

# Your Kingdom Come

## PART 7: 'WISDOM AND POWER'

There is nothing in heaven that is separate from God's presence. So you could say that abiding in Christ is a foretaste of heaven. Heaven is a full discovery of the manifest presence of God; it's the invitation into Himself. So when we pray, *"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"* we are actually crying out for a manifestation of the presence of God that marks the course of history; marks the human heart; marks our thinking and our value system. Everything about us then becomes marked by the Holy Spirit Himself.

We are completely dependent on the Holy Spirit, on the presence of God, to get this thing right. Left to our own devices, every one of us will create a religious copy, a religious clone - something that mimics what Jesus said and did, but it's not the authentic work of Jesus. When it's authentic; when it is Spirit-birthing and Spirit-empowered, it always brings absolute liberty and freedom. Because, as we know, *"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."* (2 Corinthians 3:17)

The manifestation of the Lordship of Jesus, expressed in the presence of God is realized in freedom. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, we see the Lordship of Jesus in action and freedom is the evidence. So the Lord is always trying to bring us into freedom. Freedom is never the ability to do whatever we want. Freedom is the ability to do what's right. That's what grace does. The Law requires, grace enables. Grace enables us to do what only Jesus can do. It's the enabling presence, the enabling power of God that gives us the capacity to function in a way that Jesus would function. So this relationship that we have with the Holy Spirit is absolutely central; it is life itself for us; it is the discovery and exploration of God's presence.

There are lots of things that are birthed in our hearts that we feel really right about, really good about. But it's not until we get into that refining fire of the presence of God that we find out that sometimes our ideas of what kingdom living is supposed to look like are quite different to what Jesus thinks. That's why it's so important that we are filled with the Spirit of God and directed by Him every step of the way, just like Jesus was when He took on flesh and ministered among us all those years ago. So that is what I want to talk about in this sermon. I truly believe that we live in obligation to the world around us.

### **We owe the world an encounter with God.**

The only way that's going to happen is if we remain full of the Holy Spirit. You're not full of the Spirit because you pray in tongues or receive words of knowledge or prophecy in Jesus' name. You're full of the Spirit when the Spirit of God overflows from you into the lives of those around you. Let me use an everyday illustration to explain this. When you buy a bottle of water from the shop it is legally full of water. But you can see that it's not really full at all. The only way you can be sure that it is completely full and will remain full is for you to pour more water into it until it overflows. While ever that bottle is overflowing, you know it is full to the measure.

So the fullness of the Holy Spirit is not just a one off experience. It's not just a theological concept. **Many people are satisfied with good theology but they stop short of a divine encounter.** We've got to take what Jesus has invited us into and follow Him into that place where the full expression of the Holy Spirit in manifest in us.

Do you remember the verse I shared in my last sermon from Judges 6:34 where it literally says, the Holy Spirit *“clothed himself with Gideon.”* The picture in the original language is of the Holy Spirit putting Gideon on like a glove. That’s the best description I can think of to describe a life that is yielded and surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

Our relationship with the Holy Spirit is unto something. It establishes a seamless manifestation of who Jesus is - in and through our life. This doesn’t involve the destruction of our personality – we don’t cease being us. We are still the same person. You may have said or heard people say to God, *“All of Thee and none of me!”* It sounds like a great, humble prayer. But it’s not a prayer God ever wants to hear. I can just hear the Lord saying, *“I had none of you before I made you and I didn't like it. That's why I made you.”*

So I don't think it's an appropriate prayer. It’s certainly evidence of humility, but what God wants is for all of Him to fill all of us. In other words, for us to be fully who God designed us to be, we need to be manifesting seamlessly, the heart and the nature and the presence of God every day of our lives. There are many people who can display the character of Christ, but they have very little impact on their environment because the empowering presence of God is not manifesting through them. So we owe the world an encounter with God – or to put it another way - we owe the world a Holy Spirit-filled life.

Now the first person filled with the Holy Spirit in the Bible is found way back in Exodus 31. It's a rather awkward description of the fullness of the Holy Spirit but it’s very interesting.

*“Then the Lord said to Moses, “See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts.”* (Exodus 31:1-5)

I find it fascinating that the first person filled with the Holy Spirit in the Bible, was so that they would have the wisdom to be excellent and creative in labour. Now as we fast forward to the New Testament. We see people touching the clothing of Jesus and they are healed and Jesus announces, *“... greater works than these shall you do.”* That’s what happened when Paul was ministering later. They would collect aprons and sweatbands from his body and take them some distance to lay them on a demonized or sick person. The demons would cry out and leave or the disease would be healed. Really? What is the point here?

Of course sweatbands and aprons we're not preaching garb; they were not the three piece suit of their day; but Paul was so filled with the Spirit of God, that people could take the sweatband off his head, after building tents all day - the sweat of his brow in labour - and take it to a demonized person and they would be set free - just like those who touched the garment of Jesus. But it's taken to another level. And that's exactly what the Lord intends to do in our generation is to take what He did, and take it to another level.

So in the Old Testament, the first person filled with the Spirit of God was a person filled for the purpose of work. Work should be something that the Church understands because the Jewish community grew up with this understanding that work is actually worship. As the Church today, we look forward to coming together on Sunday, or in other special events. These are highlights for us in our walk with the Lord. But the impact that we have, is not just through the witnessing that we do at work and in the community. It is through the excellence, the creativity, the uniqueness of our labour throughout our life; our devotion to working well and working hard.

But it's not just the quality of the work. It's the fact that what we do, from our heart we do as unto the Lord (See Colossians 3:23). So this first person filled with the Holy Spirit we see in the Old Testament, was filled for the purpose of labour. Let's look again at the first part of Exodus 31:3.

The Lord says, *"I have filled him with the Spirit of God, (and) with wisdom ..."* I want to highlight the word *wisdom*, because everything that follows (which you can read in the book of Proverbs) is a manifestation of wisdom. Wisdom was there on the day of creation, assisting in the creative expression of the earth. It's in Proverbs chapter eight. Wisdom is measurable in creativity, integrity and excellence. You can see the silver thread of creativity, integrity and excellence all through the book of Proverbs revealing the importance of wisdom.

I'm mentioning this for a reason, because right now the world is aching for solutions for stuff that we just don't have. I certainly believe in the bold preaching of the gospel. I believe in the sharing of our faith with people and praying for people in public and private. I believe in all of that stuff. But eventually, we have to be a people who can come to the table with solutions, answers and something that actually benefits the people, not just us in the Church. The Church is called to be salt and light in the world and that doesn't just mean proclaiming the name of Jesus and calling people to Christ. It also means that the manifold wisdom of God is revealed to the world and, Paul says, even to heavenly beings, through the Church (Ephesians 3:10).

When the manifest presence of God fills us and overflows into the environment around us, everyone should benefit: business leaders, community leaders, political leaders can all come to a place of greater effectiveness if the people of God can hear from the Lord and function in this gift called wisdom. I personally think it's one of the most missing elements in our culture: divine wisdom.

Wisdom is divine reasoning. Wisdom is literally seeing things from God's perspective. And it's not just having good solutions for problems. It's more than that. It's the ability to see through the externals and discern the heart of a problem or a people or a crisis. I can look at a plastered wall and all I see is painted plaster. But if I can look through that plaster, I will see the studs and noggins and nails and even the pencil marks of the creator of the wall. Wisdom sees into the internal structure of something that's not obvious. In other words, wisdom is prophetic in nature. It looks into the heart of something. That's why wisdom is able to bring long-term solutions to problems.

Wisdom is what the world around us is actually aching for whether they know it or not and the manifold wisdom of God is meant to flow into the world through the Church. That's us folks! So I would like to suggest that the first manifestation of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Bible is in wisdom. Now let's go to a familiar passage in the New Testament:

**Acts 2:1-13** *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."*

*Confused, amazed, marvelled, bewildered, perplexed, mocking.* Sounds like a revival to me! Every time in history when God shows up in a mighty way, we see all those responses. Now the manifestation of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter two is not just for speaking in tongues, it's not just for being able to be a witness in the sense of being bold for Christ, it is all of that. But the bottom line, the reason for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter two is for power – just as Jesus had predicted when He told the disciples to not leave Jerusalem but to wait for the gift which the Father had promised. We read His words in Acts 1:8

*“ ... 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.”* (Acts 1:8)

And if we're going to see the Old Testament version of being full of the spirit being for wisdom, then the New Testament version is for power. But I want to suggest that whenever God reveals something new, He never undoes what He revealed previously. For example, when Jesus says, *“I no longer call you servants, I now call you friends,”* He revealed this incredible new intimacy that He was calling us into, but He didn't abolish servanthood. Instead, He put friendship on the foundation of servanthood. That's why you can have somebody as intimate as Paul is with God, and yet he calls himself a bond-servant of the Lord. Servanthood never disappears – it becomes the foundation for more that God is building and revealing.

So in the Old Testament, the purpose of the fullness of the Spirit was for wisdom. In the New Testament, God added to that foundation by introducing power. One way I heard it put is that wisdom is the setting on the ring, power is the diamond. If we can get a generation that will function in both wisdom and power, then finally the Church will bring about all the change that's needed in our world. A change in culture; a change in disease, war, famine and every area of need which surrounds us every day.

There are a lot of really nice people in the world that are very kind of very service-oriented, and even very wise - but they lack the power to change the things that need changing. The concept of 'power' in the Bible is really very simple. It simply means 'the ability to do.' So Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem and not to leave, not to start any ministry, not to even attempt to fulfil their calling to continue His mission ... they had to wait for the power, for the ability to do what they could not do and that power came when they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, like Jesus when He was among them, could they fulfill their calling and actually make a difference in the world.

Remember last week we looked at that impossible commission Jesus gave the disciples in Matthew chapter ten when He told them to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons and raise the dead? None of those disciples had the ability to do any of that. They lacked the power to achieve what Jesus commissioned them to achieve. That power came upon some of them in the upper room when Jesus breathed on them and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* It came on many more on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on many. So let me wrap up this sermon by putting it this way:

**Power ignites the fires of revival, but it's wisdom that keeps them burning.**

Wisdom creates a context for the move of God to continue. Wisdom is what gives longevity to anything that God is doing on the earth and you and I have been called as a generation for such a time as this, to be a people who are filled with the Spirit; who know what it is to host the Spirit of God; to truly yield to this wonderful person called the Holy Spirit; to fellowship with Him; to walk with Him; to move to His most subtle impressions. Brothers and sisters, the Lord is looking not just for a manifestation of His power. He wants to see His power at work over the long haul. He wants to see us move in His wisdom and power.

I have seen many mighty moves of God and amazing manifestations of His power throughout my life but very few of them produced fruit over the long haul because those servants who were part of those outpourings lacked the wisdom of God to channel that power into long-term ministry and complete community transformation. That is God's intention. That is God's purpose. That is what it looks like to advance the kingdom of heaven, by God's grace, for God's glory, through God's empowering Spirit. This is revival and that is what we need to be praying for every day.

When I look at the Church across the world today, I see some hot spots where the power of God is simply awesome and lots of people are being impacted in mighty ways. But I know from experience that most of those hot spots will burn out or grow cold in the days to come because those leaders lack the wisdom of God to keep the fires burning.

I also see many incredibly wise teachers, preachers and Bible Scholars – people who can articulate the truth better than anyone and who wear the wisdom of God like a cloak. But their ministry lacks the power to transform people and communities and address the deep needs our world faces today.

What I long for and what we should be praying for every day is a manifestation of the wisdom and power of God across the whole Church as we are filled to the measure of the fullness of God. Then, and only then, will we begin to live *'on earth as it is in heaven.'* Then, and only then, will we see the fullness of the Spirit of God at work. Then, and only then, will we actually be part of the fulfilment of Christ's mission on earth.

*So come, Holy Spirit, come!*