

A Spirit Empowered Testimony

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 15:26-27
Preached on: Sunday, May 17, 2015

It is always a great joy and a profound privilege to be able to minister the word of God to you and this morning I would invite you to take your Bibles and turn again to John 15 where we will be examining verses 26 and 27. I want to focus this morning on the topic of the Holy Spirit but especially as he relates to our personal testimony. I want to talk about a Spirit empowered testimony.

Before we look at the text, may I remind you that this statement is coming from our precious Savior in his farewell discourse to his 11 disciples and by extension, to all believers. A passage that is, frankly, pregnant with promise. One that is rich in blessing when we understand it and when we apply it to our lives.

With the weighty prospect of his imminent suffering bearing down upon his soul, he nevertheless focuses on his beleaguered disciples. He wants to bring comfort to them. He wants to encourage them because they are distraught. They are frightened. In chapter 15, he has explained their union with Christ and the profound importance of abiding in his love by keeping his commandments. He has explained how that in him all believers have spiritual life. We are sustained. We are nourished. We bear spiritual fruit that brings glory to the Father. He has commanded them to love one another as he has loved them and obviously this goes for all of us, that we should even be willing to lay down our lives for one another. Moreover, he has warned them that the world is going to hate them because they first hated him. Remember, the term "world" basically refers to godless unbelievers that are alienated from God, that unwittingly serve Satan who rules them. And because all true disciples are joined to Christ, because the very life of Christ flows through us, the world is going to hate us and hate us as they hated Christ.

So basically he's reminding the disciples that the Lord Jesus Christ was really the prototype of how the world will hate every believer and just think of how they hated him. They treated him with cynical indifference, with sneering contempt, with mockery. The word of God says that they spat upon him. They stripped him and placed a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns on him then knelt down before him and mocked him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spat on him and took the reed and began to beat him on the head. Can you imagine that, wearing a crown of thorns and being beaten by other people with reeds? Then they crucified him. Though hated by the world, Jesus tells them in verse 16 that he has chosen them out of the world. He has appointed them to go and to bear fruit that will remain, the fruit of souls being won to Christ. Then recall that at the end of verse 20, he encourages them that even as some have embraced his words in repentant faith, others are going to respond in similar manner to your words, to our words. Therefore we must not show contempt for the world, nor can we compromise by

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becoming worldly in order to escape persecution. Our lives and our message must confront the culture, not conform to it.

Now, Jesus knows the disciples are wondering how on earth are they going to be able to endure all of this. In fact, a few verses later in verse 6 of chapter 16, Jesus says to them, "Because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart." No doubt they are saying to themselves, "Lord, it's bad enough that you are going to be leaving and, frankly, we don't even fully understand why. We thought that you were going to bring in the kingdom now. But now you're telling us that this godless, unbelieving world is going to hate us. How are we supposed to possibly survive in this world much less bear fruit?" Well, the answer is found in our text this morning. Beginning in verse 26, Jesus says,

26 When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, 27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

He even goes on to say in verse 1 of chapter 16, "These things I have spoken to you so that you may be kept from stumbling."

So, all of these things that Jesus is telling them applies to each of of us. As genuine believers, we are all united to Christ. We are branches in the vine so that we can bear the fruit of holy living. So that we can bear fruit that remains in terms of being his instruments of righteousness to lead other people to a saving knowledge of Christ. Because of this, the world is going to hate us. The world will react to our Gospel message and to our lives with seething resentment, with that head-shaking, eye rolling hatred and hostility because our message and our lives expose their sin. It's interesting how the Gospel is like turning on a light that exposes people doing something evil in the darkness where they think no one will see. In fact, Jesus spoke of it this way in John 3:19, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

So, what Jesus is saying is that this godless society of unbelievers, alienated from God like we were before he graciously saved us, even religious people, in fact, especially religious people, even in the ranks of evangelicalism, those who utterly loathe the biblical real Jesus, they are going to treat us like they treated Christ, with cynical indifference, with that sneering contempt and mockery and violence. In light of this, if I could speak very practically, whenever you see masses of people flocking into an ostensibly evangelical church, when the church is exploding in growth and they can't find buildings

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for their numerous satellite campuses, know this: the true Gospel is not being preached. Know this: that the biblical Jesus is not being taught. If it were otherwise, these verses would beg for relevance. Know that lives are not being transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit into the image of Christ. Religious professors of Christ who cannot be distinguished from the world are not united to the vine therefore they cannot bear fruit for the glory of the Father and many of these kinds of churches that are just exploding in growth all around the country, frankly, do not even meet the New Testament definitions of a church and the primary reason is this: they exalt man, not Christ. Man is madly in love with himself and the people of the world will flock after anyone that will make them the center of the universe. Jesus has said in verse 19 that "the world loves its own," so if you offer them a worldly religion, if you offer them a man-centered rather than a God-centered church, they will beat your door down to get there.

Now, in light of the world's hatred of Christ and all who belong to him, we want to answer the question: what must our attitude be? And certainly as we look at this text and many others, we see the answer is basically this: we need to have an attitude of bold love that will give testimony to the glory of Christ and this is implied in our text here as we will see. You see folks, this is why we exist: to give glory to Christ. This is our calling, our commission. Our attitude towards the world therefore must not be one of resentment. It must not be one of revenge. It must not be one of compromise. But rather we need to manifest a bold love for them and in our lives give testimony to the ineffable glory and grace and the transforming power of the living Christ. It's for this reason that Jesus will send from the Father, the Spirit of truth. Again, in our text, "He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also."

You see, Jesus knows that none of us can do this effectively and boldly. None of us can give testimony to the glory and grace of Christ on our own. He has already said, "Without Me, you can do nothing." So for this reason, according to verse 16 of chapter 14, "He sent another Helper that He may be with you forever, that is the Spirit of truth." Another of the same kind. Another paracletos. Another paraclete. One exactly like Jesus. One who will come alongside those of us in need and strengthen us. Here again in the text before us, Jesus speaks of this Helper, of the Spirit of God who will come to the disciples and isn't it interesting that he did just that at Pentecost. We read about that in Acts 2. You will remember that 40 days after Jesus' resurrection, he ascended into glory and then 10 days later, 50 days after the Passover, after the final sacrifice for sin was made by the Lamb of God, he sent the Holy Spirit.

Now, I hope to explain this text in such a way as to help us with our testimony in this fallen world. I have found this passage speaking in a profound way to my heart. I hope it will to yours as well because we all need a testimony that is Spirit empowered in order

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for our lives to be God honoring, in order for them to be effective and profoundly rewarding. So in order to do this, we're going to look at these 2 verses along with some other passages with respect to the Holy Spirit and then apply these things to our life. And I might add, that the Holy Spirit, I believe, is the least taught, the least studied person of the Triune Godhead and this has resulted in many doctrinal errors and confusion, especially as to how he functions in the life of believers and, sadly, ignorance of the Holy Spirit has opened the door to many errors and excesses.

So, we're going to look at, 1. The person of the Holy Spirit. 2. The ministry of the Holy Spirit. 3. The practical application of what we have learned as it relates to our personal testimony. So number 1, let's think about the person of the Holy Spirit and this will be brief but hopefully it will be enough to help you understand some very important fundamental truths. Indeed, he is a person. He is not a virtue, nor is he an energy source flowing from God to man as the Jehovah's Witnesses and other heretics would assert. The Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of personhood. He is the third person of the Triune Godhead. For example, he possesses intellect. He has a mind. Romans 8:26 and 27, there we read that he, "helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should." In 1 Corinthians 2:11, we read that "the thoughts of God, no one knows except the Spirit of God." We also know that he teaches. According to 1 Corinthians 2:13, "we have received the Spirit from God that we might know the things freely given to us by God." Paul goes on to say, "not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit." We also know that he speaks. Paul said in Acts 28:25 that, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers." He even has emotions. You will recall that text in Ephesians 4:30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." We also know that he loves as we read in Romans 15:30, where Paul speaks of, "the love of the Spirit." We know that he has a will as all people do. He distributes spiritual gifts, for example, as he wills, 1 Corinthians 12:11. And he exercise that will in a variety of different activities that he performs. We can read in the word how he teaches and he bears witness, he convicts, he writes Scripture through human authors, he restrains sin, he comforts, encourages, helps, intercedes, prays and so forth.

Now, bear in mind that in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was active in many ways but he did not come and abide with every believer in that era. He would only fill certain ones. He would give them abilities to accomplish certain tasks but when we come to the Gospels and when we come to the book of Acts, we see a transition occurring where the Holy Spirit actually abides in every believer, dwells within us. Jesus said in John 14:17, "He abides with you and will be in you." So when we come to verse 26 here in chapter 15 when Jesus says, "When the Helper comes," he's talking about a person. He's not saying, "May the force be with you always." This isn't Star Wars. This is a person. This is another paracletos. This is another of the same kind, one like Jesus, "whom I will send to you

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from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth," and he says, "who proceeds from the Father." In other words, "I'm going to request the Father and he will give you another Helper," as he says in John 14:16. He even adds in verse 26 of that chapter speaking of "the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the father will send in my name." So, here in verse 26, Jesus is saying at the end, "He will bear witness of Me." So to put it very simply: Jesus is going to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to join with the disciples for the primary purpose of bearing witness about him to a hostile world.

So these are a few things that help us understand the person of the Holy Spirit. But as we look at this text and other passages, we can understand more of what he does: what are his works and what are his ministries and how can this empower us to have an effective witness in a hostile world. So secondly, let's look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit. To do this, I want to look at a few passages that John reveals to us and a few other New Testament passages that may be helpful, but please know that my little list here, I believe I have 4, they are by no means exhaustive in terms of what the Spirit does. First of all, let's consider his work of regeneration. John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Then in verses 5 and 6, he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

Now, an important clarification: some believe the term "water" in this passage is referring to baptism like that of John the Baptist or what we would understand as Christian baptism and they would therefore use this to support the heresy of baptismal regeneration, that there is something mystical that occurs in the baptismal waters whereby the Spirit affects new birth. But this would've been the furthest thing from what Nicodemus would have thought. It would have been totally foreign to him to understand the term "water" in terms of water baptism as the essential requirement for entering the kingdom. Furthermore, the last thing Jesus would require of a committed ritualist, of one that already believes that salvation is by works, the last thing he would do is say, "Hey, if you just get baptized you're in." So what does the word "water" refer to? It simply speaks of the cleansing work of the Spirit of God. That's how it's used in the Old Testament. That's how Nicodemus would have understood this. And it's for this reason that the word "water" is never again used in this entire discussion of the new birth. The emphasis is solely placed upon the sovereign work of the Spirit of God which, in John 3, is also analogous to "the wind," in verse 8. "The work of the Son of Man," in verses 14 and 15. And "believing in Him," in verses 15 and 16.

So Jesus, remember, is speaking to an Old Testament scholar. I mean, this guy is at the top of his game and at the top of the heap of all of the scholars in Israel. This was the

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teacher of Israel and he knew the terms that Jesus was using because he knew the sacred text. He knew, for example, how it was used in Ezekiel 36:25-27. He knew exactly what Jesus meant by connecting water and Spirit together, namely, he's speaking of spiritual renewal and cleansing. Now, with this background, beloved, please understand: the primary work or the primary way, I should say, that the Holy Spirit works in our life initially is in the ministry of regeneration. He causes us to be born again. He brings us into newness of life. Prior to that, we were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were alienated from the life of God. We were unresponsive to the things of God. But by the power of the Spirit, he raises us from spiritual death and brings us into spiritual life. Said differently: there will be no evidence of spiritual life apart from regeneration. Moreover, a man could no more achieve his second birth than he could his first birth. It's all a work of the Spirit.

Now, how does this apply to our life? How does this apply especially to our testimony in evangelism? Well, we may be able to arouse the emotions of a person pertaining to Christ. We may be able to convince them intellectually of the Gospel through our compelling apologetics. We may even be able to get them to pray some prayer or make some decision for Christ. But only God can raise a spiritual cadaver from the dead and raise them into newness of life in Christ and this is what we must look for. When a person says they have been born again, this is what we look for: newness of life. Parents, this is what you look for in your children when they say they have come to Christ. "Well great, honey, that's wonderful. Let's see." Alright, we want to see some newness of life, and in little kids, that's going to take some time. This is what we must look for in each of our lives, "If any man is in Christ," Paul says, "he is a new creature. The old things have passed away. Behold, the new things come." Paul says in Ephesians 2:5 he has, "made us alive together with Christ."

You see, regeneration is that instantaneous supernatural impartation of spiritual life to the spiritually dead. J. I. Packer describes it this way, "Regeneration is a drastic change brought upon fallen human nature to bring a man under the effective dominion of the Holy Spirit and make him responsive to God." I fear that the church has lost its understanding, its definition of regeneration. Today anybody that prays a prayer or walks an aisle and says they're a Christian, "Oh well then, we accept that." Well, that may be true but what we have to look for is the results of the Spirit's work. When a man is truly born again, he is suddenly awakened out of the slumber of his sleep, his sleep of sin out of his spiritual death and he begins to have a hunger to know the glory and the greatness of God. He begins to hunger for the word of God. He begins to love the things that God loves and hates the things that he hates. His whole disposition in life begins to change and this measurable change is what validates genuine saving faith. This is the evidence of regeneration and, I might add, that this is the great blessing of the Gospel.

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Now, don't miss this: the chief witness therefore in this hostile world is not the apostles, it's not even you or me, it is the Holy Spirit. Jesus says in John 16:8, "when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment." My, what a relief that is to me and hopefully to you and certainly to the disciples, to know that it's not up to me to get a person that is spiritually dead to come to life. So this is what Jesus is telling us in verse 26, the Spirit of truth, "He will bear witness of Me." And he does this through the truth of his word and through the bold love and spirit empowered testimony of faithful believers.

Let me give you an example of this. You will recall back in Acts 8, an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and said, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he goes. Behold, "there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and he is sitting in his chariot reading from the prophet Isaiah." Now, my friends, what is happening here? The Spirit of God is at work. He is in the process of regenerating someone, giving them spiritual life. It's about to happen. So he's sending one of his choice servants, Philip, and he's en route there and he finally gets there and the Spirit says to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." So Philip runs up to him and he hears him reading from the prophet Isaiah and he says to him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And the eunuch said to him, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" So he invites Philip to jump in the chariot with him and help him understand what's going on. Then the text says that he is reading from Isaiah 53:8 and following concerning, "The One who is led as a sheep to the slaughter and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away," and so forth. So the man asks Philip, "Please tell me of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or someone else? Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him." The text says that, "he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Folks, what an incredible example of the work of the Spirit in a person's life and can't we all share those stories. Were it not for that work of regeneration, I would still be spiritually dead and so would you. And what a glorious thing to behold the Spirit of God perform his ministry of regeneration not only in us but in others. And what a wonderful promise, think about this, what a wonderful promise Jesus makes to his disciples here in this text, "When the Helper comes. Guys, I know," to put it in an our vernacular, "you're freaking out. You are frightened. You're confused but let me tell you something: when the Helper comes, that is the Spirit of truth, He will bear witness of Me and you will bear witness also." In other words, "The Spirit will empower your witness so that the world will hear about Jesus." Then he says, "because you have been with Me from the

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beginning." In other words, "You are is specially qualified to speak from first-hand experience since you have been eyewitnesses of my glory and grace."

Now, folks, please don't miss a very important point here as it relates to your personal witness. Since the Holy Spirit is the initiator of salvation, where must our evangelism begin? Is it in our programs? Is it in our preaching? Is it in our outreach opportunities? Is it in our kind deeds? Or our compelling apologetics? The answer is no. Those things can be helpful but, beloved, please hear this: the real work of evangelism is done on our knees pleading with God in prayer. We come boldly before the throne of grace in time of need so we should come before God, the Holy Spirit, and implore him to do his great work of regeneration. You see, because the world hates our Christ and despises our message and wishes we were dead, the real work of evangelism begins in our prayer meetings. For those of you that can make it on Wednesday night, it begins there. That should be our priority. It begins in your prayer closet. Sometimes it begins when you're on your face in your bedroom as some of us have been praying for our children. That's where the great work of evangelism begins because the Holy Spirit is the one that regenerates the spiritually dead. So in our private worship as we seek the face of the Spirit who alone gives life, we find the real power in evangelism. Folks, this is the stuff of a Spirit empowered testimony.

Let's look secondly at his work of uniting us with Christ. Jesus has already talked about this in John 15 with his analogy of the vine and the branches. Every believer is a branch that is ingrafted into him so that we can bear his fruit for the glory of the Father. He's helping us understand that every blessing comes from Christ because we are in him. Our intimacy with God, the likeness of our nature comes from him. The continuous impartation of life and joy. Now, how did all of this happen? Beloved, it was the work of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

Now, once again, Paul is not referring to water baptism. Water baptism is nothing more than the outward sign that depicts a believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection. But here he is simply saying that all believers in Christ are Spirit baptized. The church, the spiritual body of Christ, is formed as believers are immersed by Christ with the Holy Spirit. Christ is the baptizer as we see in the New Testament. And similarly, all believers are also immersed into the body of Christ by means of the Holy Spirit. He is the one, you might say, that ingrafts us into that vine, that gives us life that flows from the vine which is Christ. And I might add that this happens at the moment of conversion. This is our initial experience when we are born again. There is no such thing as some subsequent baptism by the Holy Spirit as many charismatics would have us believe. If

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you have not been baptized by the Holy Spirit, you're not in Christ. "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him," Romans 8:9.

Friends, for this reason, there is no exhortation anywhere in the New Testament for a believer to be baptized in or by the Holy Spirit nor are we ever commanded to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We're never commanded to be sealed by the Holy Spirit. These are all things that happened the moment we were born again. They are part of our salvation. Now, we are commanded to be continually filled by the Holy Spirit, to humbly submit ourselves to the Spirit of God as he has revealed himself in his word and when we do this, the Spirit fills us up with his power. We cannot fill ourselves. The grammar in those texts is very clear.

So every believer enjoys this intimate oneness with Christ because the Holy Spirit has joined us to him and because of that, we are now in Christ. But thirdly, let's think of his work of sanctification. There are really 3 distinguishable phases of sanctification and each member of the Triune Godhead is involved in varying ways with each one. There is, first of all, positional sanctification which occurs the moment of salvation when a man is set apart from sin and he is set apart unto God, when he receives Christ as Savior and Lord. 1 Corinthians 6:11, believers have been washed, Paul tells us. He goes on to say they, "have been sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God," so the Holy Spirit is also active there. But secondly, there is progressive sanctification where the indwelling Holy Spirit gradually conforms us into the likeness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul tells us that as we gaze upon the glory of Christ as he is revealed in the word that we, "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." So the Spirit is making that happen. And thirdly, there is perfected sanctification which we experience at the consummation of that process of sanctification where we finally and forever enter into the presence of God, where we are finally set apart from all sin and wickedness and bodily set apart unto God for eternity.

But it's the second aspect of sanctification I want to dwell upon for a moment because it speaks to the issue of our testimony, this issue of progressive sanctification where the Holy Spirit gradually transforms our character into the likeness of Christ. Beloved, you must understand that this is the great ministry and the great purpose of the Holy Spirit of God. This is the purpose of the Helper in our life. He does not come in us and dwell in us in order to activate some sensational, exciting type of experience or whatever, though sometimes he may do something spectacular in and through us. But his primary ministry in our life is to transform us into the likeness of Christ. Scripture is so clear.

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Again, he says that we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. Once again, as we look at John 15:26, "He will bear witness of Me and you will bear witness also." This is going to be part of what is happening here in that sanctification process. Today it's sad. We see such an unbalanced emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit as if his primary business in a believer's life is to somehow exalt himself or to somehow exalt the believer rather than Christ. But that's contrary to Scripture. Scripture is clear. His great ministry and his great purpose is to bear witness to the glory of Christ and to change our character so that we will do the same. And you want to ask yourself: is this happening in my life? Is there measurable change in my life? And what a magnificent promise this was to these beleaguered, forlorn disciples and soon they would experience this at Pentecost as we can experience it today.

This would lead us to a fourth aspect of the Spirit's ministry and that is: his work of empowering. Jesus says in Acts 1:8, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Now, bear in mind the disciples are frightened; they are confused. Jesus has already told them that, "On your own, you can do nothing. I'm going to send the Helper who is just like Me." So therefore by the power of the Spirit, the apostles were able to perform many signs and many wonders and it's interesting that Paul says in Ephesians 3:14, that he prays to the Father that he will grant the saints to be strengthened. Catch this: he is praying that "we might be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being." Why? "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

Today you hear many people crying out for the power of the Spirit. I was passing through the channels as you probably do with your little guide to find something that I was looking for and a particular personality caught my eye and I noticed that this was a whole television program devoted to helping people experience the supernatural for their benefit. In other words, we see people crying out for the Spirit of God so that, "Somehow I can experience something sensational, something incredible. So that I can be healed. So that I can be more successful. So that I can have more money," etc. etc. There are books that are written on how to tap into the power of the Spirit so that we can have these incredible things, so that we can manifest those sensational gifts of speaking in tongues and so that we can have some special revelation from God apart from Scripture. But dear friends, the great ministry and purpose of the Holy Spirit according to Scripture is not in making much of us, it is in making much of Christ and the power that is available in the

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Spirit is not for the purpose of putting himself on display or putting us on display or even necessarily meeting our personal needs or our wants, he dispenses his power in our life for the purpose of making us more like Christ.

This should be the motivation of our prayers to say in a little different way what Paul said in Ephesians 3, "Father, according to the riches of your glory, grant that I might be strengthened with power through your Holy Spirit in my inner man, so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith, so that I might be rooted and grounded in love, that I might have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that I may be filled with all the fullness of God. That I might truly manifest the likeness of Christ so that I can effectively testify of his glory and grace, that in all things Christ might have the preeminence." Oh child of God, please understand this very simple truth: the Holy Spirit will only empower you for one reason and that is to exalt the name of Christ. That is why he was sent. We need to seek his power for the reason that he came and by his power, he will change your life. He will change you into the likeness, into the image of Christ, so that your life will bear testimony to his glory and grace.

You know, we would all do well to remember that the Lord our God is a jealous God. He will not share his glory with another. The Holy Spirit is not in us to make us look spiritual, to impress other people with our spiritual gifts. He's not even in us necessarily to make our life go smoothly. He's in us so that we will bear testimony to the glory of Christ. So instead of praying for power from the Holy Spirit, we need to pray that the Holy Spirit by his power will change us into the likeness of Christ because this is his great ministry. This is his business in your life. And I might add that when the Spirit of God sees a man or a woman or a young person with a zeal for his glory, he's going to send the power, "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the world that He might strongly support those whose heart is completely His," 2 Chronicles 16:9.

Go back to Jesus' words as we wrap this up this morning. He says, "the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also." So indeed, we must testify to the glory of Christ in word and deed but it will only bear fruit where the Holy Spirit is at work and aren't you thankful that he delights in working through our weaknesses? How many times and I'm sure you can all identify with this, how many times I have just felt like, "I'm down for the count. I don't know if I can get up again." Do you know that feeling? That feeling that, "Lord, if you don't intervene in some way, all is going to be lost." Then somehow in the moment of my greatest peril, he gives me that peace that surpasses all understanding combined with some measure of wisdom and some mysterious grace and power and joy and hope and suddenly like the psalmist, my soul comes alive and I can say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation,

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whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defence of my life, whom shall I dread? I will sing praises to Him. Yes, I will sing praises to the Lord."

How does that happen? It's the work of the Spirit. Beloved, this is the strengthening, the enabling ministry of the Spirit of God in our inner man and these are the great truths that Jesus is revealing to his disciples who needed to hear it so much, so desperately as do we all and he is doing this even though the shadow of the cross is falling over him very quickly.

By way of application, ask yourself: how do others who know me best see me? How would they describe my Christian testimony? Does my life manifest the transforming work of regeneration? Or do I really look like the rest of the world? Do I have a passion for the glory of Christ proven by my desire to obey his commandments and bear witness of his glory and grace? Do I have a zeal for evangelism? Do I want to see others come to Christ and this is evident by my habit of prayer where I go before the throne of grace and ask the Spirit of God to do his great work? Parents, are you praying like this for your children because this is where evangelism begins. Is it your prayer and passion for the Holy Spirit to empower you to become more like Christ so that you can exalt his name? Folks, if these virtues are true in your heart, then certainly you will have a Spirit empowered testimony and the world is going to see you and they are going to hate you for it. Don't think that the more you become like Christ the more the world will love you. Just the opposite is going to happen. But do you know what else will happen? The world will see your difference and you will make a difference in the world because you're in the world, you're not of it.

Can I give you 3 practical suggestions in closing? 1. Find at least one person that you believe manifests this kind of a Spirit empowered testimony and that can influence you to these ends and then try to spend some time with them. Call them up. Take them out for breakfast. Meet with them somehow, someway and study their priorities. Study their habits. See how they spend their time. Find out who and what they read because I have yet to see a person with a Spirit empowered testimony that doesn't saturate themselves with the word of God and other great pieces of literature. Ask them to list the top 10 most influential books in their life and then go find one or two of them and read them.

Then secondly, study the lives of some great men and women of the past who have shined for Jesus in some profound way. Read their biographies and you will find that the Spirit of God will speak through their lives to you.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, I would encourage you to set aside some time this week where you can get alone with God and ask the Spirit of God to come upon you in

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some powerful way and do whatever it takes to change you into the likeness of Christ. Ask him to conform you to his mind and his purposes. Ask him to give you a zeal for the glory of the Lamb. Ask him to help you with your life so that you might have a Spirit empowered testimony to his glory and grace and then watch what he does.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these profound truths that emerge from your word. But, Lord, they are nothing but words apart from the power of your Spirit, so Spirit of God, I pray that you will take your word and make it come alive in each of our hearts that it might bear much fruit. And Lord, for those that perhaps are here today that know nothing of this magnificent transformation, the miracle of the new birth, they know nothing of forgiveness of sins, they know nothing of having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, Lord, I pray that by your Spirit, you will do your great work and bring them to faith in the living Christ. We give you thanks in all things in Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.