THE POWER SHIFT – Sermon 4

THE SOURCE OF OUR AUTHORITY - THE SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION:

A police officer stands in the middle of a highway and raises his hand. An eighty-thousand-pound truck comes to a stop. He does not stop it with muscle. The lawful authority he represents stands behind the command.

THE POWER IS NOT IN THE SIZE OF THE MAN. IT IS IN THE AUTHORITY OF THE ONE WHO SENT HIM!

Jesus did not redeem His Church, establish her in righteousness, and commission her to confront darkness only to abandon her to human ability.

GOD NEVER GAVE HIS CHURCH A SUPERNATURAL ASSIGNMENT EXPECTING HER TO FULFILL IT THROUGH NATURAL ABILITY!

The disciples had walked with Jesus, heard His teaching, seen His miracles, and witnessed His resurrection. Yet He told them to wait until they were clothed with power from on high.

THEY HAD THE MESSAGE, BUT THEY WERE COMMANDED TO WAIT FOR THE MIGHT!

We do not need a Church that merely remembers Pentecost. We need believers yielded to the Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost.

THE KING HAS NOT WITHDRAWN HIS COMMISSION. THE FATHER HAS NOT REVOKED HIS PROMISE. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NOT LOST HIS POWER!

Luke 24:49 (NKJV) - Behold, I send the **PROMISE** of My Father upon you; but **TARRY** in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with **POWER** from on high.

Acts 1:8 (NKJV) - 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.

1. SUPERNATURAL WORDS

Acts 2:4 (NKJV) - And they were all **FILLED** with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other **TONGUES**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV) - For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to **GOD**, for no one understands him; however, in the **SPIRIT** he speaks **MYSTERIES**.

THE FIRST PENTECOST AND THE TESTIMONY OF IRENAEUS

Acts 2 places the disciples together in Jerusalem at Pentecost. A sound like a rushing mighty wind filled the house; divided tongues as of fire appeared; they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. The crowd included visitors from many nations who heard God's mighty works declared in their own languages. Peter explained the event by pointing to Joel's promise of the Spirit poured out.

Centuries did not immediately silence all testimony about spiritual gifts. **Around the late second century, Irenaeus wrote in Against Heresies (5.6.1) of believers in the Church who possessed prophetic gifts and spoke through the Spirit in various languages. Use this as an early Christian report, not proof that every congregation experienced precisely the same gifts.**

PERSONAL TESTIMONY CUE: Tell your own story of encountering the Holy Spirit as a boy at First Assembly of God in East Nashville.

- **PENTECOST DID NOT MERELY GIVE THE CHURCH SOMETHING NEW TO SAY. IT REVEALED THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN EMPOWER HUMAN SPEECH BEYOND NATURAL ABILITY!**
- **WHEN THE SPIRIT FILLS A BELIEVER, EVEN THE TONGUE CAN BECOME AN INSTRUMENT SURRENDERED TO HEAVEN'S PURPOSE!**
- **THE SPIRIT WHO GAVE UTTERANCE IN JERUSALEM HAS NOT LOST HIS ABILITY TO EMPOWER THE CHURCH TODAY!**

2. SUPERNATURAL WORSHIP

John 4:23-24 (NKJV) - But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in **SPIRIT** and **TRUTH**; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Spirit-filled worship is not a performance, and it is not a program. A church can keep every service orderly and still lose its life. The Holy Spirit breaks the routine and brings the room alive.

Acts 16 begins with gospel ministry in Philippi. After Paul cast a spirit of divination out of a slave girl, her owners lost their source of profit. A crowd rose against Paul and Silas. Magistrates ordered them beaten with rods and imprisoned. The jailer placed them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks.

At midnight, while their wounds were fresh and their freedom gone, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. Other prisoners were listening. Then a sudden earthquake shook the foundations, doors opened, and chains were loosened. The jailer, fearing

escape, prepared to take his life, but Paul called out that everyone was still there. The jailer asked what he must do to be saved; the gospel reached his household.

The story is not a formula promising that every worship service will cause an earthquake. **It reveals that worship is possible before deliverance, and God can turn a place of suffering into a place of witness.**

- **ANYBODY CAN PRAISE GOD AFTER THE DOORS OPEN. FAITH WORSHIPS WHILE THE FEET ARE STILL IN THE STOCKS!**
- **THEY DID NOT WAIT FOR THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES TO CHANGE BEFORE THEY DECLARED THAT GOD WAS WORTHY!**
- **WORSHIP IS NOT THE DENIAL OF THE BATTLE. IT IS THE DECLARATION THAT THE BATTLE HAS NOT CHANGED THE WORTHINESS OF OUR GOD!**

3. SUPERNATURAL WITNESSES

Acts 1:8 - 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.

Acts 4:29–31- Acts 4:31 (NKJV) - And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all **FILLED** with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with **BOLDNESS**.

STORY TO TELL: POLYCARP BEFORE THE ROMAN AUTHORITIES

Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna and an early Christian leader remembered for his steadfast confession. The Martyrdom of Polycarp, an early Christian account, describes his arrest and appearance before a Roman proconsul. The official pressed him to swear by Caesar's fortune and revile Christ in exchange for release.

Polycarp refused. The account records his famous response: "For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?"

- He was condemned and executed. **The narrative also reports a voice encouraging him to be strong**

In the early church threatened believers prayed not first for comfortable circumstances but for boldness to speak God's Word. The Spirit-filled witness is not necessarily spared danger; he is empowered to remain faithful in it.

THE SAME DISCIPLES WHO ONCE HID BEHIND LOCKED DOORS STOOD BEFORE HOSTILE AUTHORITIES AND PROCLAIMED THE RESURRECTION!

- **PENTECOST DID NOT REMOVE THEIR ENEMIES. IT EMPOWERED THEM TO SPEAK IN THE PRESENCE OF THEIR ENEMIES!**

BOLDNESS IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR. IT IS FAITHFUL WITNESS UNDER THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

4. SUPERNATURAL WORK

John 14:12 (NKJV) - Most assuredly, I say to you, he who **BELIEVES** in Me, the **WORKS** that I do he will do also; and **GREATER** works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

Mark 16:17-18 (NKJV) - And these signs will follow those who **BELIEVE**: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will **LAY HANDS ON THE SICK**, and they will **RECOVER**.

THE EARLY CHURCH PRAYING FOR THE SICK

Acts 3 records Peter and John meeting a man lame from birth at the Beautiful Gate. Peter did not claim independent power or personal holiness. He directed the man to Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and the man rose, walked, and praised God. When the crowd gathered, Peter explained that the healing came through Jesus' name and faith in Him (Acts 3:12–16).

Irenaeus also described reports of healing and other extraordinary works among Christians of his time (Against Heresies 2.32.4).

On tongues, Against Heresies 5.6.1:

“For this reason does the apostle declare, ‘We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,’ terming those persons ‘perfect’ who have received the Spirit of God, and who through the Spirit of God do speak in all languages, as He used Himself also to speak. In like manner we do also hear many brethren in the Church, who possess prophetic gifts, and who through the Spirit speak all kinds of languages, and bring to light for the general benefit the hidden things of men, and declare the mysteries of God.”

On the dead raised, Against Heresies 2.32.4:

“Yea, moreover, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years.”

On healing and the praying church, Against Heresies 2.31.2 and 2.32.4.

“And oftentimes in the brotherhood, when, on account of some necessity, our entire Church has besought with fasting and much supplication, the spirit of the dead has returned, and the man has been restored through the prayers of the saints.”

“Still others heal the sick by the laying on of hands, and restore them to health. And, as we have said, even dead persons have been raised, and remained with us many years.”

JESUS NEVER DESIGNED HIS CHURCH'S MINISTRY TO BE CONFINED TO A PLATFORM, A PULPIT, OR A HANDFUL OF PERSONALITIES!

THE WORLD DOES NOT NEED A CHURCH THAT ONLY DESCRIBES WHAT GOD ONCE DID. IT NEEDS A CHURCH THAT STILL PRAYS, STILL BELIEVES, AND STILL SERVES WITH EXPECTATION!

5. SUPERNATURAL WARMTH

Romans 5:5 (NKJV) - Now hope does not disappoint, because the **LOVE** of God has been **POURED OUT** in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Galatians 3:28 (NKJV) - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all **ONE** in Christ Jesus.

STORY TO TELL: MOTHER TERESA AND THE DYING IN CALCUTTA - Mother Teresa began her work among the poorest residents of Calcutta and founded the Missionaries of Charity. Her ministry became known for tending people who were sick, abandoned, or dying, **especially those whom others were unwilling to touch.** In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize. Her work offers a vivid image of Christian love expressed through hands, presence, and care. **She taught that service to the suffering was service offered to Christ**, echoing Jesus' words in Matthew 25 about caring for 'the least of these.'

Romans 5:5 declares that God's love has been poured into believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who gives gifts also forms love. First Corinthians 13 makes clear that spectacular gifts without love are spiritually empty.

THE SAME SPIRIT WHO FILLS THE CHURCH WITH POWER POURS THE LOVE OF GOD INTO HER HEART! PENTECOST WAS NEVER GIVEN TO MAKE US SUPERIOR TO THE WORLD. IT WAS GIVEN TO EMPOWER US TO REACH THE WORLD GOD LOVES WITH HIS LOVE!

THE WORLD MAY BE IMPRESSED BY OUR GIFTS, BUT IT MUST BE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE JESUS IN OUR LOVE!

CONCLUSION: THE PROMISE HAS NOT EXPIRED

The Church does not need to invent another Pentecost. We need to surrender afresh to the Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost.

- The Holy Spirit is not a historical artifact, a theological footnote, or a decoration for religious services.
- He is the promised Helper who glorifies Jesus and empowers His people for the mission of the Kingdom.

WE HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD, ESTABLISHED IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, COMMANDED TO RESIST THE ENEMY, AND EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!

THE KING HAS NOT WITHDRAWN HIS COMMISSION. THE FATHER HAS NOT REVOKED HIS PROMISE. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS NOT LOST HIS POWER!

We need supernatural words that honor God, worship that remains faithful at midnight, witnesses who will speak under pressure, works of compassion and faith, and love that crosses every human dividing line.

WE DO NOT NEED A CHURCH THAT HAS LEARNED TO FUNCTION WITHOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE NEED A CHURCH THAT REFUSES TO FULFILL ITS ASSIGNMENT WITHOUT HIM!