

## “The Power Inside”

Acts 1: 1.9

Series: *Recharge: Plug into the Power of the Holy Spirit*

Meg Smith April 24, 2022

Power. For only being 5 letters, this word carries the weight it actually represents. We're all after a source of power but what power are we seeking? We see power in the workplace, in sports, in politics and rulers; but my favorite form of power is found in superheroes. There's something almost majestic and magical when you hear that opening credit theme to Marvel movies. It just makes you feel invincible, like you're able to team up with the Avengers and save the world. As cool as that seems, it's a false sense of power. None of us are able to jump up and fly or have superhuman strength. Yet every person needs a power of some kind - not a superhero power but a power to deal with life circumstances.

We're looking for more than fantasy power. This power DOES exist and it's greater than all of the Marvel powers combined! This power is what helps us overcome loss, fear, stress as well as gives us the wisdom to make decisions and live life well. Over the next month and a half we'll learn more about this incredible power; the POWER of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a very important part of the Trinity: Father, Son, Spirit; yet, as someone who grew up in church, He's the person talked about the least out of all 3. Because we didn't talk about Him a lot, I kind of made Him out to just be this entity floating around us, living inside us - but I didn't have a relationship with the Holy Spirit because I didn't view Him as a person I could have a relationship with. The Holy Spirit was this voice in my head telling me right from wrong, and I recognized gut feelings were from Him, but I never interacted with Him. I also only thought the Holy Spirit really wasn't "on the scene" in the Bible until after Jesus' resurrection. Not true. All 3 persons in the Trinity have been there since the beginning of time!

Genesis 1:1-2 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters." There He is, mentioned in the second verse of the Bible.

In Jesus' final moments with His disciples, He introduces them personally to the Holy Spirit who will guide them, never leave them, and lead them to the Truth. Right after Jesus' resurrection, in John 20:22, He turns to His disciples and says, '*Receive the Holy Spirit,*' blowing the Spirit onto them. At his ascension, Jesus leaves His disciples with specific instructions to follow through the power of the Spirit.

In Acts 1:1-9 Luke writes "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command:

**'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.** For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the **Holy Spirit.**' Then they gathered around him and asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **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.**' After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

Imagine how they were feeling. Jesus gives them the task of taking this message to the ENTIRE WORLD, and then He leaves! I'm sure they were experiencing loss, feeling left behind, overwhelmed, and uncertain of what was next. However, Jesus promised them they would not face the future alone! Like the

disciples, we need the Holy Spirit's power. In order for us to tap into the Holy Spirit's power we need to remember a few things.

### 1. **We already have the power inside of us!**

It's already here! We don't need to be searching for the Holy Spirit's power. Remember Jesus introduced the disciples to the Holy Spirit in John 20 and as His disciples we have Him too!

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 states "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, and put **His Spirit** in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

The Holy Spirit is a gift, He dwells inside of us. The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to exude love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Without His help, we struggle to spread these qualities. The Holy Spirit is a guide and helps us discern difficult decisions. He constantly points us to Jesus, who points us to God our Father. He works in perfect harmony with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit plants specific gifts in each of us to use. We'll be unpacking and exploring these gifts in a few weeks!

I want to make an important distinction of this power though; we don't have the ultimate control over it. It's not like a button where you push it and all of the sudden you are able to have all of the wisdom and understanding in the world, it's only accessed through the Holy Spirit. We cannot turn it on and off with our own will, strengths, or plans. The Holy Spirit's job is to be in control, not us. He's not like a genie, waiting to grant us all of our deepest desires, but wants us to draw nearer to Him so He can lead us to the desires we're meant to have. Pray to the Holy Spirit, that He releases His power inside of you and empowers you.

### 2. **We are called to GO with the power of the Holy Spirit!**

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructs us to "go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the **Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Many of us have heard this so often and maybe have even memorized it. But what does this actually mean? To me, it's befriending people in your immediate circles, having spiritual conversations teaching them about Jesus; His way of living, His death, & resurrection, and inviting them to respond to His offer of Salvation. This is a big task for us to accomplish; however, we must remember when Jesus sends us out, He isn't sending us alone.

John 14:26 AMP states " But the **Helper (Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you."

The ability to go out and make disciples; having the boldness to talk to people about Jesus; baptizing people; and the power of answered prayers - is all the Holy Spirit at work. We aren't meant to carry out these directions all on our own, because we can't. I would predict it would not go well if we attempted to GO without waiting on the Holy Spirit's promptings.

Stan is a proud Jewish businessman who raised his two daughters with his wife in the Jewish faith. When one of his daughters came home from college stating that "Jesus is the Messiah," it threw the family into a faith crisis. Determined to convince his daughter she was wrong, Stan, his wife, and other daughter all committed to personal studies to bring their lost daughter and sister back to the right side of faith.

A couple months later Stan was invited to the National Convocation of Messianic Jews. He was going to approach this conference with the same gusto he did at every business conference he ever attended, asking

questions until he found an answer. *After a series of meetings, Stan lay awake in his dorm room, thinking about his journey. He had arrived at a point of crisis. If the Bible was true - and he had concluded it was - then he really did believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He also admitted to himself that he believed in the Bible as God's inspired Word. But he couldn't quite say the words to himself, 'Jesus is the Messiah.' He asked his roommate, Art, to pray for him. Art obliged, praying simply, 'God give Stan your peace, and resolve his inner conflict.'*

The next morning at his table, Stan was asked to pray over the meal. Startled to be asked to pray, he bowed his head and said, *"Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe. I thank You for the fellowship and the friendship at this table. I thank you for what we have learned at this meeting. I ask You now bless this food, and I do so... in the name of Jesus, the Messiah."* After the prayer he looked up and saw every man at the table smiling at him and they said, *"Stan, you're a believer!"* They all took turns hugging and congratulating him!

Stan was so overcome by this joy of his newfound faith, he knew he needed to call his wife; however, was nervous to call her and declare Jesus as the Messiah to her. He dialed her number and when she picked up the phone he blurted out, *"Ethel, honey, it's me. It's over. I've made my decision. Jesus is the Messiah!"* There was a pause on the other line then his wife replied, *"Thank God! That makes it unanimous. We've all been waiting for you."* Stan's entire family—his wife and both daughters—had also made their decisions to trust Christ as the Messiah. They had each been praying, and waiting patiently, for the Holy Spirit of Christ to draw Stan into a relationship with Himself."

Sharing the Gospel with others is the most important GO we've been instructed to do. It's only through the power of the Holy Spirit that people's hearts will be open to the message we share. The power of praying for someone else to experience this amazing relationship is another way the Holy Spirit empowers us to move. Prayer is an action and one way we are able to GO, sourced by the Holy Spirit's power! And that takes us to our final point today-

### **3. We are called to WAIT for the Power of the Holy Spirit!**

Something we often overlook in this passage is the command to wait. Did you miss it? Let's look at it again. "Do not leave Jerusalem, **but wait** for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about." Acts 1:4

We're so accustomed in our culture to GO and DO. These actions can equal feeling accomplished, worthy, or enough because we did something to earn it. What if I told you that sometimes the Holy Spirit is telling us to WAIT. Not act, but WAIT! How many of you just squirmed in your seats thinking about sitting and waiting? We aren't always programmed to wait so it feels unnatural and uncomfortable; however, I find it's in the times of waiting where our refining and preparation for something is happening. We are too busy NOT being still to recognize the beautiful challenge of waiting before acting. This act of obedience is hard but crucial to our relationship with the Holy Spirit!

In March Roz and I attended a conference in Orlando. One of the speakers, Hosanna Wong had this to say about Acts 1:4, 8 - *Us physically leaving where we are to do something somewhere else was not the sole purpose of Jesus' commission. And it was certainly not the order. In order, first Jesus said, "you must be filled before you go forth anywhere." FIRST you must BE FILLED, THEN GO! We don't want to first go forth with our own agendas or our own strategies or our own plans or our own programming. We want to first be filled with the power of God. We don't want to say statements that sound super spiritual but don't serve people where they really are. We don't want to create beautiful products or put on impressive programs that are void of the power of God. We want to first be filled with HIS power and then go forth..."*

Think of us as a car. What does a car need to go? Either gas or electricity; it needs to be filled with a resource in order to physically move. That's something we can remember next time we're facing a difficult life

circumstance. Remember we're a car and without the Holy Spirit fueling us, we won't go anywhere (or far on our own!) We must be filled in order to go, just as Hosanna mentioned. When we go on our own, we often are stopped short of our destination. Rely on our ultimate energy source, the Holy Spirit to fill us with the exact fuel we require in order to follow His plan for our lives! There's beauty in the waiting. Releasing control and staying still to receive direction is hard; however, it's a necessary part to following the Holy Spirit's plan. Stop rushing around and busying yourself so you can enjoy the journey!

I'm definitely a go-getter, striving to be accepted, trying to "earn my keep" by doing and staying in control. I knew exactly how my life would pan out at just 8 years old. Guess what, 8 year old Megan was wrong. I lived my life according to my 8 year old self's plan. I'd go to college, become a teacher, get married, have a family, and live happily ever after. There'd be no disrupting the plan.

I was 18 years old and on a mission trip when I was first asked if I'd ever considered becoming a pastor, I said no and laughed in their face. Fast forward to my college years and early 20's and the more times people asked me about being a pastor, the more I started to "consider it, but still not fully accepting it. I started praying for God to lead me to seminary or to be a long term missionary at age 21. At 27 I became a long term missionary, so 6 years of praying and discernment from the Holy Spirit led me to it. Now I'm 32 years old and am happy to report, in the fall I will begin pursuing my journey to becoming a pastor at Princeton Theological Seminary. This only came by responding to the Holy Spirit's call to WAIT. I wasn't ready to pursue my Master of Divinity at 18, or 22, or 27. I start my first day of classes 18 days before I turn 33 - and let me tell you, getting to this place has been SO WORTH THE WAIT! It wasn't easy to be obedient; however, the Holy Spirit made it abundantly clear the wait is over and now I must go!

After the disciples received the Holy Spirit, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles." Acts 2:42-43

The disciples relied on this ultimate power to carry out Jesus' instructions. They set the example for how we, Jesus' disciples in 2022 are to use the greatest power the world will ever know! Are you ready to unleash this power inside of you?

I want to invite you into a certain posture to practice waiting. I invite you to uncross your legs, hold your palms upward in an open gesture, and close your eyes. Deep breath in, hold it, slow exhale. Holy Spirit, we thank You for being our Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor—Counselor, Strengthener, and Standby. We thank You we don't have to DO until you instruct us too. Our doing doesn't determine our relationship with You!

Speak to me now, what are you telling me?

Am I to wait and enter into a season of pruning and preparation?

Are you giving me directions of where I need to go and who I'm to see?

I pray for Your discernment and boldness to be unleashed in me.

Speak to us Holy Spirit, we are listening.

Come rest on us, come rest on us, amen.