

The Power of the Spirit



Restoration (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue to look together at the outworking of God's end time purpose of restoration for His people.

Yesterday I compared the church as we see it today in the Western Hemisphere with the church as portrayed in the book of Acts. Today I'm going to state certain specific conditions which I believe must be fulfilled if the church is really to be restored.

I see four main areas in which the contemporary church is for the most part deficient. Four aspects of God's purpose for the church which are essential to its proper function. And I'm going to list these four areas or aspects in which the contemporary church is largely deficient.

First, the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

Second, the main ministries given to build the Body of Christ.

Third, proper spiritual government or authority.

Fourth, the effective, functioning unity of believers.

I'm going to repeat that list because it is important to all that I'm going to say for the rest of this week. These are the four practical aspects of God's purpose for the church in which I see the contemporary church as largely deficient. First, the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Second, the main ministries given to build the Body of Christ. Third, proper spiritual government or authority. And fourth, the effective functioning unity of believers.

In due course, as I continue with these talks, I think you will see that there's a logical connection between these various areas of which there are deficiencies. Today I'm going to deal with the first area, the power of the Holy Spirit. I want to state three simple facts about the church. First, the church was supernaturally brought into being by the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, the church depends continually on the Holy Spirit to function effectively. Third, there is no alternative way in which the church can function effectively.

I want to emphasize the word "supernatural." Not particularly in the sense of that which is melodramatic or particularly

impressive to the senses, but that which is above the level of man's natural ability. And I don't want to speak only of power, but I want to speak also of grace. I believe the church is totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit for both grace and power to function above the level of human ability but on the level of God's will. I believe the church can never function effectively merely on the level of natural human ability, intelligence or organization.

I've stated this as clearly as I know how in my book Purposes of Pentecost. And I am going to read just two paragraphs from that book.

> "If we study the New Testament with an open mind, we are compelled to acknowledge that the whole life and experience of the early Christians was permeated in every part by the supernatural. Supernatural experiences were not something incidental or additional; they were an integral part of their whole lives as Christians. Their praying was supernatural; their preaching was supernatural; they were supernaturally guided, supernaturally empowered, supernaturally transported, supernaturally protected. Remove the supernatural from the book of Acts, and you are left with something that has no meaning or coherence. From the descent of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and onwards, it is scarcely possible to find a single chapter in which the record of the supernatural does not play an essential part."

And then a little further on in the same book:

> "The truth is that, where we do not see and experience the supernatural, we have no right to speak of New Testament Christianity. New Testament Christianity can never be separated from the supernatural or experienced in isolation from it. These two things, the supernatural and the New Testament Christianity, are inseparably interwoven."

All right. That's a quotation from my book, Purposes of Pentecost.

Now I want to give you a very simple, childishly simple outline of God's redemptive intervention in the history of the human race. I want to present it to you in just two successive stages. The first stage, God the Father sent the Son to represent Him. Therefore, no one can come to or receive from the Father except through the Son.

It's a principle of God that when He appoints a representative, He always honors and upholds that representative. When the Father made Jesus His personal representative to the human race He demanded that the whole human race honor Jesus as they would honor the Father and made no provision for anyone to come to Him, the Father, or receive from Him apart from the Son.

Now evangelical theology and most Christian theology makes this pretty clear, on the whole. But there's a second phase of this redemptive intervention which is equally clear, equally scriptural, equally important, that is often neglected in theology. The second phase is this, the Son of God sent the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, to represent Him. Jesus said to His disciples, "I'm going away. It's in your best interest that I go away. Because if I don't go away the Holy Spirit will not come. But if I do go away, I will send the Holy Spirit to you and He will take of the things that are Mine and make them known to you and impart them to you."

So the Lord Jesus, in a certain sense, officially designated the Holy Spirit as His personal representative on earth. And the Holy Spirit came in person to the church on the Day of Pentecost. But the principle is the Father sent the Son. Therefore, no one can come to or receive from the Father apart from the Son. But also, the Son sent the Spirit. Therefore, no one can come to or receive from the Son except through the Spirit.

This applies in each direction, both in the direction of access to God and in the direction of receiving from God. In Ephesians 2:18, Paul says this:

> "For through him [that's Jesus] we both [that's Jews and Gentiles] have access to the Father by one Spirit." (NIV)

Notice, through the Son, by the Spirit, to the Father. It's not just the Son and the Father but an essential link in the total chain is the Holy Spirit. Through the Son, by the Spirit, to the Father. Remove the Spirit and there is no access.

This is true also the other way around; that is, God dwelling in the believer. In Ephesians 2:22, just four verses further on, Paul says:

> "And in him [that's Jesus] you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (NIV)

So the Father indwells us by the Spirit in the Son. Again, the Spirit is one essential link. We cannot remove that link and have God's purpose fulfilled. The Father indwells by the Spirit in the Son.

Put those two verses from Ephesians 2 together and we have this general principle. Without the Holy Spirit there is no access to the Father. And likewise, without the Holy Spirit there is no way the Father can indwell the people of God. If we do not have the Holy Spirit in real presence among us, we can have theology, we can have doctrine, we can say prayers, we can go through the motions of church life, but we do not have the reality that the New Testament is all about.

Let's look at just one very simple but profound statement in 2 Corinthians 3:17:

> "Now the Lord is the Spirit..." (NIV)

That's capital "S," the Holy Spirit.

"The Lord" is the title in the New Testament of the one true God. Each person of the Godhead is designated as Lord. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Spirit is Lord. Each is equally Lord. We often acknowledge the Lordship of the Father and the Son but fail to acknowledge the Lordship of the Holy Spirit.

Let me express it this way. Jesus is Lord over the church. The Holy Spirit is Lord in the church. The Holy Spirit is the personal, resident representative of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church on earth. Jesus is in heaven, the Spirit is on earth. And the Lordship of Jesus over the church is effective only insofar as the Spirit is Lord in the church. What does that mean? It means that if we've not given the Holy Spirit His rightful place, we need to repent. And not merely do we need to repent and change our ways but we need to submit ourselves without reservation to the Lordship of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to do what He alone can do in the church in which He is Lord.

All right. Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the second essential for restoration of the church, the main ministries given to build the Body of Christ.

Radio Program

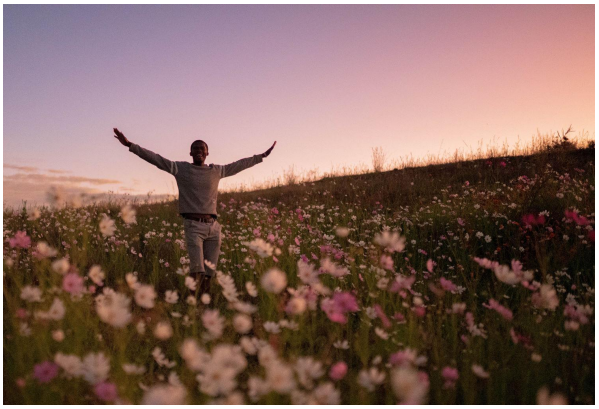
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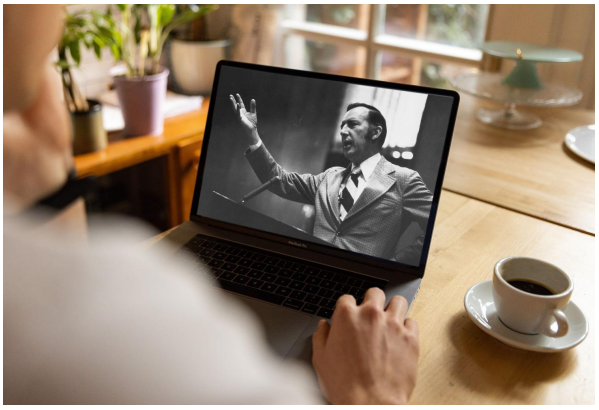
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