

Empowered for Transformation
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But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 1.8

So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Acts 19.20

In order to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit we MUST BEGIN by studying the book of Acts. It is called the book of the Acts (workings or deeds) of the Apostles, however, I think the full title should include “After being empowered by the Holy Spirit”. I believe the book of Acts is a model for the Church to Operate in order to totally transform communities.

In the New Testament we find two very different Churches and Paul writes an epistle to each one of them in order to bring them into a proper understanding of a Christian walk balanced by both the Power and the Fruit of the Spirit, the Churches at Corinth and Ephesus.

The book of 1 Corinthians was written by Paul to bring correction and discipline to a Church that was well known for its PENTECOSTAL roots but lacking in maturity and carnally minded. (The Pentecostal Church at Corinth)

I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, ⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, ⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 1.4-7

The Greek word for *GIFT* here is *CHARISMA*. Today when we refer to a Charismatic Person we refer to someone that believes in the Gift of the Holy Spirit and who functions in any and all of its manifestations.

Paul rebukes them by writing:

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 1 Cor. 3.1-3.

From this scripture we understand that moving in the manifestations of the Spirit does NOT necessarily mean spiritual maturity.

In addition, Paul deals with their lack of balance by exposing their weakness and teaching them about how to grow in those areas.

The other Church, Ephesus was known for the evidence of their faithfulness and love for the saints. And he tells them he will be praying that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened to understand their inheritance, their calling and the position they had been placed at, by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to those who believe, as you can read in Ephesians.

Acts is the *continuation* of the risen Lord’s work by the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles and records the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome.

Acts provides a model for living out Christianity under the power of the Spirit. It was the power of the Spirit in Jesus' life that authorized Him to preach, heal the sick, cast out demons, and set the captives free (Luke 4:14–19; Matt. 4:23). The same Holy Spirit power also gave that authority to the disciples (Acts 2) and is promised to Christ's church (1:5) and "all flesh," any and all who come under the new covenant of having faith in Christ (Is. 44:3; Acts 2:17).

It is the power of the Spirit that also enabled the early church to work together (2:42; 4:32–35), to solve their differences (15:6–21), to emphasize each other's strengths, and to listen and submit to one another (15:6–14). They were strong in faith and power, and they kept refreshed by fervent prayer and fasting (2:42; 6:4; 13:3).

Acts is a lesson to us about ordinary people doing extraordinary things. They opened to the power of the Holy Spirit and changed their world; you can, too!

The Book of Acts is the story of the disciples receiving what Jesus received in order to do what Jesus did.

Luke describes the disciples experience and notes that people were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (2:4; 9:17), that "they received the Holy Spirit" (8:17), that "the Holy Spirit fell upon (them)" (10:44), that "the Holy Spirit had been poured out on (them)" (10:45), and that "the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:6). These are all then essential equivalents of Jesus' promise that the church would "be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (1:5; see especially its immediate fulfillment in 2:4, which Luke describes as a filling).

Three of these five instances record specific special manifestations of the Spirit in which the people themselves participated. Those on the Day of Pentecost and the Gentiles of Cornelius's house spoke with other tongues (2:4; 10:46); the Ephesians "spoke with tongues and prophesied" (19:6). Although it is not specified, it is generally agreed that there was also some type of manifestation in which the Samaritans participated because Luke says that "when Simon *saw* that ... the Holy Spirit was given" (8:18).

Empowerment for world Transformation and evangelism is tied inseparably to this promise. There is obvious need for power if people are to fully perceive the gospel. But prior to that, another issue awaits resolution. The Spirit has come to convince us to go. We need power to serve effectively, to heal the sick, and to deliver those possessed of unclean spirits. **But let us first receive the Holy Spirit's first anointing—power to *act*—to go.**

Apostle means 'sent out' Apostolic Empowerment comes from the 'sent one' who activates us and likewise 'sends us' as instruments of Transformation.

Then, He will give 1) power to find the lost; 2) authority to boldly declare Jesus as the Son of God; and 3) power to establish His church—locally and worldwide. The intended borders of expansion are clear: Jerusalem (local), Judea (national), Samaria (cross-cultural) and "the end of the earth" (international). Jesus' last earthly command points to His power and His pathways for global evangelism.

The apostle Paul declares that his ministry was NOT based on persuasive words of human wisdom BUT in the visible manifestation and demonstration of God's power so that the faith of the people WOULD NOT be based on human wisdom but in God's power

"¹And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God." 1st. Cor. 2.1-5

For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power. 1 Cor. 4.20

The VERY foundation and essence of the empowerment to change people's, cities and nations was derived on the fact that they were ALL in one accord with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel and they were continually given to fasting and prayer.

Jesus received the empowerment on the waters of the Jordan, the disciples on the day of Pentecost and the apostle Paul by the hands of Priscilla and Aquila. Paul then made it a point to EMPOWER all his disciples through teaching and then the laying on of hands.

In the 19th chapter of the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul finds believers in the city of Ephesus. Once found, he immediately determined their foundation. "How were you saved? Were you baptized in water? Were you baptized in the Holy Spirit? Are you free to operate in the gifts of the Spirit?" Paul made sure he knew what the true needs of these saints were before proceeding, for these things were absolutely vital. He knew that before any real teaching could begin, he must know who they were in Christ. Their experiences in Christ had to be completed with baptisms that would identify them to the Church and fill them with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, necessary ingredients for effective living.

¹And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ²he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." ⁴Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." ⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. ⁷Now the men were about twelve in all. ACTS 19.1-7

The Apostle Paul dealt with first things first.

He did not set his attention on church growth, on building acquisition, or even on evangelism. He set his heart, as Jesus did, on the equipping of the twelve and the others that would follow after them, to prepare them for ministry. In the 8th verse of chapter 19 we see Paul enter the synagogue and begin to teach about the Kingdom of God. The religious leadership, as was common, rejected him, so he established a school of ministry for the city. The school of Tyrannous, likely a rented facility for children or adults was used to begin the process of teaching disciples, a repeat of previously learned and tested patterns. Paul trained and taught the converts in that city, both Jews and Greeks, all that he had received from Jesus and all he had learned with Barnabas. It was multi-cultural ministry, the only way Paul would have it.

Jesus taught and then he demonstrated God's power with miracles, this produced a following of disciples and explosive Church growth.

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching (equipping) in their synagogues, preaching (activating and proclaiming) the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. Mathew 4.23-25

The results were evident:

1. Teaching. Acts 19.9

2. **Preaching.** Acts 19.8
3. **Healing & Miracles.** Acts 1.3 and 19.11-12

What were the results?

Great multitudes followed him. Acts 19.20

After two years of intense instruction, likely filled with a mixture of the theological and practical, growth of the church began to occur. The result of the teaching ministry, after having laid an appropriate foundation for the disciples, was that extraordinary miracles began to manifest. Deliverance from demonic oppression occurred. People who had debilitating diseases were miraculously healed.

This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. ¹⁸And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. ¹⁹Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. Acts 19.17-20

It will take an Ephesus-type of ministry to produce His Supernatural Church. It is God's intention to restore back the full functioning of the church of the city, where His purposes for the nations are accomplished. Our purpose is to effectively and completely equip God's people in preparation for the fulfillment of our calling. God the Father EMPOWERS US so that we can become agents of change, instruments of transformation, bearers of hope, and ministers of grace and the manifestation of HIS glory. Philippians 2.13 says "*It is God at work IN YOU, giving you the will and the power to achieve His purposes*"

All I really know is this -- if we catch the vision of what God intends to do, our hearts and minds will change. Our focus will no longer be on our own programs or ourselves, but we will be intently determined to find and do the will and purpose of God for the expansion of His Kingdom in the earth. As we began the 21st Century Church my prayers were that we would see the glory of God manifested in power. I thank God for every great warrior of the cross of Christ that has come before us and has laid a foundation stone to the church of the city.

It is time for us to examine what we are doing and make a decision not to settle for church as usual, but seeking instead to settle for nothing less than His Supernatural Church!

In the 21st Century Church, growth and development will occur because of the empowering of the Holy Spirit through yielded servants of God. The Lord will use for His purposes trained, equipped and empowered disciples who will go into the highways and byways and compel men and women to come in, led by apostolic and prophetic teams, discipling the nations until the Lord returns. We are building for the next generation, a generation who will fulfill the mandate for the Church.

Like Paul, we must do things in the proper order. Do you speak with other tongues? Do you prophecy? If not, Why not? Have you (received=lambano) visually manifested the Holy Spirit SINCE YOU believed? Have you demonstrated the empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit has been given to us as the earnest, the down payment, the first fruit of our salvation, He is our engagement ring (earnest=arrabon)

²¹Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; ²²Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. 2 Cor. 1.21-22

Let's examine Paul's instructions to the Church at Corinth:

¹Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ²For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification. ⁶But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? 1st. Corinthians 14.1-6

Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. ¹³Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. 1st. Cor. 14.13-14

⁷If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. ³⁸But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. ³⁹Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. ⁴⁰Let all things be done decently and in order. 1st. Cor. 37-40

¹³If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Luke 11.13

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) John 7.38-39

Acts 2.4 ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.