

Acts 1:4-8
The Power of the Holy Spirit

Power is intoxicating. Many spend their lives grasping for it and for those who obtain it they do everything in their power to hold on to it. Power, in and of itself, is not bad. It's how we use power that makes it good or bad. Unfortunately, power has been and continues to be misused and abused in a variety of ways. I would surmise that most of us in here have had an experience with the misuse of power and/or the proper use of power. This is why we must take seriously who we put in places of power when the decision is up to us. The church is not immune to this situation as it concerns power. The misuse or proper use of it. Just study church history and you will soon discover we have not always gotten it right and have perpetrated some horrific evils upon one another and others in the name of God. There is no society or church free of a social power construct. But unlike those in the world who grasp for power for a variety of reasons, some good, some bad, we, the church, receive power from a different source and for a different purpose. With this said, three observations from the text regarding the power of the Holy Spirit.

Frist, the church cannot do what Christ has commissioned it to do without the power of the Holy Spirit. I understand the importance of having a vision and mission statement. I acknowledge the value of human and financial resources. But these alone will not get it done. The church is not only founded upon the identity of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, it is empowered and held together by the Holy Spirit. The

word in the Greek is *dynamis* (doo-nam-is) and it means the power of Christ invisibly present and operative in Christian church formally assembled. Had the apostles and those gathered/assembled in Jerusalem sought to set out on their own without the power of and the unity brought on by the Holy Spirit the results would have been disastrous. Jesus knew this and gave them a strong commandment to wait on the promise. **V4-5** “And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”” How many times have we as Christ’s church set out on our own determined to do what we wanted to, instead of what the Holy Spirit has empowered and bond us together to do? What was the outcome? Don’t tell me. I already know.

Zechariah 4:1-7 “Then the angel who had been talking with me returned and woke me, as though I had been asleep. ²“What do you see now?” he asked. I answered, “I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl of oil on top of it. Around the bowl are seven lamps, each having seven spouts with wicks. ³And I see two olive trees, one on each side of the bowl.” ⁴Then I asked the angel, “What are these, my lord? What do they mean?” ⁵“Don’t you know?” the angel asked. “No, my lord,” I replied. ⁶Then he said to me, “This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. ⁷Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel’s way; it will become a level plain before him! And

when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: ‘May God bless it! May God bless it!’”

Matt 28:18-20 “¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Second, the power of the Holy Spirit is not for predicting or determining future outcomes. V7 “⁷ And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.” The future belongs to God. This does not mean we do not plan. What it means is we do not become overly concerned about the future. Doing so will result in us missing the urgency of the moment, attending to the needed work in the present. The Holy Spirit is not a genie. It is not a fortune teller or fortune predictor. The Holy Spirit does not prevent hardship. The Holy Spirit is our advocate, counselor, teacher, comforter, guide, prayer partner, constant companion, our keeper and his power is fully at work in the church in these ways.

John 14:26-27 “²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”

Romans 8:26 “²⁶ And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.”

1 Cor 6:19 “¹⁹ Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself,”

Eph 4:30 “ And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.”

Finally, only by the power of the Holy Spirit do we become Christ’s witnesses. **V8** “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.” Now, none of us were eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. However, all of us are witnesses to what the resurrection has accomplished in our own lives. Every disciple has a testimony that gives witness to the truth of the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to turn ones heart from stone to flesh, to give one sight when one was blind, to help one hear when one was deaf to the truth of God, to make one selfless when one was selfish, to move one to trust in God rather than riches, to trust in grace rather than one’s own efforts. Listen, I could on and on, but the point is every disciple has a testimony to the truth of the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Only by the power of the Holy Spiry do we become Christ’s witnesses.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 “²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.”