

Series: The Familiar Stranger
Witness; The Spirit Sends the Church

Acts 1:8

Sermon by Lead Pastor Paul Joslin
 Waterstone Community Church, Littleton, Colorado
 Sunday morning, June 28, 2026

Dan: Anyway, got to love review. Let's open our word. Please stand for the reading from Acts chapter 1, verse 8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

Paul: Thank you so much, Dan. Can we just give it up for him? We are so thankful for the ministry that he and his wife and his family are doing. If you would like to hear more about the work God is doing through them, they are going to be available right after service through those doors, and they would love to have a conversation with you about their work and ways that you can maybe support or come alongside them. We have been in this series, The Familiar Stranger, and we have been looking at the person of the Holy Spirit, and throughout this series, I have tried to paint an image, a mental picture for our church of what life with the Spirit looks like. It is one we continue to come back to and return to, because I really want us to grasp this concept, and the basic premise is this. I painted a picture of a beach resort. You could go to Mexico, Hawaii, favorite place in the world, where you just get to sit on the beach and enjoy the pool and people bringing you drinks with little umbrellas in them, and you're there, and in the pool, there is no sand. There is no salt water that stings your eyes. There's no seaweed. There's just this calm, carefully curated space for you to enjoy and to relax, and thirty yards away is the ocean, and there's no curation at the ocean. There is a power that is more comprehensive than you could even imagine. There is more life teeming in the water than you could ever experience in a thousand lifetimes. There is power that can take your breath away and knock you off your feet, and that is life with the Spirit of God. So many of us, we live in existence following Jesus where we are just content in the pool, and it is a nice life, it is a beautiful life. We are experiencing the goodness of God, but there is more available to us, and that is the life with the Spirit of God, with the Holy Spirit. Throughout this series, I have been trying to drag us slowly from the pool into the ocean, to where we can maybe smell the salt in the air, where we can feel the waves crashing on our feet and experience life with the fullness of God.

There is this mythological lore in our culture about stories of the sea. There are tales and books that are told about the ways that the sea is full of life, tales of the sea that are full of wonder and complexity and danger and discovery and adventure, where sailors risked leaving the shore to experience life beyond. I am here to tell you today that there are stories of the Spirit that are similar to stories of the sea, stories of ordinary people like you and like me who are willing to step beyond the shore and venture into the unknown, into the places of discovery, of experience, the life of God in extraordinary ways, ways of healing and courage and faith and generosity and miracles and sacrifice and love. I think the invitation for us today, Waterstone, is to recognize that the Spirit exists to bring us into those types of stories, not for its own sake, not even for your sake, but for the sake of the world and for the glory of God.

I am afraid that sometimes when we talk about the Spirit, and up until this point, I could even be guilty of leading us in this direction, where you might get to the end of this series, and you might believe that the whole point of life with the Spirit is a better emotional experience, where you understand God a little more deeply, you experience His love a little more fully, and that is absolutely true. The Spirit absolutely exists so you can experience the comfort and grace and goodness and love of God, but in my own personal life, and I have shared this before, that for much of my life, it was Father, Son, and Holy Bible. I did not really have a relationship with the Spirit, and this is true, the epitome of the experience with the Spirit that I felt from my life was simply like goosebumps during worship or a sermon, and I was like, “Oh, that is the Holy Spirit talking to me right now,” and absolutely, the Holy Spirit comes in clarity in those moments to speak to us, but if we think that the height of life with the Spirit is goosebumps at a particular song that we like, or a sermon where someone exposit the word, and it hits us in a new way, then we have missed so much of what the Spirit has to offer us. The Spirit does not simply exist for us to have a good experience with God. The Spirit exists for the sake of the world and exists in believers for the sake of the world.

We began this series by a quote by Billy Graham, and he said this: “Everywhere I go, I find that God’s people lack something. They are hungry for something. Their Christian experience is not all that they had expected, and they often have reoccurring defeat in their lives.” Christians today are hungry for spiritual fulfillment. The most desperate need of our nation today is that men and women who profess Jesus be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. I would say that is just as true today as it was in Billy Graham’s day, and he traveled all around the nation and then nations experiencing life with believers, and his consensus thought, the thing that he walked away with was that there is a lack of fulfillment and a desire for more and a reoccurring defeat within the life of the church that needs the Holy Spirit, but did you catch the end? It is not just so that we can feel better about our faith in Jesus. It is for the sake of the world. The desperate need of the nation today, the desperate need of the nations, is the people of God who are empowered by the Spirit to follow Jesus into the places He has called us. What we tend to do is we tend to make the Holy Spirit very, very small in our lives. He exists for my comfort, my conviction, and absolutely, I will say again, the Spirit does those things, but the Spirit wants to draw us into a deeper story. He wants us to have stories of the sea, where we have experienced life with the Spirit in awe and wonder and the miraculous, and sometimes that comes through the ordinary and through ordinary people like you and me.

I think the passage that Dan just read is what draws us into this deeper story. We are really going to camp out on this one verse today, Acts chapter 1, verse 8, where it says, this is Jesus speaking, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the very ends of the earth.” There are two things that Jesus says will happen to us when the Holy Spirit falls on his church, falls on believers, and these are the last words that He spoke before He ascended in the book of Acts, before He was seated on his throne forever. He did not say that the last thing He wants us to remember is to be at peace or to take really good notes about everything that He said. He did not tell us to simply join a small group and talk about the words of scripture. He said that his Spirit will descend and that we will receive power to be his witnesses throughout the entire world.

The Spirit was given with a purpose, and that purpose is not primarily to comfort your life. It is to make you a bold witness for the kingdom of God, telling stories about what Jesus has done. The truth of the church, and if you are here today, and you are a follower of Jesus, the truth for you is that the Spirit has been given to you so that you can continue the ministry of Jesus in a broken world, and so today I want to keep this message really simple. Last week I joked about preaching a short message, and I went for like fifty minutes. So, we are not going to do that today, which is a risky thing to say when you said that last week, and then you broke your promise, but I'm going to try really hard to keep it very simple, and we are just going to take two points, that when the Spirit comes, when you receive the Spirit, you are emboldened for power and for witness. So, let's break both of those words down. We are going to start with this word, power.

Jesus says that when you receive the Spirit, you will receive power, that you will receive power when the Spirit comes on you. Now that is a very particular word in the ancient languages, and the word is *dunamis*. Can everybody say "*dunamis*" for me? That was pretty good. You guys are halfway to scholars in Greek. All right, and this is what *dunamis* means. It actually comes from our word for dynamite. It is the same root word, which ultimately means power. Now, if you hear dynamite, you probably think explosive power, and you are thinking, "Wow, did Jesus give us power to like blow stuff up?" That sounds awesome, especially right before Fourth of July. Am I right? Like, we could get on board with that. No, it has actually got a deeper meaning. So *dunamis*, it means this, power, ability, capability, and then if you follow along, it says the Spirit gives us power beyond our natural capacity.

So, I want you to think, has anyone ever driven an old car from the 1950s or 60s, and some of you are like, I'm showing my age a little bit. Okay, you don't have to like say that you are old, but you know when like you can actually drive a modern car, and your power steering goes out? Has anybody ever had that happen before? It is incredibly difficult to drive that vehicle. I mean, instead of just like barely turning the wheel with two fingers, it takes your whole body to crank that thing, to turn it, and it takes a lot of power to move that vehicle around. The idea of *dunamis* is power steering, that you're no longer dependent on your own strength. You have the capacity to do something that you did not have the power to do before. Aristotle actually likes this word a lot, and he uses the word *dunamis* to become a word for potential, the capacity that something has that has not yet been realized. There is a power assisting you. You are steering that wheel, but you are no longer steering alone. That is *dunamis*, and in the New Testament, they take that word, and they use it for the power the Spirit gives, and it does not mean God hands us religious dynamite. That would be awesome, but that is not what it means, okay? It means God gives ordinary people, like you and me, capacity to do things beyond their natural ability. It is the Spirit giving us the ability to live and witness beyond the limits of our own strength.

I have young kids, and I love to use them for illustrations all the time, and they get tired of it. So, I told them every time I use their name in the sermon, I'll give them five dollars, and now they are okay with it, but Camden, my daughter, when she was two years old, and if she wanted a glass of milk, and I asked her to pour her own glass of milk, I mean, it would be a disaster, right? Like two years old, she does not have the coordination. She is like trying to pour it, but it is as big as she is. Like a gallon of milk is massive, and she is not strong enough, and so it would just be a mess everywhere, right? As she grows in her stature and in her strength and in her ability, now at seven, I can ask her to pour milk for herself, for

her brother. She can get me a glass of milk out of the fridge. She has grown in her capacity to accomplish things, and when the Spirit comes into our life, it helps us grow in capacity to accomplish things that we could not do on our own, that we would not have the strength to do on our own. That is what the Holy Spirit does in our life. It does not ask you to try harder to follow after Jesus. It grows us into people who can do what we could never do before.

So, what does *dunamis*, this power, look like, this new capacity actually look like in our lives? I think a great example of it is the apostle Peter, who had a capacity that grew as he was filled with the Spirit. His transformation is so fascinating. In the gospels, as Jesus is arrested, he is afraid to tell a servant girl that has no power over him that he knows Jesus, and then fifty days after the resurrection of Christ, he stands before thousands of people, and filled by the power of the Holy Spirit, he not only confesses to knowing Jesus, but he looks at a crowd of people in Jerusalem, and he says, “The Messiah was here, and you all killed him,” and thousands come to faith in Jesus. That is the increase in capacity. It is the boldness to do what you could not do before. For us, practically, capacity, it looks like to be able to love when our flesh wants to retaliate against others. It looks like the ability to forgive those who have betrayed us, to bless the person who has wounded us. It looks like being able to remain patient when everything in us wants to walk away. Sometimes we can look at people and think, “Oh, that’s just their personality,” and sometimes we can look at people and recognize that that is not they themselves. That is the power of the Spirit within them.

It is not just internal transformation, though. It is actually the power to go out into the world as well, the capacity to pray for the sick in faith instead of cynicism, to discern God’s leading, to speak a timely word of encouragement, to trust God with generosity when fear tells us to hold on tighter, to endure suffering without losing hope, to choose joy when circumstances have not changed. It gives us the ability and the capacity to become more like Jesus more than we ever imagined possible. We talk a lot at our church about becoming more like Jesus and learning to live for others, but that is not some sort of self-help statement to give you five steps to living a better life. That only happens by the power and presence of God taking up residence within us and filling us, empowering us, increasing our capacity to become more like Him. The Holy Spirit does not simply improve our natural abilities. He shares the very life of Jesus with us, so that the courage Jesus displayed becomes the courage that you and I have the ability to wield. The compassion that Jesus showed to those around Him becomes the same compassion you have to share with the world around you. The wisdom and the love of Jesus become your ability to love and have wisdom for the world around you.

Dunamis does not try harder to live like Jesus. It is Jesus living his life through you by the power of his Holy Spirit. We have talked before about what this power means, but it is very fascinating that the same word is used in Ephesians, and we have talked about this verse several times, but this verse in Ephesians, which talks about the Spirit coming onto believers, says this, that that power of the Spirit is the same as the mighty strength exerted when the Spirit raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and I keep trying to get this idea into our minds. The Spirit taking up residence in the life of believers is the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. It is the power to reverse death, and it was not just for Jesus in that moment. It is the same power that was given to every believer to live and continue his ministry in

the world, but Paul does not stop there. It is not just resurrection power in you for the good of the world. What does he say? That same power also enthroned Him in the heavenly realms over every power and authority in the world and in the supernatural world. It means you do not have to be afraid of the next election or of what is taking place in the world, because the same power that is enthroned over all things lives inside of you.

Do you live like that? Do you live like you believe that power is not only available to you, but is ready to burst forth from you to bring life into a broken world? Paul is trying to paint this picture that in our world that is so full of fear and anxiety and addiction and disease and death, we have the power as the church to not simply stand against those things, but to conquer those things. We do not have to be afraid. The powers of darkness do not have the final word. Jesus does, and by the power of his Spirit, you can share in that life. Jesus said, "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these." Not because we are greater than Jesus, but because He is the greatest, and He has sent his Spirit to empower us for the life He has called us to live. It would be one thing if Jesus said, "Hey, I want you to follow after me, and I want you to try really hard to do all the things that I did and be all the things that I was and to say all the things that I said." That would be impossible. You read these stories about Jesus, and He raises people from the dead, He heals lepers, He gives sight to the blind, He proclaims truth to power, He changes the world, and He says He wants you, as an ordinary follower of his, to do the exact same thing, and that you have the power of the Spirit inside of you to accomplish the mission that He has given to his church.

The Spirit who empowered Jesus now empowers his church, and his words become our words. His compassion becomes our compassion. His courage becomes our courage. His healing becomes our healing ministry, and his witness becomes our witness to the world. The same mission of reconciliation and redemption and restoration that He carried in His ministry now becomes ours through the power of the Holy Spirit. The resurrection did not simply prove that Jesus was alive. That is what we like to turn it into sometimes. It actually inaugurated a new creation where the powers of sin, death, and darkness no longer have the final word. The Holy Spirit is how the future victory of King Jesus breaks into the present through ordinary people like you and me. "You will receive power when the Spirit comes, and you will be my witnesses." That is what Jesus said. You will receive power, and not so you feel better, not so that you have peace, not so that you can do miraculous things, but so that you can be his witnesses. "You will be my witnesses." Acts 1:8: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

Now what is fascinating about this idea is Jesus specifically told his followers not to continue the mission until the Holy Spirit came, so they had been sitting in Jerusalem waiting for the power of the Spirit, and sometimes, I think when I look at the church, I think we have missed that really, really important directive from Jesus. Because I think we are really capable of doing the church thing, doing the missions thing, doing the evangelism thing, trying to reach the lost without the power of the Spirit, and we think it is up to us and our abilities. How well do I know the answers to the questions someone theoretically might ask me? How much am I able to argue and craft an argument to convince people that Jesus is alive? We think it is all about our words and our actions, and meanwhile, Jesus said, do not take a step towards the mission of God's kingdom until you receive the power of the Spirit, and how many of us are afraid to

witness and tell people about who Jesus is because we are afraid that we do not have the right answers? Or we are afraid that our life maybe doesn't look convincing enough for someone else to follow Jesus, and I wonder for how many of us, if we simply recognize the words of Jesus, "You will be my witnesses." There is no conditional there. A witness tells a story. What story are you telling with your life? What story are you telling with your life?

What a witness is not, and I want you to pay attention to what Jesus says here, is He does not say you will receive power to win arguments to convince people. He does not say that you will receive power to build bigger churches or better ministries. He does not say you will receive power to convince people where they are wrong, but we would love that power, wouldn't we? He says, "You will receive power to be my witnesses." A witness simply tells a story about what they saw and what they have experienced. I think so many of us, we have turned this command, and we have said Jesus commanded us to when we got the power of the Spirit and when the Spirit comes on us, that we will have the power to be defense attorneys, and we flip the paradigm. A defense attorney is someone who has to convince someone of what is true, to convince the jury of their point of view, but a witness just bears testimony to what they have seen and to what they have experienced. Jesus does not say you will do witnessing. He says, "You will be my witnesses." That is identity language. The only question is what kind of story are we telling with our lives and with our words?

I want you to think about a witness in a courtroom. A courtroom witness is there to not try to steer things one way or the other. It is just to truthfully explain what they have seen and what they experienced. Whether it is a character witness or a person who is witnessing to an event that they saw, they're not trying to convince anybody of the truth. They are trying to simply say, "This is what I have seen. This is what I have experienced. It is up to you to decide what you will do with that." I wonder how many of us would feel less fear in our lives about sharing the goodness of who Jesus is if we stopped trying to think we needed to have perfect arguments, or we needed to have all the answers, or we needed to know all of the truths, and we simply said, "This is what I have seen Jesus do in my life, and I think He could do something similar in yours." Do you want to know the real reason why I think that sometimes we step back from that? It is because I don't think we have stories to tell. We don't have stories of the sea, because we have been living a sheltered life in the pool. How can we tell people about what we have witnessed and what we have experienced and the truth of what we have seen if we haven't really seen that much or witnessed that much because we have just been content to have theological discussions about what we believe? What if there is more?

Our witness is our testimony that Jesus is alive, that He is king, and that his kingdom has broken into this world, and if the Spirit is tasked with continuing the ministry of Jesus through ordinary people like you and me, then our witness simply just has to look like the ministry of Jesus. When we speak, it should sound like Jesus. When we look somewhere, it should look like Jesus. When we love, it should love like Jesus. Our witness about Jesus' life should look like Jesus' life inside of us, because He has called us to continue his ministry. He has called us to step into his ministry. Have you thought about it that way before, that when Jesus called you to follow Him, He was not just simply calling you to get a ticket into heaven where you could be with Him for eternity, but that He actually called you onto his team so that you could continue the work that He had been doing in the world? How might that paradigm shift

change how we saw following Jesus, that Jesus has selected you and has been in work in your life so that you can keep doing the things that He did, to keep sharing the good news of his kingdom that is breaking into a broken world that is desperate for good news?

Tyler Staton in his book, *The Familiar Stranger*, breaks down what it looks like to witness into three categories, three swimming lessons that I want to use very quickly, and then we will wrap up with a prayer response, but there are three ways that Tyler Staton, and this is where I want to just make this super practical, three ways that we can witness to who Jesus is through the power of the Spirit, and the first is this, spoken love. He talks about the idea that followers of Jesus speak in love. We witness in boldness what Christ has done in our lives. We share about the truth of what we have experienced and what Jesus has taught us, how Jesus has changed us, how He has encouraged us, how He has confronted the sin and death and disease in our lives, and then we call people to that same reality, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to witness to those who are in our lives, where we bring our honest self, our joy, our struggles, our fears, our failures, and all of our hope, and we bring all of that, and we say, “This is who Jesus is and what He has done,” and we do that in worship, in work, in errands, in our parenting, in our family visits back home, and happy hour with our friends on a Friday. We simply say, “This is who Jesus is. This is what He is like. This is what I have seen.” It is not a debate. It is not a challenge. It is not something you are forcing upon people.

I love visiting Rocky Mountain National Park. My family has been vacationing there since I was a little kid. My family still loves to go there. We are getting ready to go there for two nights at the YMCA this coming week. They have like an awesome pastor’s discount, so humble brag. It is great. Like, we love being up in the mountains. It is beautiful. If I come back next week, and I say, “Oh my gosh, this is why Rocky Mountain National Park is the best park in the whole world and why you need to go,” and I start laying out theoretical arguments for why it is the place you need to visit on your next vacation, and I put everything in a spreadsheet for you, it is probably not going to convince you, but if I tell you stories of what it was like for my family to rest and relax together and laugh, if I told you stories of the beauty that we experienced, it might make you want to experience that too, right? So many times, we take witnessing to Jesus, and we turn it into a theoretical argument or into apologetics, and we try to formulate the systematic theology and the spreadsheet to convince people. I wonder what would happen if we just said, “Man, Jesus is beautiful. He has changed my life. This is what that looks like. I wonder if you’re hungry for something of the same.”

So many times, when it comes to spoken love, the problem that we have is that it does not actually sound like love. It sounds like anger. It sounds like resentment or bitterness. It sounds like condemnation. You go through the early church, and for sure, they stood up to the principalities and powers that tried to confront the kingdom of God, but when they were sharing their faith with the lost, so much of the time it looked like ordinary people who were uneducated, did not have all the right answers, and simply pointed to people to Jesus and said, “I think this is what you are looking for.” What if that were our paradigm? But Jesus didn’t only proclaim the kingdom through spoken love. He also demonstrated it through supernatural love, so we not only witness in boldness, but we also witness in power. Everywhere Jesus went, blind eyes were opened, the sick were healed, demons fled, the hungry were fed, the broken were restored, and it was all fueled by supernatural love, and the displays of Jesus and the church are never meant to be random

displays of power. They are acts of compassion. They are signs that God reigns over a broken world that is being held captive by sin, sickness, and death, and there is a rescuer who is powerful enough to deliver people from those things.

I was reminded of that idea a few weeks ago. My dad spent some time in Africa, and I have shared a few stories with you, but he said there was this moment that he had no category for. He was standing there, and they had just had an altar call where they had this church service, and they had brought a bunch of people in to share the gospel with them, and as these three women came up to receive Christ, one of them fell on the ground and just began convulsing. The pastor, who has been pastoring in this area of Tanzania for a long time, he said, “You know what?” He told my dad after the fact, “I saw when she came in that she was possessed by a demon, and I did not want her to distract everyone from what was going on,” and so as these three women walked up to receive Jesus, he saw this woman fall and start convulsing on the ground, and this is just like this. He just said, “Okay, I am going to lead you to faith, and we will deal with that in a moment,” and so he prayed with them, and he turned, and he healed her of her possession by the power of the Spirit. If that is just not one of the ultimate displays of how we do not have to be afraid, of how we do not have to fear, “I will deal with that in a moment,” and it was not for his own glory. He pulled her to the side. He just wanted the goodness of Jesus to be displayed. The power that raised Christ from the dead and has enthroned Him above every earthly and supernatural power is inside of you, to love people supernaturally, to bring you a capacity beyond what you could do.

Then finally, it is not just spoken love or supernatural love. All of that only makes sense within the context of Jesus’ sacrificial love, his witness through the cross. The entire shape of Jesus’ life, the entire shape of his ministry, long before He died on a cross, He lived carrying a cross. He consistently chose the way of humility over recognition, service over status, generosity over comfort, forgiveness over revenge, and obedience over self-preservation. The cross was not an interruption in Jesus’ ministry at the end of his life. It was the culmination of it. He lived that life always, and if we were to follow Jesus by the power of his Spirit, then that same Spirit forms the cruciform life in us. He gives you and me, ordinary followers of Jesus, the capacity to forgive when we have been deeply wounded, to stay when it would be easier to leave, to serve when nobody notices, to give generously when fear tells us not to, to love that difficult person in the lobby or at our work, to bless our enemies and not curse them, and to endure suffering without losing hope. The greatest witness of the church that has ever been offered was not the size of its buildings or the size of its influence or even the miracles that sometimes break through. It is the community of ordinary people like you and me who love like Jesus, sacrificially, with our whole lives, because that is a supernatural ability.

The Holy Spirit, and this is the final idea for the sermon, the Holy Spirit clothes ordinary followers of Jesus with the power to continue the ministry of Jesus in a broken world. Billy Graham said that that is what the world needs, people filled with the power of the Spirit to carry on the ministry of Jesus in a broken world. What we know as a church is this, that the only solution to the problems we see in our world, to the human condition, to the broken marriages that surround us, to the families that have been split apart, to the epidemics of loneliness and depression and anxiety and addiction, is the presence of God. You can just look at our culture and the way that it is progressing without God’s presence and how broken we have become as a people, how broken we have become. With all of our breakthroughs in

technology and with all of the influence we have in science and medicine and all of the ways we have to connect people, people are still longing for something deep. They are longing for something more. They are longing for tales of the sea, and a people empowered by God's presence is the solution. It is what our world most desperately needs right now.

It is no mistake that Jesus offered to the world, the church, as broken and beautiful as it is, and He commands us as the church to continue his ministry through the power of his Spirit that He has gifted us. We have vastly misunderstood what the church is actually supposed to be, and I would put myself at the front of this line. The church is not another activity that we squeeze into an already packed Colorado weekend, and it is not a place we stop by after a run down a trail or that we squeeze in before the soccer game. It is not a weekly concert designed to give us an emotional lift before Monday. The church is not a self-help seminar with Bible verses attached to it. It is not a social club. It is not a political movement designed to help you find the people who vote like you, and it is absolutely not a group of people who are just trying to be nicer and do a little bit more good work in the world. The church is the covenant community of disciples who have been filled by the power of the Holy Spirit to carry forward the mission of Jesus into a broken world, to announce the goodness of Jesus' gospel, to demonstrate the power of the kingdom, and to love sacrificially and live by the power of the Holy Spirit. That is the church, and that is you and I. That is what Jesus has called us to.

As we close our time together today, as you walked in, you should have received a prayer card in the room, and this is a simple invitation today. As we have been walking through the series, we continue to have different responses, or we can simply pray for more of the Spirit in our lives, and here is the invitation for you today. I want you to take this card, and there are two possible ways you could respond to the sermon, to the worship today. It is, one, you might be feeling something stirring in you, some way that the Spirit is calling you to live more fully for Him, to be bold and witness. Maybe it is a person's name. Maybe it is a place that Jesus has called you to be a witness for Him, and I simply want you to write that on this card and pray for boldness to witness to who Jesus is.

The second response you can have is maybe you are in a place where you are simply hurting, where the brokenness of the world does not feel like something you can step into, because it has invaded your life, and you are just feeling broken and worn down and weary, and you need the power of the Spirit to come alongside you and not necessarily just to heal the world around you, but to heal your inner world, and so I would encourage you to write that as well. It is completely optional to leave your name and your contact. If you want someone to follow up with you, we would absolutely be happy to do that this week.

Over the next two songs as we are worshiping, as you fill out these cards, I want to encourage you to just come and simply lay them here at the foot of the stage, not as a sign that you are just letting that thing go or that it does not matter anymore, but that you are surrendering it to Jesus. You are giving it to Him, and you are asking for more of the Spirit in your life, and so I would encourage you, whenever you feel the appropriate moment, if you have to walk around someone in the aisles, that is totally fine. No one is going to be upset if you walk through them, but you can come forward and bring your prayers to Jesus today. Would you please stand and let me pray for you?

Heavenly Father, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is not simply sitting in a history book. The power of the Holy Spirit is not just for tales of things that happened back then or things that

God used to do. It is the stories of what God is desperate to do in our lives again. We have talked before about how in Ezekiel, his vision of the Spirit coming is just the floodwaters pouring out from the temple and bringing life to everything that is dry and desolate and empty. God, may your Spirit pour out right now in this room into every heart that is questioning, every mind that is unsure. To every skeptic who believes, “I am not quite sure what to do with all of this,” and for the person who is sitting here today, just desperate for a little bit more of you, may you pour yourself out. By the power of your Spirit, may you fill us for life with you on behalf of a desperate and broken world, and it is in Christ’s name we pray, amen.

John Stott, who was a fairly famous theologian and academic, he wrote about the church, that what the church needs and what the world needs is not better learning, not more education systems, not more programming, not even better preaching, which hurt a little bit, because I am a preacher. He said, “What the church needs is the Holy Spirit, and what the world needs is the Holy Spirit.” My prayer throughout this series has been that you would experience the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit in your life, but it is not just for your sake, although I pray that the Spirit comes on you to comfort and clarify in kindness, but man, I pray that He pours Himself out so that we can give ourselves away sacrificially, like Jesus, for a world that is desperately in need of the power and presence of God. Amen? Amen.

All right, as we go today, I just want to let you know a couple of things. One is next weekend, July Fifth, we will have one service, 10:30 a.m., kids, families, all together. We are going to be celebrating together and continuing in this series. Really excited for next week, and so come. If you come at nine o’clock, that is great. You will just be here by yourself a little bit early, and then we will kick things off at 10:30. It will be a great morning, and then also, if you are newer to Waterstone, if you have been around for a little while, and you would like to have a conversation with me, I will be right outside. Brooke said she made a little sign so people can say hello to me. I have no idea what it says on it. She said something about pestering Pastor Paul. You are not a pesterer. I would love to talk to you. I would love to hear about what is going on in your life, and so I will meet you out there.

Finally, if you would like prayer, if you are sensing or longing for something more, we have prayer ministers around the room. I would encourage you to linger and come to them. They have the red lanyards on. They are sprinkled throughout the room. They would love to pray with you today if you would like that, and so let me pray the benediction as we close today. If you would just extend your hands, if you are willing, in a posture of receiving, because Jesus said that we will receive the Holy Spirit. We do not earn. We do not strive. We simply receive. We are open. We surrender. Christ, we give ourselves to you. May you pour your Spirit out on us, not just for our own sake, but for the good of a broken and bleeding world that is in desperate need of your power and your presence. It is in Christ’s name we pray, amen, and you may go in peace.

45:14 minutes

Edited by Tom Kenaston

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