

**The Gospel is Power: Pt. 2** By Todd Bentley

Jesus Christ never could, and never would, conform to the status quo set by Israel's ultra-religious clerics. Those dudes had everything all wrapped up, jammed up, written up, and boxed up! But Jesus busted through their rigid mindsets by walking boldly in His full stature, power, authority and anointing. After all, He was and is God. But they couldn't perceive it. No wonder most of them hated Jesus and some even conspired with the Romans to have Him crucified. But He rose again! The apostle Paul wrote to the Romans about this when he spoke about Jesus' deity: "... declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4). Amen!

**THE GOSPEL IS IN WORD AND DEED!**

When Jesus walked in the full power of the anointing of God, His righteous acts demonstrated to the world that the gospel wasn't only a message to hear, but it was also a message to see. How He dramatically preached the gospel was by healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Yes, He did speak, of course, but He also released miracles, signs and wonders because the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

And God wants us to walk in this power, too. Listen. There's no better time than now. Look at what's happening in the world. If there ever was a time that the nations needed to see the hand of God and Jesus Christ's redemption, it's NOW! It's time to throw down stuff that doesn't matter: stupid business and daily grinds that mean nothing. We need to cry out for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost! We need to have a God-encounter; an experience with the Holy Ghost.

Look at this. You know what I love about Jesus? It's 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." Jesus was declaring that His disciples would have a win-win situation because they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them. And He wants us to be winners too! The power of God is always unto winning lost souls for Christ. It's always connected to being witnesses, evangelism and releasing the message of the gospel. The power of God is always connected to, "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 10:7). If there isn't any going, there isn't any power; why would there be? But with the power of God we are fully equipped to go to the lost wherever they are.

You know, one big reason why God gives miracles is because He is moved with compassion. But perhaps more than that, miracles are a visible demonstration to a lost and dying world. I guarantee that the more you begin to take the gospel of Jesus Christ into the city streets, the more you will experience an increase of the manifestation of the power of God. God will always bless soul-winning. God will always bless "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

Hey! I am excited about going into the harvest. I am excited about going to the jails and the drug houses. I am just excited about the power of God because the gospel of God is the power of God unto salvation! You will see more power than you can shake a stick at when you begin to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in faith, believing that it is a gospel not in word only but also in power. Signs and wonders will follow those who believe (Mark 16:17).

The apostle Paul knew this. Let's examine Romans 15:17-19 and take to heart what he was saying:

"Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—(NKJ) "[Even as my preaching has been accompanied] with the power of signs and wonders, [and all of it] by the power of the Holy Spirit. [The result is] that starting from Jerusalem and as far round as Ilyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel [faithfully executing, accomplishing, carrying out to the full the good news] of Christ [the Messiah] in its entirety" (Amplified).

Paul was saying it's in word and deed and by mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God that he fully preached the gospel, faith fully executing and carrying out to the full, the good news of Christ the Messiah in its entirety. On the flip side, do you know what else Paul was saying? "I have not fully preached the gospel of Christ if I have not done it with power, signs and wonders. I have not fully preached the gospel and I'm not really a minister of God unless Gentiles are being made obedient because they are receiving the word, the message, and the deeds."

A powerless gospel is not going to give harvest, friends. You can't just be a man and a woman with a message. It's a man and a woman of power with a message. It's a man and a woman filled with the Holy Spirit. It's a man and a woman endowed with power from on high with a message! Paul was saying that he hadn't really preached the gospel if he hadn't done it with miracles, signs and wonders.

We need a demonstration of the Spirit of God and power and I believe that the Holy Spirit wants to impart that to you today. As I said in Part 1 (of this teaching), we need to understand that the gospel without power is not the gospel of Jesus Christ as He meant it to be proclaimed. A gospel without people being saved and healed, and without people being delivered and radically changed, is not the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Look, we need to examine our own lives. We're not actually walking in the fullness of our salvation if we're not contending, ourselves, to be completely healed. I say this because when we really understand what it means to be saved we'll understand that salvation is for our body, soul and spirit. Just as Jesus was wounded for our transgressions and iniquities, He also bore upon His body all of our sorrows, all of our sicknesses, and all of our diseases. By His stripes we are healed. We just can't take that away from Jesus. We can't take that away from Calvary.

Don't miss this. To take miracles and healing away from Calvary is to bring down the ministry of Jesus; it's to bring down the gospel of God. To believe that you can embrace Christianity without power is the same as believing that Jesus never really rose from the dead and that there's no power in the gospel of God. If we believe like that it's like saying, "We just need to have a message." "Theology will do it." "My opinion will do it." "My programs will do it."

**BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND KEEP ON BEING FILLED!**

Would you agree that it's going to take more than theology and programs to win the lost to Christ? When the power of God begins to visit us and we really begin to get hungry for the anointing, and we really begin to have a revelation and understanding of the gospel, we'll begin to preach the gospel in its entirety, like Paul did (Rom. 15:17-19). And as we begin to preach the full gospel, we'll begin to lay hands on the sick and they will recover. As the saints begin to be released into that anointing, we will start taking whole cities for Christ.

But it all begins when the power of God comes upon you. And I want you to get hungry for that! I want you to get hungry to have an experience with the Holy Ghost. Jesus gave the promise of the Holy Ghost to His followers. This is where it all began—"For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

Yes, they were baptized with the Holy Ghost! On that great day, the day of Pentecost, they spoke in foreign languages (formerly unknown to them) to all the people, which in itself was a marvelous sign and wonder. Yet, still, some of the onlookers mocked them and said, "They are full of new wine." But get this! There's more to being filled than the gifts of the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues, or being drunk in the Holy Ghost. I love the gifts but there's even more. Let me explain.

We read in the Book of Acts that after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit the apostles began walking in the power of God. One outstanding miracle to note is when a forty-year old man who had been lame since birth was instantly healed (Acts 3:2-12). As well, thousands of souls were saved (Acts 1-4). Yes, the apostles were walking in a good measure of the power of God. But I want to bring something important to your attention. The Bible goes on to cite in Acts 4:31—"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." Listen! They experienced another time when they were filled again!

They were desperate for something more! They wanted boldness so they could act out what the gospel is all about and stand strong against persecution—"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (4:29, 30). Their desperation carried more weight than just wanting to be bold, loud and unafraid. You see, these were men who were already walking in miracles, but they had a revelation of their need of Holy Ghost boldness for the kind of evangelism that would turn the world upside down for Christ.

They knew that there was another dimension. The apostle Paul talks about another dimension—"to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19). The fullness of God means more than being filled with the Spirit, as awesome as that is! It tells you there is a greater experience, and it isn't just being filled, it isn't just the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The key to power is being filled and to keep on being filled! The apostles were filled in Acts 2. But we see that Peter was filled again it says in Acts 4:8, and then the Bible says that Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:55 when he saw heaven open. (I believe he was being filled again with the Holy Spirit as he was being put to death.) But before that, Stephen was already "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:5).

Furthermore, when I read what Paul told the Ephesians: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (5:18). I look that to heart. For instance, I remember when we were in Nigeria, Africa I had a revelation of this. Every morning I had a revelation of the filling of the Holy Ghost and every morning God came down and filled me with the "lightnings" of God. I had a fresh filling every morning and I was full of the power of God. It was "electric"!

So, one of the keys to being full of the power of God is to be full of the Holy Ghost EVERY DAY. And remember, you're not necessarily full of the Holy Ghost just because you speak in tongues. I'm talking here about an absolute fullness. That fullness comes out of being filled, yes, but we need to keep on being filled. It comes out of being in the anointing. It comes out of allowing the kingdom of heaven to begin to fill you and possess you. One thing I discovered about walking in the anointing is that as full as I can be at times, I can be empty the next day. It's not that the Holy Ghost left me, but I haven't been seeking the Lord and spending time with Him, there isn't the same anointing because I haven't been in the place where it comes from.

Amen! I want you to get hungry for God—to get filled with the Holy Spirit and keep on getting filled! Listen. Every morning when you get up, get filled with the Holy Ghost before you do anything! Just lie on your carpet until it happens, until you start shaking in your room. Just stay in your room until you feel the fire of God begin to fill your body from the top of your head right down to your toes. Then, do your devotions!

**GOD'S POWER IS RELEASED AS YOU GO!**

We need time with the Holy Spirit every day to be filled afresh with God's power. Not only is a fresh infilling essential for demonstrations of the power of God, but being filled with the Holy Spirit, daily, keeps our faith alive and strong. Most of us already know that our faith is tested in the good times and in the difficult times. But did you know that very difficult days are coming upon the earth? Our faith in Jesus Christ will be challenged (Luke 18:1-8, Matt. 24).

For example, during John the Baptist's great trial, even he, as sold out as he was to God, even he wondered about Jesus. It's not just people in the world who wonder about God. Christians do so. Sometimes our faith gets rocked. When John was imprisoned he was compelled to send two of his disciples to clarify Jesus's mission. They asked Jesus: "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" (Matt. 11:3).

In response, Jesus didn't get defensive or try to preach and teach theology to those two disciples. He simply said: "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (lv. 4-6).

First of all, we are blessed when we hold fast to our faith in Christ, when we aren't offended because of Him. As well, let's look at verse 6 from the Amplified version, "And blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) is he who takes no offense at Me and finds no cause for stumbling in or through Me and is not hindered from seeing the Truth." Yes, there is a sure blessing for us when we hold fast to our faith in Christ to the end (Matt. 10:22).

Secondly, it's notable that when Jesus told John's two disciples about His righteous acts, it wasn't until the very end of his statement that He said, "... the poor have the gospel preached to them." The blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf all needed to experience a demonstration of the power of God and they did! Their mighty miracles certainly demonstrated dynamic evangelism in action. But notice that Jesus placed preaching the gospel at the end of his list of righteous deeds. You know it's good to preach the gospel, but so often the Church has so exalted the Word of God that it has missed the manifestation of who the Word is. It's Jesus Christ! He demonstrated the gospel for all to see and He wants us to do the same thing!

Thirdly, we can learn a lesson from Paul, too, because he had a heart to win lost souls for Christ, but he was careful to go where the gospel had never been preached and displayed before. He said to the Romans:

"Thus my ambition has been to preach the Gospel, not where Christ's name has already been known, lest I build on another man's foundation; but [instead I would act on the principle] as it is written, they shall see who have never been told of Him, and they shall understand who have never heard [of Him]" (Rom. 15:20, 21 Amplified).

Like Paul, we need to make it our goal and aim to go where the name of Christ has never been named because that is where the gospel will fully operate in the power that the gospel is! When we're planning a crusade we like to advertise it on secular radio and secular television because that media reaches the people who really need to hear about a crusade. At one crusade we had in Canada, about 200 East Indian people heard about it and so they came. Some of them got up out of wheel chairs, some were touched by the power of God, and some came down to the altar to be saved! I tell you, it was exciting, but something needs to happen to the church.

Sometimes what drives a Church is a mindset about keeping everyone happy. I really don't believe that was the intention of Jesus and I bet you don't either. Instead, it was: "... the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). I believe the church was and is meant to be like an "equipping center" where people can have an experience with the Holy Ghost and then go back out into the world and evangelize. It's sad to say, but something has happened throughout time and religion that's hindered believers being equipped this way. But having said that, I want to see the release of evangelistic fervor come into the hearts of the body of Christ so believers begin to get stirred up and begin to take demonstrations of the Spirit of God and power into the malls, into the streets, into the highways and into the byways!

Jesus, at one point, "When He called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease" (Matt. 10:1). First of all, one of the things I love about that passage of Scripture is, He gave them power. God wants us to realize that this is a now word for us today! He wants to give us power too (as stated earlier) so that we can be witnesses, not in word only but in power because when we begin to mix our faith with God's power then dynamic evangelism is sure to be the outcome!

Next, I just love that He called unto Himself the twelve disciples. Now they were apostles in their "office", but they were His disciples. I'm an evangelist; but I'm His disciple. You might be a teacher but you are His disciple. When we're born again we're all disciples of Jesus. (Had there been more disciples He would have given them power over unclean spirits and to heal the sick, too!)

Now it goes on to say right here in Matthew 10: "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (v. 7). One of the main points we need to realize about the release of power is it's released as you go. It's like Jesus is saying: "As you go to tell them to preach that the gospel of the kingdom of heaven is at hand. I want you to have a message. I want you to tell them about salvation. I want you to tell them about the good news. I want you to tell them about the love of God. I want you to tell them about My death and resurrection, the shedding of My blood for the remission of sin. I want you to share with them the message of the kingdom of heaven."

But, remember, the message of the kingdom of heaven was never just a message! Because as you go and you begin to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, you are not really preaching if you aren't healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead and casting out demons. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (v. 8). Actually Matthew 10:7, 8 records that Jesus said it all in the same breath!

But what we tend to do is to put preaching the gospel and healing the sick in two different categories. Quite often we say it's harder to heal the sick than it is to preach the gospel. It's like believers are saying, "I can say the gospel but I can't heal the sick!" Also, some believers that are OK with healing the sick have this mindset: "I'm OK with preaching the gospel and healing the sick but I don't have an anointing like that apostle over there. He raises the dead." Or we say: "You have a deliverance ministry because you cast out demons."

Listen, if you can preach the gospel you can heal the sick. If you can heal the sick you can preach the gospel. If you can preach the gospel you can cleanse the leper. If you can cleanse the leper you can preach the gospel. If you can heal the sick you can raise the dead. If you can raise the dead you can cast out demons. If you can cast out demons you can preach the gospel. If you can heal the sick you can cleanse the leper. If you can cleanse the leper you can raise the dead. If you can raise the dead you can preach the gospel. It's all the same thing! It doesn't get any harder. It's all about Him. It's the kingdom. It's the gospel. It's the message, and the Holy Spirit brings a demonstration of the power of God.

How many of you are hungry for God today? Let's begin to ask the Holy Spirit to release God's power and to begin to fill you today and bring you into a new level of being full of faith and power. That's what Stephen had. He was full of faith and power. Do you know why He was full of faith and power and did great wonders and signs among the people (Acts 6:8)? It was because He was full of the Holy Ghost. That's all. You don't have to try to get more faith and power, just get full of the Holy Ghost.

**PRAYER**

*Father with great confidence in You we come before you today, because we, like the apostle Paul, "are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."*

*We are coming up higher into greater revelation concerning Your will for us, that You want to give us the same power that You gave your disciples over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. We want to be filled and full of the Holy Ghost. Please fill us, God.*

*We cry out for all that You want to reveal and release to us so that we're fully equipped to share the gospel in word and deed to bring in a great harvest, all for Your glory!*

*Thank you God, for hearing our prayers. We are filled with joyful anticipation! We promise to be faithful stewards of Your power and we give You the glory, in Jesus's name. Amen.*

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