

## HOLY SPIRIT POWER

August 12th, 2018 - Holy Spirit Power

Part 13

Today's message continues with the Gift of Faith. Because it's such an extensive topic, we may be preaching on it for a few weeks. Today we're picking up on the topic of provision of divine protection thru the Gift of Faith. We read in **Luke 7:28** Jesus referencing John the Baptist; *"For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

It's almost odd that Jesus on one hand says that no one is greater than John, and in the same breath says that one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than John. John lived under the old dispensation of the law, but Jesus came to bring the new dispensation. John gave up his life for Jesus, went to prison and was executed there. From the death of John the Baptist onward, the dispensation of Jesus Christ was in motion. It was out with the Old and in with the New. Jesus brought grace, mercy and salvation.

John said this about himself in **John 3:30**; *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* In essence saying that grace had to increase through Jesus, and the law, which he – John - was living under, had to decrease. Works had to decrease from the law and the Holy Spirit needed to increase.

John the Baptist operated in faith that was great, but he did not operate in the gift of miracles that comes from the Gift of Faith. It says in **John 10:41**; *"Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true."* Unlike many of the prophets of the Old Testament, John did not operate in miracles like Elijah, Elisha and many others. He did come though as a voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In all that John knew about Jesus, right from childhood, his measure of faith failed him in that he questioned whether Jesus was the true Messiah. It says this in **Matthew 11:1-6**; *"Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."*

Jesus' reply wasn't a list of Old Testament works and regulations, but the news being preached with signs and wonders following. John must have been greatly encouraged by that report. As great as John was under the law, Jesus made it clear that those who are the least in the kingdom of heaven under the new dispensation of grace are greater than him.

This is not saying that being a Christian will always deliver you from persecution or satanic opposition in the Spirit realm. Many disciples have died for their faith as privileged martyrs of the church body, however outside of these select few, God's intention is to deliver us from evil and fulfill our call as Christians and not be taken out before our time by the devil.

In **Acts 4:18-22**, Peter and John were arrested by the religious Sanhedrin for preaching the Gospel and healing a lame man. *"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they*

## HOLY SPIRIT POWER

*all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”*

This inspired the Church to pray and operate beyond the mere measure of independent faith that they received individually, into a Gift of Faith which they operated in as a **corporate unified body of Christ, the church.** Lone ranger Christians that are not a part of the Church have a measure of faith, but will not operate in the supernatural Gift of Faith in its fullness, whether it's in prayer or good works, the supernatural Gift of Faith operates **when the church members are in one accord.**

Why doesn't it operate as a lone ranger? Well, the reason that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are given is for the edification of the body of Christ, not just for personal edification. A Christian is to be in church, with fellow believers where the gifts of the Holy Spirit are in operation.

**Hebrews 10:19-25** says; *“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

The Gift of Faith is given to those who are assembled together with other saints, that's the key here, it's the unity in the body of Christ the Church. **Acts 4:31** states; *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*

Do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit and more boldness to preach the gospel? Then turn the Christian TV and radio off, get to church, and stop forsaking the assembling together with the church body in exchange for a media preacher. You wonder why your faith is not supernatural, check your church attendance record since you've been a Christian. You may need to forsake the church of me, myself and I. If the Bible says to not forsake assembling yourself with other Christians for the building up and edifying of each other – then don't do it. Christian media has its place for sure, but it can't be exchanged for assembling yourself together with other Christians. Media ministries are not one on one with you. Yes they may pray a general prayer over you, but they can't hear, see or minister to you directly with the laying on of hands.

We need to question those who say they're Christians but aren't going to church for this, that and other reasons, complaining about this church and the other church, whining and making all kinds of excuses as to why they don't go to church. It makes you wonder if they're truly born again. How can a Christian operate in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit when they're not part of the body of Christ? Those who don't congregate, are not allowing their gifts to bless the lives of their fellow believers. These who forsake going to church may have the Christian lingo and talk down with other believers, they know how to say the right things and have good conversations across the table, but when it comes down to where the rubber hits the road rolling up their sleeves to work for Jesus, they're no where to be found.

Just to clarify, we're not talking about those who are bedridden, in hospitals or things as such. It's those who purposefully choose not to assemble themselves together with other Christians by going to church.

**Acts 5:12** states this; *“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.”* The new believers were together – in one

## HOLY SPIRIT POWER

accord, one place. It doesn't mean a big congregation either. The Bible says where two or three are gathered together in his name, He is there.

Once again, the religious Sanhedrin leaders persecuted the church and had the Apostles thrown into prison. The apostles didn't perform any miracle to escape, but rather are supernaturally delivered out of prison by an angel. Why? Because they had a church praying for them, they were part of the church. They weren't lone ranger, drinking milk and eating pablum Christians, with a selective hearing of Christian Radio or TV church. They WERE the church and they did not forsake the assembling together except when they were undergoing persecution from the secular or religious authorities.

We read this in **Acts 5:19-20** where it says; *"But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."*

You see, Jesus says this in **Matthew 18:20**; *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* So when the apostles were thrown into prison which we just read about, they were the church body and part of the greater church...praying corporately. Church isn't a denomination or organization; it's believers in Jesus Christ that specifically get together to pray, to worship, to be in agreement or one accord, to minister to each other with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation, and to evangelize. So the assembling of believers as the church is as small as two or three, to greater.

The Gift of Faith that the church body operated in which brought about this supernatural deliverance, caused the Sanhedrin to not execute the apostles, for they feared being stoned by people that believed. It was religious self-preservation.

The Apostles are on trial again in **Acts 5:22-32**; *"But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, "Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!" But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men." The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him."*

Because of the apparent miracle of supernatural deliverance from prison, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, teacher of the law and respected by all spoke up in **verses 38-39**; *"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."*

While the church is in one accord, under great persecution, the supernatural Gift of Faith operates and takes them beyond their individual measures of faith and opens the door for the supernatural deliverance to take place. Not because they were anything special, but because they were part of the church and the corporate church was praying for their deliverance.

Again, those who profess to be Christians, who don't go to church and prefer camaraderie with the secular unsaved people more than fellowship with the saints in the body of Christ, are amiss and erroneous. We can no

## HOLY SPIRIT POWER

longer coddle and pander to that mindset and belief which is rampant around the globe. Don't buy into the lie that says you can call yourself a Christian and don't have to go to church, this is the devil's way of keeping you on the bench when God wants to get you in the game.

Several years later Stephen was martyred by the Sanhedrin religious leaders and Saul, who later becomes Paul the Apostle, is a leader of this persecution of the early church. The story is in **Acts 7:58-60**; *“and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”*

When Saul, who the religious leaders used to persecute the church, became a Christian, all hell broke loose on the church under the rule of King Agrippa I - whose grandfather was King Herod the Great who was responsible for the murders of all the baby boys in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. This King now, had the Apostle James the brother of the Apostle John killed.

Peter is again put in prison, but once again we see the church in one accord operating in the Gift of Faith thru corporate prayer. A person is not going to experience these types of manifestations of protection and deliverance in their fullness if they're a lone ranger and not in the body of Christ. A miracle takes place, but not at the hands of a Peter, or the church body other than constant prayers of faith.

We read in **Acts 12:5-10** the following account; *“Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, “Arise quickly!” And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals”; and so he did. And he said to him, “Put on your garment and follow me.” So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.”*

It's evident that Peter had great faith to be delivered from jail because of the constant prayers, for he was able to sleep chained between two guards knowing that the next day he would die. He had faith that he was going to get out. The church prayed the deliverance of Peter out of jail, but obviously didn't have the miraculous faith, because even when Peter showed up at house of prayer, they didn't believe it was him.

We read the account in **Acts 12:12-16**; *“So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. But they said to her, “You are beside yourself!” Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, “It is his angel.” Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.”*

The account continues with Herod killing the innocent guards and is then himself killed by an angel. What a turn of events. There is no record that the King's death was a result of the prayers of the church, but Herod's wickedness obviously found him out, enough for God to kill him.

Let's read the story in **Acts 12:18-24**; *“Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the*

## HOLY SPIRIT POWER

*guards and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed there. Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's country. So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of God grew and multiplied."*

The secular think that they are getting away with persecuting the Christian church, but God has the final say as He did with Herod, where his sins found him out, and he was eaten by worms. But after death, he was then judged and sent to hell, where the worm never dies and the fire does not go out. Eternal fire and being eaten by worms.

Jesus says this in **Mark 9:42-47**; *"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— **where 'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'** And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— **where 'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'** And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire—**where 'Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'**"*

Causing someone to stumble could be like endorsing, affirming and agreeing with a Christian to not to feel obliged to go to church, that they can be a lone ranger Christian and live apart from the body of Christ. By doing that, you're causing that Christian to stumble, because you're propagating a lie and not what the Bible says. Be very careful with your example to Christians, even though it makes them uncomfortable and makes them squirm, tell the truth what the Bible says.

Do you notice that three times Jesus says; *'it would be better'* and then *'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched'*.

We have to stand up for the truth. I'd rather be a Christian that operates in faith undergoing persecution, seeing the supernatural at work and having a church praying for me, than being a lone ranger that doesn't operate in faith, settling for the church of me, myself and I where no gifts operate. Oh, the latter may be fleshly comfortable because you have no interaction with anyone else and you can pamper yourself and how you feel, but the truth is you won't fulfill the call on your life, you won't experience the gifts of the Holy Spirit and ultimately, you'd be believing a lie.

We read a short script by Bob Snook, please click on the link to read it. It's entitled '[Auction](#)'.