

## BE EMPOWERED

Acts 1:1-9

### I Wanted To Change The World

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.

I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation.

When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town. I

couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly

I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on

my family. My family and I could have made an impact on our town. Their impact

could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

Author: Unknown Monk 1100 A.D.

We can only change ourselves. Phenomenal impact the first followers of Christ had on their world.

We want to begin 2018 by looking at four lessons from the early church that can cause us to have a greater influence in our world. This morning we want to look at their source of power.

**Acts 1:3–9 (NLT) — 3 During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. 4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” 6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” 7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him.**

### The ascension of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

On the last night Jesus was with his disciples he promised he would send them the Holy Spirit and he made it clear that could not happen unless he returned to his Father

**Ephesians 1:19–23 (NLT) — 19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world**

to come. 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

The gospel of forgiveness / the gospel of transformation

**Jesus dies to change us so that we could change the world.**

***2 Corinthians 5:14–17 (NLT) — 14 Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. 15 He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. 16 So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! 17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!***

The power to control or destroy > the promise of the Kingdom

God's Kingdom is all about God restoring his rule over the whole world. This is the Good News, the death and resurrection Jesus Christ ended the power of sin and death and began the process of restoring God rule to the world. The good news is God intends to continue this restoration of his creation in the Spirit empowered followers of Jesus. **God's new creation is beginning in all of us who have placed our trust in Christ.** ***Romans 14:17 (NLT) — 17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*** The Spirit of God enables us to experience the rule of God in our life right now. This rule is not about rituals, and regulation. It is about doing good in an attitude of peace and joy.

Listen to what Paul says about this power. ***Ephesians 3:16–21 (NLT) — 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. 17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. 19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.***

This is a very different kind of power. This is a power that works from the inside out to enable us to fully experience God's love and therefore bring glory to God.

**What do we need to do to experience this power in our lives?**

First we need to ask God for the Holy Spirit **Luke 11:11–13 (NLT) — 11 “You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? 12 Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 13 So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”** Now the Bible is clear that everyone who puts their trust in Christ receives the Holy Spirit. Look what Paul writes **Romans 8:9 (TNIV) — 9 You, however, are not controlled by the sinful nature but are in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.**

What Jesus is telling his disciples to ask for is the filling of the Holy Spirit. **Luke 11:9–10 (NLT) — 9 “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.** This intense, persistent asking demonstrates a deep desire to allow the Spirit of God to reign in our life. The reason so many Christians do not seem to be growing in love, peace and joy, is because that they are not really committed to allowing God to reign in their life.

**John 7:37–39 (NLT) — 37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’ ” 39 (When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)**

We have come to believe that something besides Jesus will fill us up and bringing us fulfillment.

Now the HS has often been associated with raucous emotional expressions, but this is not the essential work of the HS. When we are filled with the HS we are more aware of the depth of God’s grace and love and sometimes that moves us emotionally, but **the primary work of the HS is to make us more like Jesus.**

**Galatians 5:16–26 (NLT) — 16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. 19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish**

***ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. 26 Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.***

I find this illustration of following the guidance of the HS, or walking in the Spirit so helpful because by simply monitoring my attitude and relationships I can tell if I am following the leading of the Spirit in my life. If I am struggling with pornography or over eating or some other sensual desire, I am not living in the power of the spirit. If I am feeling that some possession or position is the most important thing in life, I'm not being led by the Spirit. If I am feeling jealous, irritated or angry, if I am caught in division and dissension with others I am not being led by the Spirit.

We must continue a conscious desire to be filled with the Spirit.

***Ephesians 5:18 (NLT) — 18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit,***

Being filled with the Spirit is not a one time experience but on going decision to allow the Spirit to rule in our lives.

**Continue danger is that we would try to create spiritual fruit with our own effort.**

Illustration: A paint by number set > The HS wants to give us the freedom to paint a unique portrait of Jesus with our lives.

**Do I really want the Holy Spirit to lead every area of my life?**