

Power for Mission

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Preacher: Pasquale Tedeschi

[0 : 00] I have the joy of introducing our guest speaker today. We have the privilege of hosting Pasquale Tedeschi. I call him Pat and his wife, Dana, today.

They're from our sister church, Green Tree Church in Egg Harbor Township in New Jersey. We pray for that church on a regular basis during our Sunday worship. Pat was actually here and preached for us six years ago.

A few of you were here for that. Maybe a few of you were here for that. But Dana is involved with Green Tree's worship team and discipling the woman in the church. And Pat serves as their pastor of outreach and missions.

Their faithfulness to their local church has been an outstanding example to me. Dana grew up her whole life in Green Tree Church. And Pat joined the church in 1987 before some of us were born. But despite having a local church that they love and their immediate and extended family that are all being part of Green Tree Church, they have been preparing now for several years to leave Green Tree Church and everything that they have in order to go and serve as missionaries in London.

[1 : 09] And so Pat's going to come up and share about that. And also he's going to preach God's word to us. So Pat, please come. Thank you.

I want to talk to you a little bit about what's going on with my wife Dana and I and this future ministry move to London. We're planning to be missionaries there with our church's missions partners whose names are Randy and Margie Lawler.

And we'll be working at the church that Randy started and where he is the pastor. It's called Oasis International Church. For the last five or six years, our church has been praying that God would send them new workers because they are essentially doing everything on their own.

Randy's the preacher. He's the teacher. He is the small group leader. Margie oversees children's ministry, hospitality, finances. They are now in their late 70s.

And they don't have the capacity to really develop the church ministry any further on their own. So as we looked at their situation in life and where Dana and I are at in our life at this time, our kids are all grown out of college.

[2 : 46] I've been working with Randy for the last 18 years, bringing ministry teams there to do short-term work with him. I even lived in London for two years before that, working with him as an evangelist to the Muslim community of London.

So with all that experience, we thought this might be a good time to go, that we could be a good fit for the right time. And so as we presented this, the potential of this to our fellow elders at Green Tree, to the region of Sovereign Grace here in the Northeast, to our global director as well in Sovereign Grace, all of them have been wonderfully supporting and affirming.

And one of our goals is to see the Oasis Church become adopted into our family of churches here in Sovereign Grace. Now you might ask why London, right? I mean, there's plenty of opportunities to be here doing this work.

Well, part of it is the situation with the lawlers that I told you about and our experience there. But at the same time, London is a city of over 9 million people.

At least 1 million people are those from Muslim backgrounds. And there are another nearly 2 million people from Hindu, Buddhist, or European backgrounds.

[4 : 07] Many of those from the European backgrounds are either nominally Christian or secular atheists. There are over 350 languages spoken in London.

And so really the world is there. And a significant percentage of those people are those from least evangelized people groups or what we might call unreached people groups.

So there's just an astounding opportunity to bring the gospel to those who have had little or no opportunity to hear a clear teaching of the gospel message.

I remember years ago when I was in London, a Palestinian guy befriended us. We shared the gospel with him. He professed faith in Christ. And at one point he said, you know, why don't you come to my country, to his people group, we could say.

He said, and we'll tell people about Jesus. Because I'm sure that more than 90% of the people that are there do not know about Jesus the way you have taught me about Jesus from the Bible.

[5 : 11] So the opportunities are virtually endless in London because all of those different people groups are there. At this point, the church, Oasis Church, is made up of primarily Iranian refugees who have come out of Islam and have converted to Christianity.

Many of them have come through great trauma, having to escape their country to be free of persecution. Well, Pastor Randy and I know that in order for the church to grow and to become more established, the outreach needs to extend to other nationalities and people groups that are in the community as well.

So that's where my wife Dana and I come in. That's my wife Dana right there. You can hopefully greet her later. Lord willing, we're hoping to go there in January, five months from now, where I will be a pastor with Randy.

I'll be involved in preaching and teaching as well as helping to develop leadership and growing areas of outreach and discipleship. And my wonderful wife will be there to help me personally as well as to help the ministry of the church, especially in the areas of women's ministry.

The truth is my wife can do everything, children's ministry. She can sing. She can lead women's Bible studies. She can do hospitality. She's got it going on. She's the package, right?

[6 : 28] But we can't do this alone. So we really would appreciate your prayers as we prepare to go. There are three primary prayer requests that we have. First of all, that the Lord would provide the visas that we need to live and work there.

We are so thankful that there is another Sovereign Grace Church in England about two hours from us in London. And they're looking to sponsor us for the visa. But it can take some time to get it.

So we really need the Lord's favor to secure that for us. Secondly, we ask that the Lord would provide, that you pray that the Lord would provide all the finances that we need.

London is just an expensive place to live. And we can't do this work without a strong team of financial supporters. If that's something that you're interested in, we have a newsletter on the back table there.

You can talk to me. We would love to tell you a little bit more about that. Lastly, we need people to join us. We need a team of other workers who will just be there as faithful members of the church, being involved, serving, doing outreach, as well as seeking to help spur on the members that are there.

[7 : 40] So we're looking for people who might have that same sense of calling into this work in particular. Perhaps you might even pray that some right here at Trinity Cambridge might sense that call and might even be willing to come and join us.

Perhaps even you. Now, when I suggest that, I think sometimes people think I'm a little crazy when I do. But, you know, I'm just not the sharpest tool in the shed.

I'm not that extraordinarily gifted. And yet God has done something in us, in my wife and I, and called us to go and do that work.

And if he can do that for us, believe me, he can do that for anybody, perhaps even you. So if you're interested at all, I'd love to talk to you. And I'd especially recommend that you would talk to Sean or one of the other leaders here who will help you discern if this might be something that the Lord would be calling you to be part of.

So as I said, we have this introductory newsletter on the back table. You can pick one of those up. We'd be very thankful for your prayers. If you have any questions, you can contact us at our sending organization called cglobal.org.

[8 : 58] It's on the newsletter. And you can connect with us there. You can sign up for our newsletter. You could even give support if that's something you'd like to do. So thank you for allowing me to share that with you this morning. As we prepared for the sermon, what I want to talk to you about this morning is what it means to be a witness.

And we sang about that wonderfully in the worship songs today. When I think about being a witness for Jesus, I'm reminded of the small town that I grew up in near the southern New Jersey coast called Northfield, New Jersey.

To be honest, I hated growing up in Northfield. I didn't care much for South Jersey either. I thought Northfield was a backwards podunk town.

And one of the reasons was because I came from the big city of Elizabeth, New Jersey. Anybody heard of Elizabeth? It's not that big and it's kind of a dump. But it was across the river from New York, so I thought it was cool.

I thought I was a cool city slicker. And yet there I was stuck in Northfield, New Jersey. All I ever wanted to do was get out of Northfield and move to the city, any city, as long as it was out of South Jersey.

[10:15] But it never happened and here's why. When I was 20 years old, I began really questioning and wondering about the purpose and meaning of life.

Wondering how I could find satisfaction in this kind of crazy world. And so I began searching for God. At that time, I began an internship at a job in Northfield, of all places.

And a lady old enough to be my mother, who worked there, asked me if I wanted to join a Bible study. I agreed right away. As I began studying the Bible, my new Christian friends explained the gospel of Jesus to me.

I began to attend church with them and I understood just how much I needed Jesus in my life. And it was through their witness that I understood that I was a sinner.

And my sin really mattered. And it really separated me from the God who created me. And I was a child of wrath under his condemnation.

[11:29] But I also learned, thank God, that he offers the free gift of eternal life to anyone who would turn from their sins and turn to faith in Jesus.

After a few years, I began, and I got saved. Praise God. Just kind of like Daniel's story. And then God began to work in me. After a few years, I began to sense that God might have me involved in full-time ministry.

And so with the encouragement of my pastors, I attended Bible college. And from there, I went on to be a missionary, as I mentioned, in the inner city of London. And so you see, I did end up in a big city, right?

But just not as an escape from Northfield this time. After two years of living and working in London, I moved back to New Jersey. I married this lovely lady, the love of my life.

Started having kids. Began working at my church. And have been on staff nearly 25 years. I'm looking forward to living in London, to living in a big city again.

[12:35] But I no longer hate South Jersey or Northfield. Because even though I always wanted to get out, God kept me there to meet a woman in Northfield who witnessed to me about Jesus.

Thank God. That lady was a living fulfillment of Jesus' promise to empower his people to be his witnesses.

Right where they are and in other places all over the world. So we're going to read about this in our passage this morning.

This is Acts chapter 1, verses 1 to 11. As I read that, I'm going to ask that you would please stand with me. Acts chapter 1, beginning in verse 1.

Is it up on the screen, maybe? It says, In the first book, O Theophilus. Okay, there's a bug crawling on my notes here.

[13:42] I just had to get rid of it. I got it. In the first book, O Theophilus. I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach. Until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.

He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

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 have heard from me. John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

So 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 ends of the earth.

And when he had said these things as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes.

[15:10] And he said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

Amen. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Let me pray quickly as we begin. Our Father in heaven, thank you that you have not left us on our own, that for each one who is in Jesus, you have given us your spirit, and you have given us your word that by your spirit, we may know you, we may love you, we may treasure you, we may follow you, and we may be part of the mission that you've called us to be your witnesses.

Help us now to see this truth yet again. I know that this church has heard this. And yet, Father, we need help.

We need reminders again and again. So would you work in this time together powerfully by the grace of your spirit? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So a little bit of background of what's going on in the passage.

The author of Acts is a disciple of Jesus named Luke, and he is continuing the story about Jesus that he first began in his other book, that is the Gospel of Luke on the life and ministry of Jesus.

[16:34] Jesus has resurrected. He has shown himself alive over 40 days with many proofs to many people. And during those days, he's been teaching about the kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom of God? It is simply the rule of God in the hearts and in the lives of those who will humbly believe in him, follow and submit themselves to Jesus.

And not only in Israel, not only among the Jews, but all over the world, among all people, groups, and nations. Now, the disciples understand from Old Testament prophecies that God would establish his kingdom with the coming of his spirits.

And so in verse 5, when Jesus says that they would be baptized with the spirit, not many days from now, they then ask him in verse 6, is this the time that you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? They are likely interpreting the kingdom with narrow ethnic eyes, friends. As if what they're looking for is a political and national renewal of the Jewish nation.

[17:46] So their spiritual eyes need to be widened to see God's kingdom that will extend beyond the borders of national Israel. Now, Jesus corrects them.

They think that this is what they're looking for. They think that they need to know the signs and the time. And so he corrects them saying, listen, you don't need to concern yourself with the timing of this.

Here's what you need to do. You wait for the spirit to come. And when he does, you will have power to be my witnesses and offer this kingdom, this rule of God to people all over the world.

All they needed to do was wait and watch what the spirit, what Jesus would do in the power of the spirit. What Jesus is telling them and all of his followers after them is that they will be empowered by the spirit to be his witnesses both locally and globally.

Jesus will empower his disciples by the spirit to be his witnesses both locally and globally. So the first thing we want to look at is what does it mean to be called as witnesses, called to be witnesses.

[19:02] And we're going to consider what a witness is and what a witness is supposed to do. So being a witness, this is nothing new, right?

If you've been in this church for any length of time, we know that we are supposed to be witnesses and we want to be. I'm so encouraged by the testimonies that I've heard in this church and the desire for this church to reach out to friends in the community.

But for clarity's sake, I just want to consider a little bit more closely what exactly a witness is and what a witness does. So think of your favorite cop show, your favorite lawyer drama.

A witness in those shows is someone who observes or hears about something and then gives a verbal testimony of what he has seen or what he knows.

The same is true biblically for the Christian. After Jesus told the disciples that they would be witnesses, they spoke, right? They didn't keep it to themselves.

[20:03] They spoke. They proclaimed what they saw and knew to be true. So there must be verbal proclamation if we are to be authentic witnesses.

Sometimes, and I've heard this in my church, maybe you hear this here. Sometimes we hear Christians say that they witness for Jesus by how they live their lives. There's a famous quote that's credited to St. Francis of Assisi that says, preach the gospel at all times and if necessary, use words. Sounds very enlightened. Sounds very spiritual. In reality, St. Francis never said that. He was in fact a rigorous advocate for the verbal proclamation of the gospel. One of his biographers said that Francis preached the gospel filled with the power of the spirit, penetrating the marrow of the heart so that his listeners were turned with great amazement. [21 : 00] Now, Francis did say that a preacher should practice what he preaches. A Christian's deeds should match his words because our deeds validate what we proclaim. But we must never think that biblical witness can ever happen with deeds alone. Gospel witness is essentially and characteristically verbal. The classic verse, right? Romans 10, 14. How will they call on him in whom they've never believed? And how are they to believe in him in whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching or proclaiming? People simply can't believe. Unless someone speaks, proclaims, maybe even writes out what they know to be true about Jesus. And we understand that this verse doesn't apply to just pastors and missionaries, right? It's true for every believer in Jesus. We are called to be proclaimers. So biblical witnesses must first and foremost be proclaimers of the gospel message. And what we proclaim is who Jesus is, what he came to do, and what our response to him should be. [22 : 12] So who is Jesus? Right? The gospel of Luke chapter 9, Jesus asks the disciples who other people say he is. And there are a number of different answers. But then he asks them directly, but who do you say that I am? And the apostle Peter answers with this amazing declaration, Jesus, you are the Christ of God. Christ is simply the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means anointed one, or someone who is especially appointed and empowered for a particular task. The Old Testament teaches that God would provide a deliverer, a Messiah, and his task would be to release God's people from their oppression and suffering. This Messiah is also known as the Son of Man, meaning he would be human, but he would also have divine qualities, making him both God and man. [23 : 15] And as he comes to deliver his people, he would also establish the eternal reign of God on earth. As we've said, not only for the Jewish people, but among all people groups all over the world who would turn to him. This Messiah makes this happen, not as a military or political conqueror, but as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. That's the deliverance that they needed. Because that's their greatest enemy. That's their greatest oppression. Not merely from physical or national oppression, but friends, from the oppression of sin. Why? Because sin is the root of all oppression. And so back in Luke 9, Peter says, when he says, you are the Christ of God, Jesus confirms this. He affirms this and says, yes, that's right. And the Son of Man must suffer and be rejected and be killed. And on the third day, rise from the dead. That's who Jesus is. [24 : 18] God in human flesh. And what he did was establish his kingdom. How? By delivering people from their sin through his death on the cross as the payment as their sins deserve. And you know what? If all he did was die, then he's just a lot of talk. Right? Because anybody can say, hey, you know what? I'm going to die for your sins. Anybody can say that. And then they die and so what? Right? So how do you know if that person is legitimate? By conquering the very thing that sin produces, death itself. That's what Jesus has done. Right? He doesn't just die. He also rises from the dead as a public witness, a public declaration that he's got all power to fulfill what he said he would do. And that's why the disciples are willing to risk their lives by being Jesus' witnesses because he rose from the dead. That was the thing. And as witnesses, friends, we then call people to repent of their sins and trust in Jesus.

[25 : 24] Trust what we proclaim about the crucified and risen Christ. So we want to tell people who Jesus is, what he's done, but we also want to call them to make a response.

Right? I remember one time we were, when I was in Bible college, we had what was called practical Christian ministry. And I had this partner and we went door to door doing evangelism like surveys in the inner city of Chicago.

And we met this young woman, this single mom, and my partner, who was a gal, she shares the gospel with her and the lady's listening. Yes, yes, yes.

And then my friend says, okay, thanks. And that was it. And I said, wait, do you believe that?

Do you know that to be true for yourself? And she said, yes, I think I do. I'm not trying to pat myself on the back here. That was the spirit of God, right? It would have been easy to say, see you later.

[26 : 21] But we want to call people to respond with repentance and faith. That's the only appropriate response to the one who's conquered death that we might have forgiveness and eternal life and joy in his presence forever.

So that's what we're called to be witness. That's our first main point. And secondly, we are called to do that locally and globally, right? That's where we discover this is supposed to happen.

Looking at verse eight in our passage, we see that it's to happen where they are locally in Jerusalem. And then they're to go regionally and nationally into Judea and all Samaria.

And then to all the earth, right? It was to be an ever outward expanding witness. And so the particular emphasis here, interestingly, is to the people who have not yet heard.

Who have little or no opportunity to hear unless someone is sent. In our day, as I said, we would speak of unreached people groups, least evangelized ethnic groupings of people who have little or no opportunity to hear a clear gospel message.

[27 : 34] Jesus' followers are to strategically evangelize neighborhoods and cities, see people converted and baptized and local churches started.

Why? Why do they need the local churches? So that they can be cared for, that they can be equipped, they can be strengthened and sent out to do the same thing among other people groups who still haven't heard.

And why would Jesus want this witness to go out to the ends of the earth? Why go to all those really hard places? I just came back from the Middle East.

It's hard. It's hot. It's 115 degrees during the day and 104 at night. Like, why do you want to go there? Why? Because Jesus is not only the king of Israel, he is the king of the entire world.

He is the king. There will be people from every tribe and tongue and nation worshiping at the feet of Jesus because he is worthy of praise among every one of those people groups.

[28 : 39] And not only that, those who do receive him, those who hear and respond to our proclamation, they will know deep joy and satisfaction in him because that's what we were made for, friends.

So we're to be witnesses right where we are locally, but also where Jesus is still not known globally. Dr. David Platt once said that the local mission, what we do right in our area, the local mission is totally necessary.

Totally. But global mission is often tragically neglected. Local mission to unsaved people growing in biblical community as you do here, being equipped for ministry in the church and in the community is totally necessary.

We will never negate that. That's why we love what you're doing here. That's why we love this brother and his family and this church, right? Because you're doing that in Cambridge. We're so thankful for that.

But when it comes to global missions, did you know that for every dollar given to missions, only one cent goes to the most unreached, difficult people groups that have no church, no global, no gospel witness, no missionaries.

[29 : 58] And only three percent of all missionaries are going to those unreached people. So that's why in Sovereign Grace, we're working to help our churches build a vision for gospel mission to people in places that don't have that kind of a witness.

We want to see unreached Muslim peoples reached in the Middle East and in Central Asia. So we have a team in Turkey learning the language, learning the culture, getting into the lives of men and women who may have, they may have heard about Jesus.

Oh, Muslims know about Jesus, but they only know him as a prophet. They only believe that he is a prophet. They do not know him as the one who alone can save by his vicarious death on our behalf. We want to see people in India, people going to India where there are over, check this out, 2,500 people groups in one country, one nation. And the majority of them have no one to bring them this great news of the gospel.

That's why we have a team bring gospel hope to Buddhists in Southeast Asia. As we send the missionaries, as we support them, encourage them, pray for them, we join them in the work.

[31 : 11] We are gospel partners with them. Now, you may not be able to physically go. Maybe you can't. Maybe you can't.

Maybe God is calling you to do that. But as we partner with the ones that have gone, we join them with going spirits. In doing so, we are part of fulfilling Jesus' call to be witnesses to the nation.

But even though global missions can be tragically neglected, I think sometimes, friends, even the local mission, right where we are, can be tragically neglected.

In my small groups, I sometimes ask this question, why is it so hard for us to talk to people? Why? Typical answers I get are, I'm afraid of what people might think of me.

I'm afraid they're going to think I'm stupid. I'm afraid of losing relationships. I understand that. I don't think I'm really well equipped for it. I don't know enough to do it.

[32 : 15] Most recently, I got an answer that I thought was quite surprising. This young woman said, when asked, why don't we do it?

She said, sometimes I just forget that I'm living in the last days. Last days meaning from Jesus' ascension till he comes again. That's what the Bible says are the last days.

She says, sometimes I just forget I'm living in the last days. And I'm just thinking about what I'm having for dinner and what I'm going to do after that. Do you ever feel that way? Sometimes we forget we're in the last days and that we've been given a mission.

And if I'm going to be honest, that's my answer sometimes. And so friends, I want to urge us with God's help, with each other's encouragement, that we remember these are the last days.

And live those days with the mission in mind. So go to the supermarket with the mission in mind. Send your kids to school with the mission in mind.

[33 : 18] Go to university with the mission in mind. Come to church with the mission in mind. Leave church with the mission in mind. Drive with the mission in mind.

Oh, there's a good one, right? That's a hard one. That's a challenge, right? Because if somebody cuts you off, you're ready to ball them out, not, you know, tell them about Jesus. I remember a Belarusian pastor that I went to college with.

He's in his home country and someone cuts him off and he's ticked. And he rolls down the window and he says, Christ is risen. That's driving with the mission in mind, right?

Go to work with the mission in mind. Interact with your family and neighbors with the mission in mind. Go to the gym with the mission in mind. Go on vacation with the mission in mind.

Now, please, please don't misunderstand me here. I'm not saying that you need to talk about Jesus to every person that comes your way. You will never sleep, right? I'm just saying, have a mindset that says, this is who I am.

[34 : 27] A child of God, disciple, follower of Jesus Christ, witness for the gospel. That's who I am. That's what I'm here to do, to know Jesus, to delight in him, to obey him, and to come alongside Christ's people.

And help them to make him known locally and globally. Is that too much to think about? Maybe it is. Maybe it is sometimes. So that's why we need help, right? That's why we need the power of God.

Third point.

We need to do this witnessing in the power of the spirit. In the power of the spirit. We can't do it in our own strength, right? We don't have the savvy. We don't have the intellect. And there's a lot of smart people here.

Sorry, you're not smart enough, right? Not on your own. We don't have the powers of persuasion that we need to do this sort of witness. On top of all that, check this out.

Our job is to proclaim a message to people who don't even have the spiritual capacity to receive it. Right? 1 Corinthians 2.14.

[35 : 29] The natural person, that is the unbeliever, the natural person does not accept the things of the spirit, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them.

Because they are spiritually discerned. So friends, on our own, unbelievers cannot understand or even believe the things of God. That doesn't mean we don't study. It doesn't mean that we don't learn about apologetics. It doesn't mean that we don't pray for people. We want to do all of that, right? But one sense, it's an impossible task beyond ourselves. So we need the power of the spirit. And if we're in Christ, we already have the spirit dwelling in us. But we want to be humbly dependent on the spirit and to enable us to do anything of any spiritual value.

So how do we experience this power? First of all, we want to remember. Remember and believe that every Christian has the Holy Spirit within them.

[36 : 33] So power is available. Right? You know what Jesus says right in the Great Commission? You do this work. You go out and make disciples, teaching them, baptizing them.

He says, I will be with you. When you do the work of witnessing, of doing the work of evangelism and outreach, Jesus himself is with you.

That's an amazing means of grace. Right? So power is available. Second, as we look at the disciples in Acts, as they experience the power of the spirit, it happens as they prayed.

In Acts 2, after Jesus ascended and told them to wait for the spirit, what did they do? They went and prayed. They prayed for 10 days. Sometimes we have trouble praying for 10 minutes.

They did it for 10 days. It was after this time of prayer that they were filled with the spirit and began speaking about the mighty things that God has done in Jesus.

[37 : 38] Later, in Acts 4, after being persecuted, I mean, you're being put in jail. You're being beat up. They still want to do it. They're being persecuted.

They prayed, asking God to give them boldness to speak. It says that the place where they were was shaken. And they were filled with the spirit. And they again proclaimed the word with boldness.

So they prayed, asking God to work. And then they were filled. Right? So what is this filling of the spirit? Listen, in Ephesians 5, the Apostle Paul tells the Christians to be filled with the spirit.

I find this very interesting. Right? When Paul says that they should be filled with the spirit, I take that to mean that in prayer, they are to come under the influencing effects of the spirit according to the word.

All right? You've heard if someone is driving drunk, they get what? A DUI. Driving under the influence. The alcohol influences them in a certain way.

[38 : 45] As believers, we are to be filled with the spirit coming under the influencing effects of the spirit through the word that then moves us to speak for Jesus and to live for him.

So as we read the word, meditate on it, believe it, and prayerfully seek God to live it out, we're being filled with the spirit who empowers us to live and to speak for Jesus.

So far, we've seen that we are called to be witnesses. Those who speak of who Jesus is, what he's done, and then calling people to believe in him. Next, we saw that we are called to be those witnesses both locally and globally.

Not one or the other, but always both. We are saved to live with the mission in mind. Third, we are to be witnesses in the power of the spirit that's available to every believer.

We can pray for it, and we can seek it as we look to the word in faith. Our last major point. God calls us to be witnesses with a passion for Jesus.

[39 : 50] Calls us to be witnesses with a passion for Jesus. Perhaps you're convinced that we're called to be witnesses. I don't doubt that. Perhaps you're persuaded that you need the power of the spirit to do it.

Maybe you're lacking motivation at times to do something about it. I think as we look at these last verses in the passage, we can see something of the motivation that God gives the disciples, and I believe us.

Look at verses 9 to 11. And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, Jesus was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven?

This Jesus who was taking up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. A cloud took him out of their sights.

[40 : 52] Most commentators would say that this is not an ordinary cloud, but the cloud of God's glory. Throughout Scripture, this cloud represents the presence and the power of God.

As the disciples see Jesus going up into the cloud, they are likely reminded of the pillar of cloud that led Israel through the desert in the Exodus.

It might make them think of the cloud that rested on the tabernacle, reassuring the Israelites of God's presence and power with them. It most likely reminded a few of the disciples, I'm talking about Peter, James, and John.

It most likely reminded them of the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus revealed himself to them in all of his glory, and two men come and join him, right?

Moses and Elijah. And at that time, they are talking with him, and a cloud appeared. And a voice spoke. It was God.

[41 : 58] Here now in our verses, Jesus is ascending in the clouds. Their eyes are fixed on this amazing sight. They're staring at him. There's no doubt that they are awestruck by what they see.

And two guys show up. Just like at the Mount of Transfiguration. So what's happening? Dr. Sinclair Ferguson says this.

God is giving them one last amazing supernatural manifestation at the ascension of Christ. To make sure, check this out, to make sure that they remembered what God said to them on the mountain of transfiguration.

What did he say, friends? This is my beloved son. Listen to him. Listen to what he says. Ferguson's saying, two men on the mountain?

Two men now? It's a reminder for them. Listen to what God says. Look at who Jesus is, right? Jesus is coming back. So as you saw him go, it's as if he's saying to them, the men are saying, don't just stand there.

[43 : 04] Do something. Do something. Remember what you saw. Remember what has been said and then do something. So friends, we want to do three things as we go out in the power of the spirit to witness.

Three things. I'll begin with the letter A. Be amazed, ask, and act. Be amazed, ask, and act. Be amazed at the person and the wonderful grace of Jesus again and again.

Now you might say, okay, that sounds good, but what if I'm not feeling very amazed? All right? I have to say one of the ways to be amazed again is to come and sing with God's people in church.

I was amazed again this morning of what God has done in my life. But remember, remember who he really is, who Jesus is. Son of God, who by a sinless life, sacrificial death, powerful resurrection, came to deliver you.

From the kingdoms of darkness into his marvelous light. Remember what he has done for you. You know, scripture tells us over and over again, remember the deeds of the Lord, especially how he saved us from the slavery of sin.

[44 : 17] Some of you may have heard of Stephen Curtis Chapman. He's an old Christian gospel singer. He writes a song that says this. Remember your chains. Your chains.

Remember the prison that once held you before the love of God broke through. Remember the place. Oh, remember the place where you were without grace.

When you see where you're now, remember your chains. And friends, remember your chains are gone. Sometimes people don't want to think of their past. And I get it. Because it can be painful.

You can look back on the things you've done and think, I don't want to remember that. I want to move ahead. But you know what the Apostle Paul says? He says, I was a blasphemer. I was a persecutor of the church.

And God had mercy on me. He remembered where he came from and what God did for him. Remember your chains and that they're gone.

[45 : 15] So be amazed. Remember where you're now and how the grace of God is delivering you from your sins and weaknesses even now.

You're a new creation. If you're in Jesus, you're a different person. You may not feel like it at times. I remember being on a mission trip and just kind of grieving over besetting sins.

Things that I struggle with again and again. And the Spirit of God really reminded me, I'm better. I don't give in to those sins like I used to.

I'm not doing the same things. I might not be where I want to be, but I'm not who I was. I'm better because of God's faithfulness to do that work of sanctification in you.

You may not feel like you're making much progress. Oh, yes, you are. More than you even realize. So remember that God is at work in you now. He's faithful to do that work.

[46 : 25] Be amazed. It might seem like a little thing. Be amazed. Remember to look ahead at what Jesus will do, right? He's coming back for those He's died for.

The passage says that He's going to do that. And when He does, He'll make all things new. A new heaven, a new earth. And check it out. A new you.

A new you. No more sickness. No more sadness. No more sin. No more disappointment. No more death.

And you will be with that good and glorious and supremely excellent Jesus forever. Friends, remember that hope. God sent those two men to help them remember.

God's given you the story to help you remember. Remember and be amazed. And as you're doing it, right? All this remembering. We talk about things like preaching the gospel to yourselves.

[47 : 25] Rehearsing the gospel. All good. I like it. But you know what I want you to do? I want you to do it with Jesus. I want you to rehearse it talking to Jesus. I want you to engage with Jesus so that you are actually communing with Him.

Listen to what Henry Martin, amazing missionary to, I think, India and to Iran. He says this. The spirit of Jesus is the spirit of missions.

The nearer we get to Jesus, the more missionary we become. So remember, be amazed. Draw near to Jesus. You will become more missionary minded because that's what Jesus is like.

So be amazed. Second, ask. Pray and ask that God would give you His help and power to be His witness. Admit that you're weak in it. And ask Him for grace to have this mindfulness of the mission.

Ask for courage and wisdom to know when to speak, to know when to shut up, right? In prayer, bring to Him the souls of your family and friends.

[48 : 32] Praying, listen, not only that He would save them, but that He might use you to speak the words of life to them. So be amazed.

Ask and then act. Consider making a plan. I get this from my friend Jim Donahue. Has Jim spoken here before? Yeah. He's kind of like, I call him the evangelist at large in Sovereign Grace.

He's like, why do you call me that? It sounds like I'm going to be arrested for something, right? But he's the guy who helps train this in evangelism. He says, make a plan. Write down who in your life that you might want to see reach with the gospel.

And don't make it like a list of 15 people. Two or three people. Two or three people. Begin praying for them. Consider ideas of how you can simply get together with them.

And it doesn't have to be anything really special. Perhaps something you're already doing that you can do with others. Taking a walk. Invite a non-Christian friend on a walk. Go bowling, right?

[49 : 30] Watch a game. Play a game. Go out shopping. See a movie. Whatever it is. Just build relationships with non-Christians. You know what Kevin DeYoung says? One of the greatest obstacles, one of the greatest reasons we don't witness is because we don't know many non-Christians.

Who do you know that you can just get together with and begin to build a relationship with? Just think about that. Think about what you might do and actually contact someone and do it.

Like maybe this week. Who are those two or three people? Who can you contact and do something with even this week? Here's where fear or tiredness or busyness can mess up the whole plan.

We need help to follow through. I need help. I need reminders. Thank God for your community groups. Thank God for your pastors who preach about these things.

Thank God for your friends who say, hey, how's that going with your non-Christian brother or sister, right? We need help and reminders. And you know what? If something is really important to us, we always make plans and we always give time and energy to making it happen.

[50 : 47] I think I've said it before. I never miss a meal. I plan for it because food is really important to me. We can make a plan for this.

Is it important? It is. There's nothing greater than people knowing the glory and the goodness of Jesus and having their lives transformed. So we can ask God to do that in us.

So let's be amazed at Jesus, who he is, what he's done, what he's going to do. Spend time with him. Worship him, delight in him. Let's ask God for help for his power.

Let's ask, let's act then and plan to do something to move us in the power of the spirit to be his witnesses. Amen? Amen.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for your grace. Thank you for saving us. Thank you that someone took the time to invite us, to talk to us, to read with us, whatever it might be, and that you

graciously work to open our eyes to see the wonder and the beauty of Jesus.

[51 : 55] Oh, Father, please help us as individuals and as a church to grow in our power for witness. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.