

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

God In Us

PART

2

TITLE

The Power Of The Spirit

SCRIPTURE

Acts 1:6-8, 14; 2:1-21



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Well, Providence family, it's great to see you today. If you're a guest with us, as we say each week, we really are glad that you're here and pray this time will be encouraging. In your Bible, if you have one, if you want to turn with me to Acts chapter one, if you don't have one, there's a lot of Bibles in the chairs near you, and we invite you, if you don't have one of your own, to take that home as a gift. For those of you who are at home on livestream, we're glad that you've also joined us. It's amazing. And I tried to start last week to emphasize how amazing it is that God of the universe, the God, the only God of the universe, desires to have a relationship with us.

And there's a lot of words that the Bible uses to describe a relationship with him. And one of them is the word with that. We're with him. If you're with the right person, with can be a really good place, can't it right? If you're with a parent or somebody who's older, has more experience in life and you're weaker and you have less wisdom and they're strong and they have more wisdom, it's really nice because to be with them is to be associated with their experience and wisdom and strength. If you're discouraged and you're with a friend, it's really amazing thing that we have a gift and that if you are discouraged, you can lean upon their courage and they can encourage you and they can speak truth to you and they can help you. And so to be with a good friend is a gift is to be with a really good thing.

Well, the Bible tells us that God wants to be with us, to have a relationship with us and ultimately of the two, we're the one who becomes the recipient in that relationship because we get to be with him. To be near and to be associated with his goodness and his kindness and his power and his authority. What we find in the scriptures is that ever since man ran away from God and sin, that God has graciously and progressively drawn closer to man. In the Old Testament, God drew close to man. In some cases it was personal. Typically it was a little distanced. He was transcended. And so if you read through the Old Testament, what you find is a lot of times, people would look on the mountain and they would see like fire and it was the glory of God and they were afraid. They wanted to stay down here even though he was up there. He was above, he was beyond, he was around and he promised a better day.

And that better day came when Jesus Christ, the Christ, his son, was sent to the Earth. Jesus was his name they gave him on the Earth, it meant savior. And he took on flesh and he didn't live beyond us and above us, he was with us. He ate with us. He talked with us. He was in boats with us. He was with us. And remarkably, he promised a better day. When he would leave and he would go to heaven and he would send his Spirit not to live beyond us and above us and even among us or even with us, but he would live in us. God simply couldn't draw any closer. And he would do that through his Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

There's a lot of confusion about the Holy Spirit. So we began a series last week called God In Us. It's about the Holy Spirit. His role, who he is, this person, what he does, how to relate to the Holy Spirit. And I know that there's, as a result of the world that we live in, some of us already, we're already a little fearful, maybe some of us are skeptical, maybe some of us are already confused, maybe some of us have been heard in previous experiences in churches where perhaps something was done in a way that maybe it was a misuse. Maybe we

were simply confused by what was happening. It was all done in the name of the Holy Spirit. And so I come and say, “Hey, we’re going to do a series on the Holy Spirit.” And some of us, we already feel like we’re on our heels, like, “Man, I picked the wrong Sunday.”

But I want you to know it’s a gift that God is good. And what he gives to us is good. And what I want to encourage you to do this morning is simply be open to whatever that God and his grace and kindness was desire to do in your life. And to be only open to what I can show you specifically and plainly within the Bible. So let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we bow before you. And as we prepare even to take Lord supper, would you use the word and the instruction to prepare us to celebrate and to praise you, to remember what you’ve done for us to remember what you’ve made available to us. To thank you that the Spirit lives within us. And I pray for those who are here, who do not have a relationship with Christ that you would use these passages to stir hope within our heart that would lead us to not trust in ourself or any other, but that we would put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and be forgiven of our sin and to enjoy eternal life. And so would you please help all of us find us wherever we’re at and meet our needs. We pray by your word, in Christ’s name. Amen.

So last week we looked at the fact that the Holy Spirit was long promised. And Isaiah chapter 44, verse three, we looked at a promise where it says, “I will pour water on the thirsty land and I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring...” Now you notice a few things here. First of all, it’s future tense. I will, I’m not doing it now, I will. One day it’s going to happen and it’s going to affect your offspring. And so he’s riding hundreds of years before Christ even came to the Earth. And he’s saying there is a day coming and I’m promising it now. When people’s hearts that can feel as dry and Spiritually weak as the desert dryness, that I’m going to pour the Holy Spirit upon you and it’s going to feel like water being poured out on the desert.

Fast forward, just a little bit. And we looked at Joel chapter two, verse 28, where it says “It shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.” Again afterward. And the word will, these are future. It’s not today. It’s coming. A day is coming. And then we looked at Jesus Christ came to the Earth and he was here and he was with us. And then the night before he went to the cross where he was going to die, where he’d not was going to, where he did die for our sin he was then buried and he rose from the dead. The night before that unbelievable and most important moment in history, he gathered with his disciples and he says, “I’m leaving. Not quite yet, but it’s soon.”

And as you can imagine, if you’ve been hanging out with a son of God and enjoying his teaching and seeing all these unbelievable miracles and all of a sudden, he says, “Yeah, I’m leaving.” You’re going to be kind of bummed out. Well, they were bummed out. And so he gives them this word of encouragement in Joel chapter 16, verse seven. And he says, “But I want you to know something. It is to your advantage that I go away for. If I do not go away, the helper...” Who he previously in John 14, we looked at this last week called the Holy Spirit “Will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” Well, just a few hours later, Jesus left. He went to a garden. He was praying, he was arrested, he was dragged to a court. He was falsely accused. He

was condemned of blasphemy for calling himself God, because he was God.

And then they dragged him to a place called Golgotha and there he was crucified on a cross to pay for my sin and yours. The Bible says that his life, his authority, his power is credibility. He was just too supreme for death to hold onto him. And so on the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. And people started writing about this. There was four different accounts. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Well, this Luke wrote another book and he wrote the book I asked you to turn, to it's the book of Acts. And in both of the books, if you read the start of both Luke and Acts, you find that he's writing a man named Theophilus. We don't really know who Theophilus is. It was a man who had tasked and basically to say, "Okay, can you go and research the things that have been said. I keep hearing these things about Jesus."

And so he went to all these eyewitnesses who actually saw Jesus in his life, in his death and after he rose from the dead recorded there and he wrote Luke, and then all of a sudden he writes a second book to say, "Hey, you know what? More things happened after he ascended to heaven." And this is where we are at. Acts chapter one, verse one. In the first book, "O Theophilus." That would be Luke, right? "I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit, to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God and while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the father."

And so we're like, wait a minute, it's finally getting close, which he said, "You heard from me, but John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days from now." And so when they had come together, they ask him, "Lord, will you, at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" And he said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the father is fixed by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Sumeria and to the end of the earth."

Well, Jesus then, if you keep reading, he has ascends, he goes back up into heaven. And his followers, his disciples, who he had ordered to stay and pray before they go out and try to tell anybody what they know, they took him at his word. This is like a miracle, because we don't typically do as well as they did. God tells us to do something. We're all sinners. They actually say, "We don't quite understand, but we should do that. Let's do that." And so what it says in chapter one, verse 14, he says In all these with one accord, we're devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and the Mary of mother of Jesus and his brothers." And the very next verse tells us that there was about 120 people who were gathering in that room and they were praying just as Jesus asked them to pray, waiting for the promise that had been spoken all these centuries to be fulfilled.

Acts, chapter two, starting in verse one. "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven, a sound like a mighty rushing wind. It filled the entire house

where they were sitting and divided tongues as a fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And at this sound, the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished saying 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and all the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians- We hear them telling in our own tongues, the mighty works of God.'

And all we're amazed and perplexed saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others mocking said 'They're filled with new wine.' But Peter standing with the 11 lifted up his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my words for these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.'" That would be 9:00 AM. 'But this is what was uttered.' What does it say? 'Through the prophet, Joel?' And then he quotes the very verse we just had on the screen "In the last days, it shall be that God declares I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." He actually lays out the entire prophecy, which ends that everyone who calls on a name of the Lord will be saved. And then Peter does something so interesting. He changes course. He said, "Now, look, you guys are all amazed about what you are seeing in this moment. And it is truly amazing." And he says, "But let me draw your attention to something else." And he turns everyone's attention and he wants to talk about Jesus Christ. Verse 22, "Men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and fore knowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up loosing the pains of death because it was not possible for him to be held by it." And then he takes some time and he describes how the Old Testament actually told us that this Messiah, when he died, that he would rise from the dead because his life was simply too credible for death to be able to hold it.

But then what he wants to do, and he needs to do, is try to connect these dots. And so the first part of his sermon, he says, "Look, I know you're seeing some interesting things and amazing things and you don't even know how to compartmentalize them. But let me tell you about Jesus. This Jesus, he lived the perfect life without sin. He died on a cross for our sin. He was buried in a grave. He rose from the dead." And then what he does, is after this moment, he connects the two and he says, "Now, what does this Jesus have to do with this moment that you're experiencing and hearing right now?" Verse 32, "This Jesus God raised up and of that we are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the father, the promise of the Holy Spirit, Jesus has poured out this, that you yourselves are seeing and hearing."

And so what he's saying is this, this Jesus, his life that was just simply too amazing that he sent us and he died, he rose again, he went to heaven and it is he who sent his Spirit, which is causing the commotion that you are

hearing about the mighty works of God in your own language. Well then all of a sudden, if you look at verse 36, he says, “Let all the house of Israel, therefore know for certain God has made in both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now, if you heard that, what would you say next? You suppose he’s like, “uh oh.” Well, that’s what they said. Verse 37. “Now, when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles ‘Brothers, what should we do?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promise is for you and for your children. And for all who were far off, everyone whom the Lord or God calls to himself.’ And with many other words, he bore witness and continued to exhort them saying, ‘Save yourself from this crooked generation.’ So those who received his word were baptized and they were added that day about 3000 souls.” A miracle.

So last week, and this week, what I’m seeking to do is the lay a foundation of simply seven theological truths about the Holy Spirit that then next week and the weeks that follow we’ll talk about how do we walk with the Holy Spirit? How do we have a relationship? If you can say this way, tap in to the power of the Holy Spirit, through a relationship with him? How do we practice his presence? Last week, we looked at four truths. We looked at the fact that the Holy Spirit was long promised. We saw some of that even this morning. The Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is personal. He’s not some force from Star Wars, it’s impersonal it, but he’s he’s personal. He has personhood. He wants to know us. And the last truth we looked at is that the Holy Spirit has a new home. That he doesn’t live in some temple or on the top of a mountain. He resides in the hearts of everyone who puts their faith in trust in Christ.

The next truth I want you to see from this passage is that the Holy Spirit possesses unlimited power. I imagine, after saying that, that most of you are thinking, “Oh, he’s going to talk about these tongues, these speaking in tongues.” And while it is true that speaking in tongues is powerful in Acts chapter two, it’s not the pinnacle of power. I want to show you the pinnacle of power. And it’s Acts chapter two, verse 22. After pointing to Joel’s promise, Peter wants to talk about Jesus and notice what it says about Jesus. This is beautiful. “Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with three things, mighty works and wonders and signs.”

Now they would all know what they meant by that. He had healed people. He had brought people back from the dead. He had calmed storms. He’d caused blind people to restore their sight. He had forgiven sins. He had raised a paralytic. He had taught with authority. He exposed hypocrisy in the religious systems. He had done all kinds of amazing, wonderful signs and works and wonders. And then the Bible is careful to tell us something that is going to disturb. Many of us. You probably might, for a moment, be disturbed with me. In particular, if you’re a Jesus fan. By the way I am too. Okay. Really love Jesus.

And it’s what’s underlined, God did through him. God did through him these works and wonders and signs. So let me just emphatically say that I believe that Jesus was and is the eternal son of God. He is God in flesh. He always was. He was in the gospels, in the scriptures when he was on the Earth and he always will be, he is God, and he has authority. But what’s so interesting is that Jesus spent a tremendous amount of time reinforcing something that has confused many of us and many of us have just kind of brushed it aside, because

we didn't know its significance to our own personal life. And that is that Jesus who his God and who had all authority chose to actually limit his usage of that authority to allow God the Holy Spirit to do things through him.

Now I know you're like, I don't know if I believe this. So let me just show you. Okay. Let me show you. In John chapter 14, Jesus has just told his disciples that he's going to go away. And they're all really sad about that. Phillip says, "I'll tell you what, you know what? Jesus, you got to go away if that's okay? Just one thing, I've been with you for a while. Just do me one little favor before you go. Just show me God, the father. Just a little glimpse in heaven. Let me just see God, the father, it'll be good for me and I'll follow you. It'll be fantastic." And Jesus, it cut him to the heart and he says, "Phillip, if you have ever seen me, you have seen him. Everything that I've ever said, everything I've ever done, you may not have known it, but I was actually revealing him to you."

And then he says something just stunning in chapter 14, verse 10. He says "The words that I say to you, I do speak on my own authority, but the father who dwells in me does his works." Now just notice on my own authority. He says, "I don't speak on my authority." Now hear me correctly. He is, God always was and he has authority but he says "When I was on the earth and was doing all of these signs and wonders and miracles, God was using it through me. And when I was speaking, even though I have authority, I wasn't speaking on my authority, I was speaking on his. I wasn't utilizing my power, I was utilizing the Holy Spirit's power." And you're like, "Well, that's just one verse."

And so let me just show you a few others. So you don't feel like I'm just lying to you, right? John chapter eight, Jesus says "I do nothing on my own authority..." He's God. Most of us, when we read, we're like, "Oh Jesus, because he is God, healed that man, when I'm reading. Oh and Jesus, because he's God, he exposed those sinners and Jesus, who is God..." Everything he was doing in his authority and Jesus comes to us and he says, "You know what? I was doing all of that. But I wasn't using my authority. And not only that, I have not spoken on my own authority."

And some of us you're like, where are you going with this? And where I'm going with this is Jesus is showing us the Christian life. He's showing us something that is so critically important, but it makes us a little uncomfortable. A lot of us, we have, or have seen, a system where water is spread around the yard or the golf course. There's sprinkler systems. And we all know that underneath the grass that there's the pipe and that pipe or that tube, it carries water. And all of a sudden there's a few places where it pops up and all of a sudden water is spraying everywhere.

So if you can imagine what he's saying in Acts chapter two, when he says that Jesus was doing all these wonders, like all these amazing, the water was spraying over to those people who were blind and water was spraying over those people who were lepers and spraying over those people who were confused and spraying over those people who felt ashamed and guilty of their sin. And Jesus was just spreading all this amazing love all

over everybody. And what he says is all that was happening through him. He was like the channel by which the water of the Spirit was being spread over all of these people, the father's authority, the Spirit's power in Jesus. Jesus in his humility, he allowed it to come through him.

So let me, because I know I'm treading on things that if you go too far and you say, "Oh, so he wasn't God." Well that's heresy. He was God. Colossians 2:9 says "In him the whole fullness of deed, he dwells bodily." He was God, but Philippians chapter two tells us something so important. That is that although he was God, the very nature of God and the nature of God he says he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. And people for a time have asked, what did he empty himself of? And what I would say is this. He never emptied himself of his deity. He was always God. But what he emptied himself of was the usage of his divine rights, powers, and prerogatives to show us how to live by the power of the Spirit.

And say, "Well, how did he do what he did?" Well, Luke who wrote Acts also wrote another book. Remember? The Gospel of Luke. And let me just show you how Luke tried to describe the ministry and life and miracles of Jesus. Begins early, an angel comes to Mary, Luke chapter one and says to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you." And what you're going to find when you read through the New Testament is the words Holy Spirit, and the word power are typically close to one another. You have one, you're really close to the other. And then all of a sudden, in chapter three, Jesus is baptized. He comes out of the water, says that John, the Baptist look, and what did he see? He says the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus like a dove. Then you turned to Luke chapter four, verse one and Luke, he says "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness."

Luke chapter four, verse 14, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee..." Luke chapter four, verse 18. He says, "Let me tell you about my ministry. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Spirit has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. The Holy Spirit has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering the site to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." As the son of God, who has all authority and always has had that authority, Jesus emptied himself of the usage of his authority and rights for a time and did what he did by the authority of the father and the power of the Spirit.

Now, I don't understand that. I just thought to explain it to you. I don't know the working. You have the son of God and the Spirit's working. I'm like, did some of Jesus get involved in that? I'm just trying to say, if somebody told me this, other than Jesus, I would make the argument, no, it was Jesus authority, but then I'd be arguing with Jesus, because he's the one who said, "I didn't do this by my own authority." And so if it's true that the Holy Spirit possesses unlimited power and that power can be seen in evidence in the life of Jesus, as an example to us, then let's be of careful attention to the life of Jesus. For not only is Jesus the hero of story and ours, but he showed us how to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You think about things that he did that are really hard. Jesus resisted all temptation and never sinned. That's hard. And wouldn't you love to have this power source that allowed you, strengthened you, when you felt

tempted, that could help you fight that temptation. He spoke truth. He understood truth. He forgave sin. People heard him and he forgave. You know how hard it is to forgive people who really hurt you? That's hard. Jesus shows us how to do it. He calmed storms, cast out demons, healed the sick, fed the hungry and he did all this in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the remarkable things that we're going to move to next, which is going to be more unbelievable to you is the same Spirit that was seen in the life of Jesus is given to everyone who puts their faith in trust in Jesus.

That's exactly what Peter said. "Repent be baptized and you will be filled the Holy Spirit." Ephesians chapter one. He says "In him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." If you have put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, his Spirit lives in your heart. This Spirit with all of his power, all of his authority lives within us. The fact that we may not experience the victory as frequently as we see it in Jesus doesn't mean it's not there. It doesn't mean it's not true. It means we have to learn.

Now some of you are properly uncomfortable because you're saying, "Wait a minute. He's about to say then if that same Spirit is in Jesus, who did all those amazing things through Jesus, if he lives in us, then he's going to tell us that we can do those things." And I'm not going to tell you that. I'm going to tell you we can do more than those things. Because Jesus said we would do more than those things. And that's the second truth is that the Holy Spirit empowers us to do greater works.

If you're feeling nervous about this right now, I understand. You're like, I've never resurrected somebody from the dead, he did. I'm going to do more than that? I've never put my hands and spit in the ground, made mud, wiped it over somebody's eyes that were blind and all of a sudden they've seen, I've never done stuff like that. I haven't done any of that either by the way. But just notice what Jesus said to us and the same conversation with Philip. He says, "Whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do and greater works than these will he do because I'm going to the father."

What? First of all, notice this word because, it's underlined. In other words, if I don't go to the father, you won't be able to do these things. And that's probably the key to two different things of how I would describe what are the greater gifts. You say what? Okay. He said, we're going to do or greater works. We're going to do these greater works than Jesus. What does that mean, exactly? Well, first of all, if you just think about it, it can't be quality of works. It has to be quantity of works. And that's why the word, because. If you just think about it. When Jesus was on the earth, he had one body, he didn't have 5,000 bodies. He had one. Which meant that when he was in one city like Bethlehem, he wasn't in the city of Jerusalem. But today he's gone to heaven, his Spirit now lives within us and we can go as missionaries and some of us can go to Bethlehem and some of us can go to Jerusalem.

And by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can forgive people. We can teach people, we can pray for people. And so quantity is probably in play, but there's something else that really should gravitate, grab our heart

in particular, in a passage like Acts chapter two. And that is, what about the miracles? Do you really believe Brian, that God can still heal the sick today and calm storms and feed masses today and to use Christians who pray to do so? And the answer is yes, I do. I believe that. Not always because I've see it, but because Jesus said it would happen. And I just think it's a really good pattern in life to believe what Jesus says. He says it can happen and it does happen. And I have seen it happen. But where the miracles that I just described, ultimately meeting man's greatest needs.

Have you ever thought about this for a second? Everybody he rose from the dead had to go through the death process twice, not once. That's a bummer. Sick people who were made well, eventually got sick again. People who ate Jesus miracle food got hungry again. Storms that were ceased, another one popped up into the storm a day, week, month later. Were these the greater miracles? The greater works? I would say, no. You say, well, what is the greatest? What are the greater works he said that we would do?

One day Jesus sent out his 12 with 60 other followers of Christ on a little mission trip two by two. They all come back and they're just so jacked up. They're so happy about what they've seen. And this is what they say. They say, "Jesus, you're going to believe us." They said, "Jesus, man, we go into the world and even the demons are subject to us in and your name." Think about this. He's like "Back in the day, when you healed that guy, he had a demon and a demon went away. We did that. It was like that. It's like what we saw with you." And what does Jesus say to him? Think about this. "Do not rejoice in this, that the Spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

In Matthew chapter seven, he says "Many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy your name?'" Oh, that's special. "Cast out demons in your name." That's noticeable. "And do many mighty works in your name.' And then I will declare to them I never knew you." What's the greater work? It's to know Jesus Christ as our savior and have our sins forgiven. The greatest works meet our greatest need. Meet people's greatest need. And so when Jesus ascended to heaven, they were 120 who took him at his word and they were praying. And suddenly verse four says "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues of the Spirit gave the utterance." The word tongues comes from the word, glossa, means glossary. It's where we get the word glossary. Means languages or words. And it says, in Acts, it says "They were gathered in Jerusalem because of a festival people who lived all over the world and they spoke different languages." And what did they say? When they heard what was happening? What startled them the most wasn't just that they heard, they're like, "Wait a minute. Aren't these guys all from Galilee, how are these people speak your languages?" And so on verse eight, he says, "How is it that we hear each of us in his own native language? We hear them telling in our own tongues, the mighty works of God." And so when you read through the book of Acts, right, and if you're just brand new to the Bible, there's four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that tell us about the life of Jesus. And then once Jesus ascends to heaven, the Holy Spirit comes down, there's a book called Acts and it tells how his followers began marching around and telling people about Jesus Christ. There's churches that formed in different cities like Ephesus and Corinth and Philippi.

And so the people who shared the gospel with those people who formed a church was like, “They need a letter to teach them how to live the Christian life.” And so we get First Corinthians and Ephesians and Philip-
pians, all these letters are written to these churches. But when you turn to Acts and you just read through the whole thing, there are 22 different accounts where, when they heard the gospel and believed, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. It says they were filled, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and of the 22, 3 of them, there was the sound or the sight of speaking in tongues. Which means that 19 times there was not speaking in tongues. When the Holy Spirit descend and filled people’s hearts.

And so, by the way, those three, I would encourage you to read them, Acts two, Acts 10, Acts 19. So let me ask you a few questions and this is not like church, like talk, okay. Just talk. Is God good? All that was kind of pathetic. Is God good?

Yes.

He’s good. Does everything that comes from the hand of God, is it good?

Yes.

Where the tongues from God?

Yes.

Therefore were they good?

Yes.

Many of us, we don’t feel that way. Many of us run from something like this. We say that’s bad. But in Acts two, they were really good. 3000 people were startled enough to hear a sermon where they heard of Christ and were saved and their greatest need was met. So let me ask, or maybe talk about a few other questions and answers. Do I speak in tongues? The answer is no, I never have. Do I hope that we will when we gather? If you’re brand new, you’re like, “So does the tongue part come later? Is that after the sermon?” And no, it’s not. And the reason it’s not is because in First Corinthians chapter 14, a whole chapter on speaking in tongues, he says, “When you come together, find a language you all speak together and speak that language so that your heart and your mind are both engaged.” And so here we speak English. We instruct and tell the gospel in English because we can understand that.

We should ask the question. Well, was it a regular practice in the church? Should it be in ours if it was in theirs? Well, we’re told about the regular practices in Acts chapter two, verse 42. It says “They devoted them-

selves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship to the breaking of bread and praying together.” And it’s not mentioned there. In addition to that, and aside from the book of First Corinthians, which speaking in tongues is mentioned in chapter 12, 13, and 14, we’ll look at this in two weeks. There is no direct mention of speaking in tongues in the rest of the New Testament.

And so it’s a good thing, but it’s not everything. And it can be misused. And oftentimes is misused. There’s been people who have told me, “I don’t believe you’re a Christian because you’re telling me that you believe in Christ, but you’ve never spoken in tongues.” And so there’s some people who make it the starting line. We know you’re saved if the Holy Spirit comes in your life in the way that we know the Holy Spirit comes in your life is you speak in tongues. And yet first Corinthians chapter 12, at the very end, he says, “Not everyone filled with the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues.” He tells us not to forbid the speaking of tongues. And there are some people who believe, even today that the practice has ceased. I’m not one of those.

But let me ask you one last question. Was the speaking in tongues, the greater work in Acts chapter two? It wasn’t. Because when the people were cut to the heart and they said, “What should we do?” He said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you received the gift of the Holy Spirit.” And their little band of 120 grew to 3,120 people. People were forgiven of their sin. They knew Jesus, their greatest need was met.

And so let me encourage us, as a church, to view salvation as the greater work and get to work. To utilize our mouth, our gifts, our resources, to help people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ that they can believe and be forgiven and connected to a relationship with Christ. There was a time when Jesus once said to a man who is a paralytic, his friends brought him to him and he says, he first comes up. The clear need he has is to be healed. And what does he say? “Your sins are forgiven.” Everyone’s like, “What? Who is this? Who thinks he can forgive sins?” And so what does he do to prove that he has the authority to forgive sins? He says, “I’ll tell you what get up and walk.” Now, let me ask you, which was the greater miracle, which was the greater work? To forgive sin or to say to the paralytic rise up and walk? And yet many people today in spotted the clear answer that it is, the forgiveness of sin will gather in churches and get more excited about a paralytic walking than a sin being forgiven.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. What are we going to do with that power? What mighty work are we going to do? And you will be my witnesses. And so have you trusted Christ? If you trusted Christ, if you put your faith in Jesus Christ, do you believe that if you died today, that you go to heaven? Are you believing in yourself? Let me encourage you to stop believing in yourself. The Bible says, “If you say I can’t save myself, but Jesus, I believe in you, I trust you. I believe you died, I believe you rose from the dead. I confess you as Lord.” He forgives you of your sin. He gives you his righteousness. Holy Spirit comes and lives within your heart. Would you trust him today?

Second question. If you know, Jesus Christ is your savior. Are you leveraging your life towards the greater work? To help people know Jesus? To be forgiven of sin? Are you rejoicing in the greatest of miracles on the Earth?

Third question are some of you called to become pastors and missionaries? For years, and rightly so, we have heralded the importance of staying in your occupation, where you're at and being a missionary there. Engineers work at engineering firms. They don't become pastors because it's the greater work. They become a missionary in the engineering firm, in the school, in the marketplace, wherever you're at, but God does call some. And he does. And maybe he's calling some today to say, I want to give my life. And God is calling me and telling me I need to become a pastor or a missionary. There are 688 evangelical churches in North Carolina alone that do not have a pastor. Could it be you? If it is, I'd love to talk to you about that.

The last thing before we take the Lord supper, it'll be quick. The Holy Spirit empowers those who pray. When we trust Jesus Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit. We don't get a little of them. We get all of them. When the New Testament tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he's not saying we lost him, so we need to get him back again. What is he saying? He's saying he doesn't have all of you. He lives within you, but because our devotion or affection or a holiness has scattered in a million different directions, it's his power is not as potent in our life. It's not as visible in our life. And as a result of that, so many of us live in weakness and defeat in spite of the fact that we have the same, Holy Spirit, Paul prayed, who raised Jesus from the dead living in our heart. So what is the secret of all this? And the secret goes back to the truth, the third truth last week. And that is that the Holy Spirit is not an it, the Holy Spirit is personal. The secret is relationship. The secret is practicing the presence of the Holy Spirit, which we're going to look at last week. But let me give you an illustration today. I am an average handyman at best, it's probably weak, but somewhere between weak and average, okay? I'm not horrible, but I'm not skilled. My brother is a skilled handyman. So when something breaks in my house, I don't sit down and work myself up into a lather and try to wield the power of John. I call John, my brother, because I have a relationship with him and he tells me what to do, or he comes over and he helps me do it.

And when you are battling temptation, or when you are in front of somebody that needs encouragement or somebody who needs prayer, where you're in a hospital room and you're like, "Okay, Holy Spirit here. I got to lather myself up a little bit. I got to get all jacked up. I'm got to try to find some Spirit and bring it down." No, you pray because you have a relationship. You call. You call. One of the ways you're friends with anyone is you talk to them. You don't talk, you're not friends. You may be long lost friends, but you're not close friends. And one of the things you're going to find, and we'll look at this next week, is the depth of your relationship with Christ will be the determining factor of how much power you see in your life. And so we're going to look next week at how do we practice this presence, but let me encourage us to humble ourself and pray. And that's what we're going to do now. We're going to take the Lord supper, which includes praying. If you don't know the Lord Jesus as your savior, oh, I plead with you, use this time right now to think about it or just a

call, you can pray where you're at. Just say, "God, I believe, or I want to believe, help me to believe, use this time, speak, teach me." But the Bible says to not take the Lord supper for, to take it is to confess to others that you believe it and treasure it. And so it's okay for you not to take it during this time.

But the Bible also tells us those of us who know Christ is that we're not to take it until we first pray and ask the Lord to forgive us of our sin. So if you know how to search your heart, if you've been after this thing for a while, then you just pray and you just ask God to cleanse your heart. But if you don't know, if you're brand new to this, I just want to help lead you through a few different areas, simply examining your heart and confessing your sin. Okay? So let's pray together. Let me encourage you to start simply by asking God to examine your heart, be your motives, your thoughts, your desires. And if there's anything that he has revealed about your thoughts or your motives that are out of step with him that were sinful, then confess those sins to him. And now let me encourage you to ask God to examine your hands. Should be your actions, the things that you've done. Is there any of your motives or desires that you acted upon that were sinful? And go ahead and confess those sins to the Lord and ask him to forgive you.

And then finally ask God to examine your mouth. The words that have come from your mouth. If there's anything that you have said that was sinful, or it was spoken with sinful intent or attitude, then confess those things to him and ask him to forgive you.

Father in heaven, we thank you. We thank you for your promise that if we confess our sin, that you're faithful in just to forgive us of all of our sin and cleanse us from unrighteousness. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen. So on the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread. He broke it and he thanked God for it. He broke it. And he began talking about how his body would be broken, just like that bread in order to give people the opportunity to have a relationship with him. And so all these years later, if you have a relationship with God and his Spirit lives within you, and you know it's because of the work of Jesus Christ, then take and eat in remembrance of him.

And then Jesus took a cup. And the cup, his cup, it had wine in it. It looked just like blood. And he began talking about how his body was going to be broken to the place that it would bleed. And if that blood would begin a new covenant where our sins would not merely be covered, they would be taken away forever, they would be forgiven. So if you're forgiven, you know the joy of being forgiven, the joy of a clear conscience and know it's only because of Jesus, then take and drink in remembrance of him.

Father in heaven, we bow before you, our maker, we thank you for sending Jesus in your authority. Jesus, our savior, we praise you. We praise you and we thank you, not only for your authority, but even for your humility. To come and yield to your father, to save us from our sin. And Spirit, we praise you. We thank you for your power. We want to know more of that power. We praise you that you point us to look and to praise Jesus. So we want to follow your leadership now and singing and praising Jesus, our savior. So would you strengthen

us and would you give us power to do that? We pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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