



**LIFE AS MISSION**  
**Power for Mission**  
**Week 2**

**Opening prayer**

**Prayer for the persecuted church:**

**Prayer for a local church:**

This morning we pray for our brother Aldo who is planting a church in Los Angeles.

**Closing prayer**

**Introduction:**

One of the principles we have tried to incorporate throughout the body of Center Church, specifically through our small groups,

is prayer, but specifically the structure of our times of prayer together. When I read in a book on prayer called *The Place Was Shaken* that so much corporate prayer is self-focused rather than God-focused and this was a possible reason we saw less answers to prayer, our church immediately shifted gears. So, our prayer times together have a certain format.

Now, if that sounds too formal for you and you think we should just pray, then I would say, “That’s the very reason our prayers become

self-centered rather than God-centered. Because we most naturally think of ourselves first.”

Our structure for prayer is just the biblical format when you look at Scripture. And it's simply this:

First, we focus on God. “Our Father who art in heaven.” We begin our prayers with God, Who He is, What He has done, what He can do, etc.

Then in response to Him we express thanksgiving or give confession of sin or praise, things from the heart.

Then we pray first for God's agenda: our spiritual walks, the backslidden, the lost, missions, our children, and for revival.

After all this, then come the personal requests regarding health and finances and jobs, etc.

Now, do you see how we do it backward most of the time? Not just us, but find a group of

Christians anywhere who are about to pray and most likely they will begin with the question, “Any personal requests?” Instead, we should always begin with God and His heart.

Why do I bring all this up? Because today’s subject is power for the mission. We’re given the Holy Spirit, not so we can be emotionally joyful, but so we can fulfill the Great Commission. “The by-product of hearing and obeying the Word of God and praying with

other was being on Mission.” (*The Place Was Shaken*)

**Big Idea: We’ve been given power for the Great Commission, not for personal fulfillment.**

## **Acts 1:8**

**<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,**



# **1. The church needs power to witness.**

When does the Holy Spirit come upon you?

## **Romans 8:9**

**<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.**



When you become a Christian, when you are born again, you are born of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? It simply means the Holy Spirit is now in you. That's what makes you a Christian.

It doesn't matter if you can remember your moment of conversion or not. The issue is do you understand now that a Christian is someone in whom the Holy Spirit dwells? So, the Holy Spirit has come upon you. He indwells you now. Can you experience more of Him? Yes, but for now let's focus on this

amazing fact that God the Holy Spirit dwells within us.

## **Ephesians 3:20**

**<sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,**

What is the power at work within us? The Holy Spirit. And this is where our times of prayer come into play, because He is able to do far

more abundantly than all that we ask. Asking is prayer.

But this fact is so amazing, God will not only do far beyond what we ask, but far beyond what we even think He is willing to do for us.

That's the kind of fact we need to stand upon, because it seems we act just the opposite when it comes to the Great Mission God has given us. Instead of focusing on the fact that God is able to do far beyond all that we even

think, we focus on how little we can actually accomplish.

We're more full of fear than of faith. In summarizing the thoughts of Richard Baxter (a great Puritan writer): "To imagine that God intends us harm rather than good is a frequent temptation [among Christians], and is more commonly yielded to than we might think." Baxter said this: "Your low thoughts of God prevent you from loving him and incline you to hate him or to flee from him as from an

enemy. Meanwhile, the Devil misrepresents him as hating you.”

## **2 Timothy 1:7**

**<sup>7</sup> for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**

What kind of faith should we have in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us? Just listen to Paul here:

## **Ephesians 1:16-20**

**<sup>16</sup> I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup> 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, <sup>18</sup> having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might <sup>20</sup> that he worked in Christ when he**

**raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,**

This is the power of the Spirit who indwells us. Why do you think God gives us such assurances that the Holy Spirit is with us? That the Spirit will give us wisdom and revelation in understanding God that we might know how much hope we have? That God wants us to know how spiritually rich He has made us by giving us the Holy Spirit? Because of the mission He has given us. “Who is sufficient for these things?”



# **Acts 1:8**

**and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem**

So, when the Holy Spirit has come upon us we will be witnesses. Where does that begin? Jerusalem. In other words, the church is called to witness to Christ locally first, but it can only witness anywhere in the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **2. You can witness because you have the power of the Holy Spirit.**

God has called us first to be witnesses locally. This means before we look to how we can help other countries, we think locally first. If we're not doing anything where we live, then how effective are we really going to be across the globe?

**and in all Judea and Samaria,**

### **3. The church needs power to witness because of the greatness of the task.**

The church has an immense task that cannot be fulfilled without the power of the Holy Spirit — “Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” So, the church is called to witness locally, nationally and globally.

After local witness, the church is called to witness nationally. Thankfully, there are some

good, solid people with national ministries. But we have to realize that evangelical Christians as a whole are a witness to the rest of the country. That's why the mindset of local churches is so important, because together we make-up the whole. At least here in this country. What is happening to the church in America?

“Personal prayer lives alone will not result in the working of God to the degree needed for spiritual transformation in our lives, our churches, our cities, or our nation. God in his

**Sovereignty has determined that something happens when we pray together that transcends praying separately... private and corporate prayer are like two wings of an airplane. Which one would you rather do without? The absence of either would be fatal.”**

**Again, being on mission is a by-product of hearing and obeying the Word of God and praying together.**

**Look at mainline denominations. It's not news that they are all dying. Why are they dying at such a fast rate? Because the church is irrelevant? Not at all. Mainline denominations are dying because they left the truth of the gospel behind. And the gospel is the power of God.**

**The more the evangelical church moves away from the Truth of Scripture, the more ineffective she will be, the less power she will have, because the Holy Spirit is grieved by a church that compromises Truth.**

Now, I am thankful for some of these large and influential national ministries, like *Desiring God* and John Piper and Timothy Keller's bestselling books, even Matt Chandler's gigantic Village Church in Dallas. Others I am not so thankful for. Other large ministries make messes for local pastors to clean up, because we have to keep battling the false ideas and false teachings that come out of them. So, they help dilute our witness as a church in this nation.



**But the idea of the big, successful American church presents a challenging mentality itself.**

**“The first key for the average church to reproduce is mental. We must die to the belief —stated or assumed—that our normal churches are inferior to a few megachurches and their prominent pastors. We praise God for those in positions of cultural influence and we should pray for them and their flocks, but we must not measure our efforts against theirs. What’s more, we can’t assume that reproduction requires that our church cross**

some minimum size threshold, budget surplus, or modicum of church health in order to reproduce. All churches can, and should, reproduce.”

**and to the end of the earth.”**

How much we reproduce is up to God. But if we're engaged in the mission “to the end of the earth” or the far side of Lake Elsinore, we should reproduce.

“Evangelism is not just about adopting a stance, it is commitment to action. Growing churches almost always act on this commitment.” (Mark Tooley)

**4. The church can shake the world with the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer.**

**Acts 4:31**

**31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.**

They prayed and things were shaken.

They prayed and the Spirit filled them.

They were bold witnesses after they prayed.

“Ask great things of God and expect great things from God,” and He will lead you on from surprise to surprise.

## **Luke 11:12-13**

**<sup>12</sup> or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**

**This is what Paul refers to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

## **1 Corinthians 12:13**

**<sup>13</sup> For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.**

This doesn't mean Christian cannot experience subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit. Our theological language is sloppy. There's one baptism of the Spirit and that happens at the moment of conversion. Then there are experiences of being filled with the Spirit after that.

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into God's family, makes us one of God's children. If we're to be theologically precise, that's what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

But Scripture also tells us to be filled with the Spirit and to keep on being filled. So, in addition to our initial baptism in the Holy Spirit at conversion there are subsequent fillings after we're born again. Two of the most common examples of this are Acts 2 and Acts 4.



**GOSPEL REMINDER:** “Think and speak as much about the mercy you have received as you do about the sin you have committed... Are your sins ever before you? Why not also the pardoning grace of Christ? Is hell open before you? Why is not the Redeemer also before you?” (Richard Baxter)

**GC ACTION STEP FOR THIS WEEK:** Watch and listen for people whose hurting lives are in need of prayer. Be courageous enough to ask them if you might pray for them, and record their name for your prayer list (use

**your cell or a notepad). Make plans to keep in touch with them.**