

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

Preached by Rev. Lucas A. Obakoya
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"And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:4, 5).

The power of God is an absolute necessity for Christians, the heirs of Glory. The Christian needs to possess the Spirit of God, Who will make him effective in the service of God. The power of God is something the Christian must covet. Paul the Apostle declared to the Christians in the city of Corinth that he did not want to know anything among them, except Jesus Who had been crucified. He made them understand that the sermon he preached to them, the Gospel he brought them, was not that of human wisdom and knowledge, 'nor of the wisdom of the world. It was not about natural power, but of Divine power.

Paul the Apostle told them that even though he came to them in weakness, even though he lacked human power, the Word of God which he brought to them was powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. He made the Corinthians know that he wanted to see them in the power of Jesus Christ, in the Spirit of Christ, in the might of the Most High God, by which they would be successful, and through which they would become overcomers.

Various kinds of religion and places of worship have been established, where melodious songs and great musicians feature, with the wise men and scholars of this world in attendance, but without the manifestation of God in their services. God wants us to delight and abide in His presence. He longs to satisfy us with His power for service.

The Word of God has revealed to us the only way to God. It is necessary for us to take heed of the Word as people who are redeemed through the Blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, the crucified One. The redeemed of the Lord are those who repent of their sins, confess and forsake them. God mercifully saves them and their names are written in the Book of Life. They consecrate more, and God sanctifies their souls. This gives them the grace to serve God in purity. This tallies with the wordings of one of our songs:

**Thank God, I'm counted worthy
In this world and in the next.**

Thank God that we are among those who can believe the Word of God; God's promises which were for the people of old are equally available for us today.

"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:4,5).

Jesus was addressing those whom He had redeemed with the power of His might. These were fishermen whom He called by the sea where they were catching fish, the publicans, the poor people, and those who were hungry and thirsty for Heaven. Jesus had dealt with them, and they had known the power of His might that there was no other Saviour. He alone was God. After His resurrection, He appeared to the Apostles for forty days. These Apostles were the people who had left the world, forsaken their sins, and had been living the life of victory over sin. He had sanctified them with His

Word. The Word had removed the root of sin from their hearts. They had faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and had become His true disciples indeed.

He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, 'ye have heard of Me.' May God give us obedient hearts. If we believe the Word of God, we shall have the grace to patiently wait to receive answers to our prayers. Jesus told the Apostles that what would make a Christian powerful was to be obedient to God's instructions. They were to wait for the promise of the Father. Even though John baptised them with water, God the Son would come with His power and might to baptise those who would believe in Him with the Holy Ghost. We thank God that we have a Supporter; we are not left to ourselves in this faith. God provides this experience for Christians.

The promise is for those who are saved, who press on to receive the sanctification of the heart. They don't have the love of the world, nor the love for the things of the world in their hearts any longer. They know their Redeemer, His doctrine and His Word, and they want to stand for Him. They have faith that, whatever Jesus Christ commands, it is compulsory for them to obey. The power of God is indispensable. It is what the world does not seek. To the Christian it has been shown that success is not by power, nor by might, but by the Spirit of God.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:8, 9).

Jesus Christ told them why they must wait for the promise of the Father. They would receive power when the Holy Ghost fell upon them. It was the power to become God's own possession, power to preach the Gospel, power to put on the Truth, to stand for the Truth, and to die for the Truth. They were not to depart from Jerusalem till the power came. Without the power of God in our lives, we cannot remain steadfast. The disciples immediately went to the Upper Room, and started to pray. They were praising God, searching their hearts and lives, confessing their shortcomings, imperfections and unworthiness. Certainly, it was a period of restitution. They must have mended their lives and ways and the Spirit of God must have helped them to restore fellowship with one another. When we purpose to do the will of God, His Spirit does help. The Spirit of God intercedes for us when we don't have sufficient grace to pray. God saw in the hearts of these people, the qualities of a real Christian - steadfastness in His service, doing what Jesus Christ did, bearing His sufferings, and abiding in the righteousness which Jesus Christ preached. They wanted to be called Christians. What kind of a Christian? A Christian who bears the Cross of Jesus Christ, who goes with Jesus Christ through the whole length and breadth of His will, who is willing to die for the Gospel of Christ, and who is willing to stake his life for the salvation of others. Those who have the Spirit of God, are the children of God.

They were all in one place, and in one accord—no confusion, no division or argument. When God saw their heart that they had met His standard, on the tenth day, a sound came from Heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and filled the place where they were gathered. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them, and they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. If we have true salvation and sanctification, and receive the power of the Holy Ghost, we shall speak with new tongues, as a witness that God has sent His Gift into our heart. If we do not dig deep, we shall not have power for service and we shall not be able to go all out for God. It was for this important reason, that Jesus commanded His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the power would become theirs.

There is plenty of work in the vineyard to be done. It is the people who have the Spirit of the Living God that God wants to place at His work. It is a matter of absolute necessity that we have the fullness of the power of God in our lives. We need not place our emphasis on how we shall have many clothes, build houses, bear children, eat and drink. For what may appear good before men may not appear good before God. What we ought to lay emphasis on is how the power of God can abound in

our lives, so that we do not become lean spiritually. If our faces are shining and our material possessions are increasing, but we are not filled with the Spirit of God, our faith is vain.

"And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

"And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

"Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

"For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

"By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:23-31).

This was the grace which the Apostles had after they had received the Holy Ghost—power to increase, in might for God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to testify. We must be filled with the Spirit so that we may have the power to testify about the great things which God has done for us. In the days after he had got the power of God, Peter had the boldness to tell the Jews, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

It is only the Spirit of the Living God in us that can enable us to persevere, endure troubles, difficulties and afflictions. When Jesus comes, the Holy Spirit is the magnet that will pull us up into the air, whether we are dead or alive. We must not be indifferent to the Holy Ghost.

We have to consecrate to the point that the power can be ours. We must have oil in our lamps, so that we can withstand in the evil day. The Word of God says, 'Those who have the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.' Ask the Holy Ghost to come into your heart this very hour and spiritual success will be yours.