

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE

We Need the Holy Spirit

SERIES

DATE

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KEY SCRIPTURE

John 16:7; Acts 1:8; Zechariah 4:6

SYNOPSIS

True power for the Christian walk comes from the Holy Spirit rather than skills, talents and efforts.

HIGHLIGHTS

Closing song: Holy Spirit, you are welcome here.



☞ We Need the Holy Spirit

Wouldn't it be great if Jesus was here with us, in person? I mean, physically here, so that we could interact with him; talk with him; ask him questions. He could speak to us, pray with us, give us instruction and encouragement. Wouldn't that be fantastic?

☞ John 16:7

But very truly I tell you, **it is for your good that I am going away**. Unless I go away, the **Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

Fellow believers, we need the Holy Spirit! We are powerless to live the Christian life without his work in our lives. Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus promised he would send the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us; to ensure us of our salvation; and to fill us and empower us for holy living and service. So, let's talk about the Holy Spirit.

☞ Acts 1:8

But **you will receive (true) power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Our true strength, ability, excellence, and dynamic influence all come from the Holy Spirit. We tend to look to our own abilities, talents, skills, background, etc. But all of those are insufficient for service to God. One of the speakers at the conference last week said, "we are solely dependent on God; the Holy Spirit is our only source of empowerment." He went on to say, "if it's your gifts and abilities, then it all depends on you and it will all end with you." To fulfill God's calling on your life; to rebuild after a major setback; to advance the Kingdom of God, we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

☞ Zechariah 4:6

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: '**Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,**' says the LORD Almighty.

In Zechariah's day, Zerubbabel was trying to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed while the nation of Israel was in captivity. It was an overwhelming task. When Solomon originally built the temple, he had almost unlimited resources at his disposal. His father had fought many battles and collected spoil to be used for the building. Solomon was king with other nations giving tribute to him, but the Jews in Zechariah's day had no such resources or authority. With their limited means, completing the temple must have looked as impossible as moving a mountain.

Let's compare to present day. The overall Church in America has been in decline for decades now. Currently, 75% of American churches are still running only around half of what attendance was before COVID. We also, like Zerubbabel are in a time of trying to rebuild after a couple of very tough years. God says the same thing to us today: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit.



What is your first consideration when facing a new task? Most automatically go to our natural human resources: money, skill, charm, etc. But those are always limited in one way or another.

Warren Wiersbe... There are three ways we can attempt to do the work of God: we can trust our own strength and wisdom; we can borrow the resources of the world: or we can depend on the power of God. The first two approaches may appear to succeed, but they'll fail in the end.

☞ **Only work done through the power of the Spirit will glorify God** and endure the fires of His judgment.

Might = group strength; efficiency; wealth; ability

Power = individual strength; vigor; chameleon (adaptability?)

Might and power, with their depth of meaning sound just like human strategies. "If we had more money, if we were more efficient in our use of time, if we had one or two really dynamic individuals, if we could adapt more readily, then we would see results." And this kind of thinking is nothing new...

Charles Spurgeon (over 130 years ago) ... "You all get up plans and say, 'Now, if the church were altered a little bit, it would go on better.' You think if there were different ministers, or different church order, or something different, then all would be well. No, dear friends, it is not there the mistake lies, it is that we need more of the Spirit."

It's not the might of a vast number of people, nor the power of one influential person that will make an impact on this world. **It's the Spirit of God working through the people of God that will make the difference.** There's a partnership between God and his people that we keep coming back to. Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the temple and also completed it, but not in his own ability. It was God working behind the scenes that made it possible.

Likewise, today, it's not our abilities; it's not our church building; it's not our t-shirts; it's not our talents; not our brilliant ideas; not our efforts... it's God working in us and through us that will make an impact in our community and this world. When the work of ministry is done in this manner, then no mountain can stand in the way.

Spurgeon went on to say...*When we trust in our own resources - whether they be small or great in the eyes of man - then we don't enjoy the full supply of the Spirit. Oh! May God send us poverty; may God send us lack of means, and take away our power of speech if it must be, and help us only to stammer, if we may only thus get the blessing.*

It's not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit... This was the breath - the *ruah* of the LORD - which worked in the creation of Genesis 1, at the Red Sea to open and close it, and that gave life to dead bones.

☞ **The Holy Spirit is like a wind**, which can be refreshing on a hot summer day. Sometimes, we need that kind of **refreshing**.



☞ But that same wind can pick up speed and have enough force to **drive and direct** a sailing ship over great distances. Sometimes, we need the strength of the Spirit to move us forward and get to where God is leading us.

And then, that same wind can come with even more force as in a tornado or derecho, which can blow over obstacles and destroy strong buildings. And, again, sometimes we need the ☞ power of the Spirit to **overcome** spiritual obstacles and demonic strongholds which we face. We need the Holy Spirit!

☞ As we see here in Zechariah and various other places in Scripture, **the Holy Spirit is also compared to oil.**

- Oil *warms* when it is used as fuel for a flame - where the Spirit of God is there is warmth and ☞ **comfort** during the hard times.

- Oil *heals* and was used as a medicinal treatment in Biblical times - the Spirit of God brings ☞ **healing** and restoration to bodies and souls.

☞ - Oil **revitalizes** when used to massage - the Holy Spirit restores us and revitalizes us for His service.

☞ - Oil **polishes** when used to shine metal - the Holy Spirit wipes away our sinful grime and smooths out our rough edges.

☞ - Oil **lubricates**, reducing friction, and machinery runs more smoothly. When we are anointed by the Spirit, we also experience less friction between us and even our programs run more smoothly as well.

☞ - Oil **lights** when it is burned in a lamp - where the Spirit of God is there is light, which can give us understanding and guide us on God's path.

God's Spirit is an endless supply of everything we need.

Isaiah 11:2 also speaks of the diversity of benefit with the Spirit... The Spirit of the Lord. The ☞ Spirit of **wisdom**. The Spirit of **understanding**. The Spirit of **counsel**. The Spirit of **might**. The Spirit of **knowledge**. The Spirit of the **fear of the Lord**.

When we lack power, we need the Spirit. When we lack wisdom or knowledge, we need the Spirit. When we lack understanding and so on, we need to look to the Spirit of the Lord. He supplies all these and more to us. It's not our wisdom that makes us shine in this world. It's not our knowledge or power. It's his that must flow through us. We need the oil of the Spirit.

Looking back to the vision earlier in the chapter, we see that God wanted Zerubbabel to know that the Holy Spirit would continually supply his need, just as the trees in the vision continually supplied oil to the lamps on the lampstand. God wants our reliance on the Holy Spirit to be *continual*.

It's not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit! Church, we need the Holy Spirit!

Vance Havner... "We say we depend on the Holy Spirit, but actually we are so wired up with our own devices that if the fire does not fall from heaven, we can turn on a switch and produce



false fire of our own. If there is no sound of a rushing mighty wind, we have the furnace all set to blow hot air instead. God save us from a synthetic Pentecost!"

It's been a dry season for churches all across the nation. We can look around and compare notes with so many others and it feels like we are in a desert season. Well let me tell you about a real-life dry place, the Atacama Desert...

☞ *Considered the driest place on earth, the **Atacama Desert (image)** sits on a 600-mile-long plateau in northern Chile which typically gets a mere half inch of rain every year. It is so arid that the region is being used by NASA to test instruments for future Mars missions. But what is not at all obvious is that the desert holds millions of dormant seeds in its soil. Once every 5 to 7 years or so, the area gets an above average rainfall and is radically transformed nearly*
☞ *overnight from a sparse desert into a **beautiful garden (image)** of many colors.*

There are spiritual seeds which God has planted in the hearts of his people and in his church that have been lying dormant for years. One of the conference speakers last week said this:

☞ **"The largest move of God in history is still ahead of us."** I want to be in on that move of God. Our best ideas, skills, and efforts will fall short without the power of the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit. Fresh wind, fresh oil, fresh fire.

Here's another comment from last week's conference. It's so simple, and yet so profound: **"God comes where he's wanted."**

Perhaps you've been giving it all you've got and you're still coming up short. Maybe you feel like you are personally in a desert season, or lacking clear direction, motivation, or inspiration. You might feel as if you've been knocked down, persecuted, or hard pressed on every side. Everything you have been trying has been inadequate. You're still stuck. You need the Holy Spirit. God comes where he's wanted. So, let's invite him in today. The altar is open for pressing in to God's presence. If you want someone to pray with you, just raise your hand. Everybody, let's press in; let's welcome the Holy Spirit in the house.

Song: Holy Spirit you are welcome here.