the world, media, culture, celebrity (including religious influencers) expect of us, and hunger more after Jesus Christ, the lamb of God, who came to take away the sin of the world.

In short, this work demands strength; strength that is not ours in our frailty and brokenness, but strength offered as a gift to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we explore the strength of the Spirit this week, let's seek the Spirit's leading before we hear from anything else. The Spirit can be trusted. Let's honor that trust by listening first to what he has to say.

*May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.*

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

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