

## **Message: Making Room for God's Power**

Sermon Series: Power Assisted Living—Seeking the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

**Text: Matthew 3:13-17; John 1:23-33 NIV**

*Matthew 3:13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

*John 1:32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'*

### **Orientation (Me)**

I've taken a seminary course this year that has been stirring my spirit to something that resonates deeply within me. It has led me to do a sermon series on this subject. It helps to address a major problem skeptics have about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### **Cumulative (We)**

**(Slide 2)** An Atheist ask a well renounce evangelist Reinhard Bonnke a question: **"Why isn't the world any better since the church received the gospel 2000 years ago?"** (Oops!) Reinhard Bonnke said, *"There is also enough soap in the world, but yet many people are still dirty. If I'm dirty and I stand by a piece of soap, I will not be automatically clean, even if I worked in a soap factory. If you want to know what soap could do, there is something you ought to do. You have to stretch out your hand and take the soap and start to apply it. And if you do, you will jump up and join the many people and say, 'There is wonder working power in soap.'"*

(Ugh) Many people are resisting the power of the gospel to make the world better. But not only are many people resisting the power of the gospel to get saved, **many believers too are resisting the power of the Spirit to make the world better.** As the world is given the gospel, the church is given the baptism of the Holy Spirit to make the world a better place.

This is what this Easter sermon series (Power Assisted Living) will be addressing over the next few weeks. We are rediscovering something that has been diminished among many Christians—Seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If you haven't received the baptism of the Holy Ghost or it's been awhile since you've felt the presence of God, it's my prayer through these sermons you will come expecting to receive more of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Today we're going to talk about **"Making Room for God's Power."**

## **Evidential (World)**

When the early church was baptized in the Holy Spirit, they were given power to advance the kingdom of God with signs and wonders for the proclamation of the gospel. And if this is still the case today, why are we not seeing it as prevalent among our churches? Why are many Christians not producing this power as often today? While the power of the Spirit needs to be more prevalent today, it is not something we can use on demand. This is not the reason why God gave Spirit Baptism to the church.

If ever a time the church has learned this lesson was when she lost her Spirit Baptism power in history. When the church came out of persecution 300 years after Christ, she was given more money and political power. When this happen, the church started to experience less power of the Holy Spirit. The more human power the church got, the less they called for the Spirit. And the less the called for the Spirit, the less the Spirit gave them power. The church ended up depending more on human power than God's power, until the church lost all its power in the enlightenment period.

The Enlightenment Period was a time, where people trusted more in human philosophies and science more than what the church taught about life. As a result, there was a shift from the church leading the world to the world started leading the church into the quest of truth. Mainstream churches lost all its power to the point that they changed their understanding of the Scripture towards a scientific friendly interpretation, explaining away all the miracles in the bible. They stop believing in the power of the Spirit. They stopped asking for the Holy Spirit for power.

But little did the church know what God was up to. While these well-established wealthy churches were going in this direction, God was getting ready to do something totally different with the poor marginalized Christians in the world. He was getting ready to do something with those who were desperate for him. And it happened in the early 1900s, where:

*(Slide 3) **God poured out his Spirit once again to give rise to the Pentecostal Movement (Ahh!).***

This movement was so pronounced that it affected places all over the globe in a short period of time. Many people experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Historical records show 1000s of Christians in the US, Canada, Europe, Africa, Russia, and South America experiencing salvation, healing, deliverances, and tongues (known and unknown).

It was so pronounced that skeptics became converted. It was so real that Children too came under the power of the Spirit. It was so unbelievable that even secular newspapers couldn't deny the miraculous findings they witnessed to be true.

Here are just a few of many testimonies reported:

- A girl, who walked in with crutches, suffering from tuberculosis, became healed. She dropped her crutches and began to skip about
- A child as young as eight years old (Viola Prince) received the gift of tongues
- A young English-speaking lady who went to Africa, started preaching in tongues, under the influence of the Spirit in the native language of the people without even learning it.

## **Prepositional (God)**

Pentecost is not an isolated historical event that happened only in the book of Acts. It is something we can still experience today. The pouring out of God's Spirit is a normative pattern for all believers to experience (A. B. Simpson)

The question today is will you take up the power of the Spirit. Will you depend on less of your human power, and more on God's power? O will you make decisions that only favour holding all the power? If you live to hold on all the power, you will make the same mistake the church made, trading God's power in for human power.

This is not what Jesus did. The one, who holds all power, let go of it to find power in the Holy Spirit. He let go of both his divine power and human power. Let's read how Jesus did this here in the passage:

### **(Slide 4)**

"13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness... 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized... heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him..." (Matt 3:13-15a, 16 NIV).

The passage first says, "Then Jesus came...". When I hear this, it reminds me how Jesus didn't have to come to this world. He could have stayed on his throne in heaven. But Jesus let go of his divine power, and thought it not robbery to limit himself to live like a human, even when he is equal to God (Phil 2:6). He refused to use any his divine abilities on earth so that he could model for us what it is like to live solely under the power of the Holy Spirit.

And not only did Jesus come, the passage also says that he allowed himself to be water baptized by John. By doing this, he was letting go of his human power. He could've bypassed his water baptism and not subject himself to the ministry of another man (John the Baptist). He could have went on solo mission and do his own thing in his own way and claim the Father told him to do it.

But No! Jesus didn't come with his own agenda. He let it go. He didn't use his divine power. He let it go. He relied on what the Holy Spirit was doing in him and in others around him. And in doing so, he not only got baptized in the water, he got baptized in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). And the Spirit of God came down upon him like a dove. (Yeah) Jesus showed us how letting go of power, positioned him to receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

But Jesus not only received power for himself. He received power to give power. He received power to empower us to continue in the mission of God. Jesus is the baptizer of the Holy Spirit for the church. And he is looking for those who want to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

(Slide 5) *Let us surrender our human power at the foot of the cross, so that Jesus can baptize us in the power of the Holy Spirit* (Whee).

### **Vision (We)**

Are you desperate for God? I'm not talking about a desperation that gives you more human power for your agenda (position and riches). I'm talking about a desperation for God that empowers you for his agenda. You're so desperate for him that you're willing to surrender all your power, your control, your will, and your ability.

What are things in your life that you are holding onto to give you power. What are the things that you look to more than God to gain more power? God wants you to surrender all of them at the cross? He wants to empty you of your power, so that he can fill you?

Come to the altar and make room for God to fill you. Don't just stand beside the power (soap story). Don't just work in a power plant. If you want to see what the power of the Holy Spirit can do. Reach out to Jesus and asks him to apply the power of the Spirit to your life.