

By My Spirit

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[0:00] 1. Zechariah 4, verse 6.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

Now, we want to be a spirit-led people. A spirit-led people. A spirit-filled church. Now, some would say, Oh, this isn't a spirit-filled church.

But I pray that it is. We must be. We have to be. The Lord wants us to be a spirit-filled people. And the work of God, the work of the church, it ought to be and must be entirely and profoundly a spiritual work.

If it's not a spiritual work, it's in vain. It's in vain without the Holy Spirit. And we need to and want to discern what is the work of the Spirit.

[1:08] What is the work of the Holy Spirit? And, you know, some say, Oh, they might speak of us and say, You're not a spirit-filled church.

But we certainly want to be just that. And we need to be just that. Some turn our kind of churches as independent Baptist churches, independent Bible churches.

But really and truly, we're not independent. We should be God-dependent. Amen? God-dependent, word-dependent, spirit-dependent. We need to be dependent upon the Holy Spirit.

We need to be dependent on the word of God. Dependent on the work of God. And to be truly a God-dependent church. And, of course, when we use the term independent, we mean that there's no hierarchy.

There's no popes and archbishops and people to report to. We report really to God as a church, as a church body. We're a self-governing, a godly, joined-together group of people accountable to Christ, who is the head of the church.

[2:16] Not the Pope of Rome. Not any other ecclesiastical authority above the local church. But we must be a spirit-dependent church. And the biblical truth about the Holy Spirit is what we must seek and find and put into action.

We must pray that the Lord will lead people to do His will by God's transforming power. To be a spirit-filled church, a spirit-dependent church. And some of the things that we need to do by His Spirit.

By His Spirit. One is in 1 Corinthians 2 verse 4. 1 Corinthians 2 verse 4. Paul writes about his preaching.

The preaching of the church. The preaching of the church. In 1 Corinthians 2 verse 4, he says, We need to realise our inadequacy.

All of us. All of us who minister in whatever capacity. But in preaching, in speaking. It's not by enticing words of man's wisdom. You know, some would make the mistake of trying to copy and mimic worldly entertainers or worldly styles of speaking.

[3:39] And there's a degree of some awe that you can receive. And even you might, I know I for myself have been somewhat in awe of some of these politicians about the place.

You know, Barack Obama. He's got a very loose tongue and he's very convincing in his way that he projects his voice. Until his teleprompter fails and then you see what he's really like.

But you know, certain politicians or certain worldly speaking people like Martin Luther King for example. I have a dream. But the man necessarily, not wasn't necessarily a saved man.

You know, so there can be a sense where there's that human ability to speak with enticing words of man's wisdom. But we ought to not be focused on might or power of men, but God's spirit.

God's spirit. That whoever's preaching or speaking or ministering, that we're dependent upon the Holy Spirit. Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit. The preaching has to be spirit led.

[4:42] Conversions. Conversions are critical and vital. Conversions happen by the power of the Holy Spirit. It's conversions that need to be resting upon the power of the Holy Spirit for them to be real and true.

In John 1.13, we read that passage of the word came. As many as received, and to them gave him power to become the sons of God.

To them that believe on his name. Verse 13. Which were born not by blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It's got to be God's work for a man, a woman to be reborn. For conversion to happen. It has to be. It has to be. The work of the Holy Spirit. Now we know at times it can be.

There's a convincing message and people respond and the music plays and there's that atmosphere that sometimes can influence people without them really and truly being converted.

[5:52] The appeal is given. People may respond. I'm not against appeals. But I'm saying that sometimes an appeal may be given with manly kind of wisdom and manly kind of manipulation.

And conversions do not happen. The man might come and pray. The woman. And a conversion doesn't happen because the Bible says that it must be where faith comes by hearing.

Hearing by the word of God. And we confess with our mouth. We believe in our heart. That Christ has died and rose again from the dead. It must be believe in your heart, then confess with your mouth.

And sometimes people get it in the wrong order. So people make what, I know, for example, it's been termed false conversions. What's his name? Ray Comfort, for example.

There's good material that explains how true and false conversions. Just like in Finney's time, I think he also made the same observation. I can't recall exactly, but there is the case where someone can respond without truly being saved.

[7:05] And it must be a work of the Holy Spirit. I mean, how many times have you seen folk make a profession, but they're professors only. They're not possessors.

We must be a possessor as well as a professor of the truth, of conversion. They must be spirit made. Conversions must be spirit made. Not a man-made thing, but a spirit-made thing.

A spirit engendered work. God's saving work. And it's up to God, isn't it? Ultimately, he is the giver. He is the searcher after man. And real conversions are not by man's techniques, by any style, or conjuring up, or musical atmosphere.

Conversions must be a working of God's spirit. And so, friends, we want to be that kind of church where it's his filling. Where the Holy Spirit fills us.

The Holy Spirit fuels us. And the Holy Spirit fires us to be that spirit-dependent church. Another aspect of where it's not by might, nor by power, but by his spirit, is that personal walk with the Saviour.

[8:15] Our personal spiritual walk. Our personal spiritual walk. Our personal spiritual growth. It must be reliant on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit must work for us to know and to possess separation unto God.

To find and realise that humility that we must have. To humble ourselves under his mighty hand so that he can lift us up. To experience that personal walk.

That personal communion with him. The Spirit must work. The Spirit must work to bring about growth. As Paul writes in Ephesians 3, verse 16, he prays that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man.

We need to be reliant upon the Holy Spirit in our personal spiritual growth. And how does that become evident in our lives? Torrey gave an example of where once a lady came to Mr Moody. Evangelist Moody. She went up to this preacher Moody and she says, Mr Moody, I don't like you. He asked, why not? She said, because you are too narrow.

[9:30] Moody says, narrow? I did not know that I was narrow. She said, yes, you are too narrow. You don't believe in the theatre. You don't believe in cards.

In other words, gambling. You don't believe in dancing. He said, how do you know I don't believe in the theatre? Oh, she said, I know you don't.

Mr Moody replied, I go to the theatre whenever I want to. What? Cried the woman. You go to the theatre whenever you want to?

Yes, I go to the theatre whenever I want to. Oh, she said, Mr Moody, you are a much broader man than I thought you were. I'm so glad to hear you say it that you go to the theatre whenever you want to.

Yes, I go to the theatre whenever I want to. I don't want to. Now, when the Holy Spirit comes in your heart and your life, a change happens.

[10:30] It's called conversion. Conversion. A change happens. That which you loved before, you don't love. You develop new loves.

You develop new desires. You develop new longings. You develop a hungry and thirsting for the things of God. The things of the world, the flesh and the devil.

That love grows dim and cold and wanes and dies. Friends, we don't want to do sinful things.

We don't do sinful things because we don't want to. Because God puts a different desire in our heart. A different motive. A different motivation. And Torrey writes, Anyone who has really received the Holy Spirit, and in whom the Holy Spirit dwells and is unhindered in his working, will not want to. Why is it then that so many professed Christians do go after these worldly amusements? Now, it's not so much the theatre in our day, as we know. But it could be some of the rubbish that's on television, some of the worldly entertainments that drag us away from Christ.

[11:40] You name it for yourself. You know what I mean. Torrey goes on, For one of two reasons. Either because they have never definitely received the Holy Spirit, or else because the fountain is choked.

It's quite possible for a fountain to become choked. The best well in one of our inland cities was choked and dry for many months because an old rag carpet had been thrust into the opening from which the water flowed.

When the rag was pulled out, the water flowed again, pure and cool and invigorating. There are many in the church today who once knew the matchless joy of the Holy Spirit, but some sin or worldly conformity, some act of disobedience, more or less conscious disobedience to God, has come in.

And the fountain is choked. And Torrey says, Pull out those rags today. Pull out the rags and that wondrous fountain may burst forth again. Friends, conversion, a change of life, a separation.

It happens when the Spirit comes in. When the Spirit does the work of saving a soul. There won't be any question about the conversion because the Spirit has worked in the heart.

[12:55] Another area where we need to be led by the Spirit of God is in walking in the Spirit and victory that we need in day by day Christian life, in Holy Spirit empowerment.

As we know of ourselves, we're empty and weak without the infilling, without the empowering of the Spirit of God. We're empty and vain, weak and ineffective Christians.

Torrey writes again, If we think of the Holy Spirit as some, many do, as merely a power or influence, our constant thought will be, How can I get more of the Holy Spirit?

There's a lot of talk like that today. We need to get more of the Spirit. We've got to go here, go there, here this one, here that one, go to this special razzmatazz meeting or this one, here, receive, take these tapes, watch this theme, read this book, to get, to get, to get, to get more of the Holy Spirit.

But Torrey writes, But if we think of Him in the biblical way, as a divine person, our thought will rather be, How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?

[14:06] How can He have more of me? That should be our prayer, to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit. We read in Romans 15, verse 16, 2 Corinthians 3, 17, 18, it talks of where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

And we changed into the image, as we behold him, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, so as if in a faded image, we behold His glory.

We changed into that same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. We changed into His likeness. We changed into Christ's likeness, as the Holy Spirit has more of us, as we live that separated life, as we want to, as we yearn to, let God have more of us.

As we decrease, He can increase. It's like that picture, as you could picture it, of a glass. As I know it's been said, and referred to, I think this morning, when I overheard someone, as the glass, at the moment, this glass is full.

It's full of air. And then, when you pour the water in, it's full of water, and the air is gone. When you come to Christ, you're full of sin.

[15:32] Christ comes in, He fills you, and you overflow. His Holy Spirit fills you, and the sin goes. The sin nature is conquered. When Christ comes and fills your life, of course, there's moments when you need to be refilled, and keep on being filled, and likewise, friends, it's letting Him have more of you.

Letting Him have more of you. And letting Him replace the deadness, the sinfulness, the fleshliness of ourselves, with His Spirit. Let Him have more of you, and then you'll know victory.

Then you'll know liberty. And another aspect where we need to be Spirit-led, in the growth of the church itself. What did they do? Luke 24, 49, And behold, I send you the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem, until, until you be endued, until you be endued with power, power, power from on high, heavenly power, Holy Spirit power, until you be endued with it, until you be clothed with it.

The early church witnessed a spiritual outpouring. They witnessed by the Spirit, as God empowered them to witness.

If we're filled with the Spirit, we'll want to witness. If you're filled with the Holy Spirit, the evidence of the filling of the Spirit is that you'll be His witness. You'll be His witness.

[16:58] You'll go. And church growth is reliant on the Holy Spirit. Not of man's making, not of man's methods, not of any of that, of human invention, but by His Spirit.

Church growth. You know, there's books on it. There's many books on it. And sometimes it's all about man's kind of thinking. It's more like management speak. I mean, you can find good church growth techniques in management books and management training, but we need to be dependent on His Spirit.

We need to be endued with power from on high. It's not by any man-made kind of invention or man kind of thinking. We need to shed all of that and question all of that and ensure that the Spirit guides us, that it's a spiritual thing.

It's a spiritual work. And I need to be led by the Spirit. Pray for me that I will not be misled, that I will not be misguided. Pray for me that I will be spiritual and that this church can be a spiritual work.

There's aspects at times when it's not spiritual. There's things that we can question in this church. I'm looking at this church. Often I might raise a question about other churches, but it's this church.

[18:16] We need to question, are we a spiritual people? Are the families in this church spiritual families? Are the ministries in this church spiritual ministries?

Are we led by the Spirit? We must be. We have to be. There's no other way because revival comes by the Spirit. Revival comes. Genuine revival. And we know there's questions of times that revivalists of old have been questioned about some of their methodologies.

We do need to question everything that is said and done. But I know there have been some genuine moves of God's Spirit. Genuine moves. When you see genuine repentance, when you see genuine conversions, not the energy of the flesh, not some marketing machine or God's TV broadcasting it to the nations because it's some razzmatazz thing, not some machinations or machinery of men, not the methods of men by any means, but the methods of the Holy Spirit. Repentance and faith. Hearts change. Lives change. And friends, we all need, I need to pray, we need to pray that we lean not on the arm of flesh.

We have no confidence in the flesh, including this own piece of flesh here. Don't have any confidence in man, in any man. Have your confidence in him. Put your trust in Christ.

[19:34] Put your trust in his work, in his Holy Spirit. The arm of flesh, we cannot lean upon that. The Bible talks much about the arm of the flesh. We must not lean on the arm of the flesh, but we must lean on him.

We must lean wholly and squarely upon him. Spirit has said, if the Spirit of God is absent, all that the church does will be lifeless. If the Spirit of God is absent, then all that the church does will be

lifeless.

He needs to be reliant upon his Spirit. Praying in the Spirit. Walking in the Spirit. Led by the Spirit. Knowing the guidance of the Spirit. The quickening of the Spirit.

The Spirit of God makes us live. The Spirit of God makes us live. It's the same Spirit that raised up Christ from the dead. Resurrection power.

Tomb-shattering power. Death-breaking power. Life-giving power. Quickening power. And Spurgeon writes again, every growth of spiritual life from the first tender shoot is the work of the Holy Spirit.

[20:49] The first tender shoot. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary to make everything that we do to be alive.

Are you alive? Or are you dead? Now, any one of us, in any kind of ministry, we can just go through the motions. We can be used to whatever we do and just go through the motions, through the ritual, through what we're used to, the traditions.

The singing that you sing may not be Spirit-led singing. The giving that you give may not be Spirit-led giving. The working, the witnessing, the praying, be led by the Spirit.

Be led by the Spirit. Otherwise, it's vain. It's lifeless. And God's Spirit is essential for spiritual life, for eternal life, for the operation of His Spirit to be at work. And we need to pray as a church.

We've got a prayer meeting. We've got opportunities for prayer. Avail yourself. Find your resource in Him. Your supply in Him to be dependent upon His strength, upon His enabling.

[21:59] That we as a church will be a God-dependent church. We'll be absolutely God-dependent. Not on man, not on methodology, but upon His Spirit.

We need His empowerment. We need Him to breathe His Spirit as He did upon the disciples. To breathe His Spirit upon us and into us. To give us life. So not to be misguided by might or power. In other words, man's energy energy or activity or methods, not by man's making, but by His Spirit. By His Spirit. That is our prayer as a church. Not by the power of human beings. Not by our own power and strength. Our own education.

Our own intelligence even. Our own intellect or our own energy. Because we must be crucified with Christ. We must humble ourselves. We must lay ourselves on the altar and lay all that aside.

[23:05] Truly, our flesh. And let Him have His work. Let Him have His way with you. Friends, just to close, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They rise up with wings like eagles, etc. They that wait, that wait upon the Lord. We need to wait upon Him. We need to wait upon Him. Pray to Him. Seek His face.

Yearn for His will. Let us pray that it be God's work in this place. Otherwise it is vain. It is lifeless. Let it be God's work. Let it be a sovereign work. Let it be a sovereign move.

Let it be a sovereign impact upon your heart and mine. Are you saved? Are you even saved? We need to question that.

I heard a preacher of old old. He said this in the early days of our church and I thought it was quite a shocking thing for him to say. But since then I think he's right.

[24:06] Are you even saved? You that are here today. We need to question that. But most of all question it for yourself. Are you saved today? Have you trusted Him? Have you trusted Him?

Is the Holy Spirit resident and present in your life? It's not by might nor by power but by His Spirit. I like it when some say they're searching they're not saved yet.

At least they're being honest. Amen? They're being honest. They know that they're not saved yet. Better to be honest and know you're not saved than to be dishonest and think you are saved when you're not.

Friends today it's not by might nor by power but by my Spirit say of the Lord of hosts. And friends be urged tonight not meaning to condemn anyone or put you under a guilt trip or say that or put you under any condemnation but if the Holy Spirit is convicting then that's a good thing isn't it?

We all need that. I need that. We need to be convicted. convicted. It means to be prompted about our heart condition. Are we right with God?

[25:21] Are we right with God? And so friends just to wrap up to recap conversions must be by the Spirit not by man not by an evangelist the conversions must be must be have to be the work of the Spirit of God by the Spirit our personal spiritual growth it must be by the Spirit our personal spiritual growth it's not by reading the latest 40 days of whatever it is or the purpose driven what not it's about the Spirit having his way with you it's about personal spiritual growth it's about the Word of God having an impact on your heart and soul it's by his Spirit personal spiritual growth that victory that you long for that you yearn for to overcome it's by the Spirit that it comes that church growth that we hunger and long for that this place will be a place that many can come and worship in Spirit and in truth in godly teaching and ministry that this place will be a spiritual work not a work of any man not a work of flesh in any capacity and that God by his Spirit might bring revival and we talk about the real thing real revival we pray for revival we long for revival the real thing amen and that's what we need to trust him for not by might not by power but by his Spirit so learn to depend upon God I urge each one today learn to trust in God's power in God's equipping in God's enabling and he will work wonders in our lives and I pray that he will so not by might nor by power but by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts I love to tell the story of haunting things about