

More...Where our hunger meets His Promises

“Empowered to Share This Life”

- Week 4 -

Ephesians 5:18 NLT

Who am I? I am not a force. I am not a Ghost. I am not Energy. I am God's Gift. I give Living Water to the thirsty. I give New Life to the spiritually dead. I give a new start to the born-again. I give gifts to edify others. I am like a River - a Wind - a Fire. Where I Am there is Peace. There is Hope. There is Love. What do I do? I live in hearts. I heal the wounded. I cast out demons. I reveal Truth. I exalt Jesus. Do you know who I am? I am Eternal. I am God. I am the Holy Spirit!

Lord, thank You for Your Presence in this place. You are here among us - among Your children, and Lord, You are welcome here. As we celebrate our freedom in this nation - our independence, we declare, as Your sons and daughters, our dependence upon You. This is our declaration of de-pendence. We're declaring that we need You - that we can't do this life without You, nor do we want to.

Thank You Lord, that You have sent One - Who was called the Paraklétos - the Helper - the One called alongside - to be our Companion - to be our Friend - our Comforter - Counselor - our Teacher - our Intercessor - our Advocate. Thank You Holy Spirit for Your Presence - that You're working in us - through us - and upon us - and we welcome You. We celebrate our fusion with You - that we get to be one with You. We are one with You in Christ - Christ in us the Hope of Glory - which makes us fused together with Him, in oneness - unity - union in Christ.

In this series, we're talking about the Person and the work of the One that is “called alongside to help.” When we receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are saying, “*Jesus, I need help!*” and when we do that, we are also receiving, along with him and his salvation, a Person who will live in us - work through us - and be *upon* us to help us fulfill the call, will, and purposes of God in our lives.

Many believers have gotten to know Jesus - they love the Father, but don't know that much about the Holy Spirit, nor do they understand that when they gave their life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit moved in and took up residence in their life - he dwells with them - walks with them.

Conversations about the Holy Spirit can gravitate towards weirdness - a red flag that says, *"Woah, wait a minute."* Many of us have had negative experiences in the past - not with the Holy Spirit himself, but with people who get weirded out because of their own ideas *about* the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not weird - *people* are. We are *empowered* to share this Life that we have been given.

The Father is our Source - God is our Source for everything. He gives us this Life - now in us - that comes bubbling out like rivers of Living Water flowing out of us - Life - Hope - Joy - the Character and nature - Virtue - fruit of the Holy Spirit - *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control*. All these things are ours in Christ as the Spirit himself lives his Life in us, through us, and upon us. We are now empowered to share this Life.

John 14:15-18 NKJV

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray [ask] the Father, and He will give you another Helper [Greek: Paraklétos - Counselor, Advocate, Comforter, Friend], that He may abide [dwell, live, habitate] with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

He empowers us to live - by filling and pouring himself upon us. We need to understand that we are not alone. The things that we've been given to do - the tasks - the callings - the will and purpose of God - he didn't just give that to you - give you a dream, and then say, *"Good luck with that. Call Me if you need Me,"* but instead he says, *"I am here to dwell with you - perpetually - literally forever. I'll never forsake you. I am with you - from beginning to end. I finish what I start."*

He stays with us through it all, even when we don't know he's there. The poem, *Footprints* is a beautiful expression of what God does by his Holy Spirit. He picks us up and carries us so there's only one set of footprints, and they aren't ours... *they're His*. God *carries us* through difficult things with his Holy Spirit, who was given as a Gift - he's a Present. Jesus said, *"The One that's coming is the Promised One from the Father."*

So we are empowered - to not only receive the Presence - the Life of the Holy Spirit - *and* the Power - we're also given the ability to *share* with others. You're not on your own. Most believers don't share their faith with others because they're intimidated - they feel like they don't *know* enough, *"What if I don't know the answer to a question?"* But we are not called to be

the Bible Answer Man - to be a walking concordance - to quote every Scripture (we have smartphones, so we can look those things up), but what we do have is the Holy Spirit within us who can direct us - lead us and guide us where we need to go. We all need help. We can help each other to a degree - but we've got One who Scripture says "*sticks closer than a brother*" (Proverbs 18:24), and that is the Holy Spirit - the very *Presence* of God - the Presence of Christ in us - living his Life in us and through us and upon us.

Acts 1:4-5 ESV

"And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'"

This was just before Jesus' ascension, where he was airlifted out of this world to another place - to take his seat at the right hand of the Father. That word *baptized* in Greek literally means *to be covered over, as in the sinking of a ship - being overwhelmed and covered over - controlled by*. "*You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...*" - you're going to *sink into*. - *be covered over - whelmed over and controlled by the Holy Spirit*.

We don't need to be afraid of that verse because Acts 1:6-8 says, "*when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has 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 Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'*"

"You will receive power [for living]... upon you." We already know he dwells in us - we're born again - the Holy Spirit has come and taken residence in us - but there is a Power that is available to you and me - and it's a Power to live this life - to fulfill what God has called us to do. He doesn't just say, "*Hey, you're born again - that's great - good luck with that! I'll see you at the end. We'll celebrate in heaven some day but between now and then, you're on your own.*"

No - He sends us the Holy Spirit - *the Paraklétos* - the Helper to take up residence in us so that when we're confronted with the "stuff" of life - where the bottom drops out in our ride and we're pinned up against a spinning wall - where we're captured by it and there's nothing we can do - you get "the call" that you didn't want to get. It happens suddenly. Our first thought and prayer at that moment should be, "*Holy Spirit, thank you for being with me. Be near. Be present. Be the Comforter. Be the Counselor.*"

This is more than just mere theory. We need his help - we need his Power - for our life - in real time. "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." - not just within, but now upon - it's literally like the Scripture says, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27 NKJV). It's like putting a jacket on - you put it on. He's already with you - in you - he lives his life through you - but then there are times when you need Power for the *moment*. You need something extra in a situation.

When we don't know every answer and we need help - we need him *upon* us in that moment - instructing - teaching - helping navigate the moment - in that scenario. Over time, as we continue to learn and grow into this, it brings such God-confidence - not *self*-confidence - but Christ-confidence. We realize, "*I am not alone and I never have to be afraid that I don't have an answer for something.*"

We realize we already have the Power, and we can say, "*I don't know. That's a mystery.*" But we *also* can receive information, even in real-time when we're in a situation. He will give us what to say - he will help us recall - remind us of everything that Jesus taught. The Holy Spirit can bring an obscure scripture that we read in the seventh grade or vacation Bible school when we were a kid - have it *come up* in a given moment when it's needed. The Holy Spirit can bring it up when we need it. That's the Helper - the Power that he brings when he comes upon you.

Why? - for this very reason, "*and you shall be witnesses to Me [you will tell others about me] in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*" (Acts 1:8 NKJV) Jesus said, "*You will be my witnesses,*" not, "*You will be my Bible professor, or - my preacher.*" What does a witness do? He just tells the story - what he saw - what he experienced. That's it. He answers their question - no more, no less.

Sometimes we, as Christians, think we have to know *everything* - and if we don't, then we're not going to say *anything*. But the Holy Spirit is here, helping us witness - empowering us - to simply say, "*Here's what I know - there was me and there was Jesus - and in-between, something changed - something happened to me - and now my life isn't perfect, but I have had an encounter with the Living God. My life was going one way, and now it's going a much different way. I've been touched, and my life has been changed. That, I can tell you - I can share with you.*"

I am empowered to speak to that, because it's *my life* - and *my experience*. Nobody can argue against your experience. The Holy Spirit comes upon you and he empowers you to be his witness - "*in Jerusalem*' [locally]... *in all Judea*" [regionally]... *and Samaria*" [beyond"], "*and to the end of the earth.*"

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."

*How does the Holy Spirit come upon you? - the same way you receive salvation - by Grace, through faith. You simply ask. Jesus said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13 NKJV). Just ask - *pray*. We need to be able to walk into any scenario where we need more than we have in that moment, and say, "*Holy Spirit, would you overwhelm me? Would you fill me and empower me to step into this? Would you speak the words through me that someone else needs to hear?*"*

Then rest in that, because he said that we would receive Power when the Holy Spirit is come upon us and we will be witnesses *to* him and *for* him. We are not alone. We are empowered by him to share the Good News with people, and to give Hope. At the Bridge, we say, "*We are the body of Christ called to be Jesus, building bridges of Life and Hope where we live, where we work, and where we play.*" The Holy Spirit empowers (enables) us to do that. He gives us the *ability* to do it.

As we continue, let us get up every morning and say, "*Good morning, Holy Spirit. What do you have for us today?*" He will empower and enable you. The word *power* from Scripture is the Greek word *dunamis* - sounds similar to *dynamite* in English and has a similar connotation in that it means *explosive power*. Strong's defines it as *power - explosive power - for working miracles*. As we go, let's remember that we are not alone. We are *empowered* - to build bridges of Life and Hope everywhere we go - to bring Life and Hope.

Prayer

Lord, teach us. Holy Spirit, we welcome you - to be upon us - to be in us - to work through us. We are grateful and we bless you! In Jesus' name. Amen