

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSIONS

Philip S. Hunt | Equip Conference 2025 | Workshop

Text: *Acts 1:8-11*

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Introduction

Illustration: Dousing brush with petrol at Higher Ground Camp. Putting the match to the fuel produced an explosion and fire.

“It is easy to determine when something is aflame; it ignites other material. Any fire that does not spread will eventually go out. Evangelism occurs when Christians are so ignited by their contact with Christ that they, in turn, set other fires. A church without evangelism is a contradiction, just as a fire that does not burn is a contradiction.” - Author Unknown.

Evangelism and missions are not optional programs in the local church. They are the supernatural overflow of a life set ablaze by the Holy Spirit of God.

John Stott wrote: *“Before Christ sent the church into the world, He sent the Holy Spirit into the church.”*

Missions is not primarily the work of men for God, but the work of God through His people, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus does not send His disciples on mission in their own strength. He promises divine power and a Holy Spirit-directed plan: Power → Witness → Nations.

Missions is birthed from heaven, fueled by the Holy Spirit, and directed toward the ends of the earth.

I. The Might of the Holy Spirit — “You shall receive power.”

A. The Holy Spirit Enables the Mission

1. The Holy Spirit provides everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). The Holy Spirit:

- Causes us to walk in God's ways (Ezek. 36:27)
 - Strengthens us to hold the truth in a world of compromise (2 Tim. 3:1-9)
 - Enables obedience and holiness (Titus 2:11-13)
2. Mission begins not with strategy, travel, training, or passion, but with Holy Spirit-dependence.

B. The Holy Spirit Empowers Gospel Proclamation

1. The Holy Spirit gives mission its force:
 - Boldness (Acts 4:13, 29-31; 2 Tim 1:7-8)
 - Clarity and conviction (1 Thess. 1:5)
 - Courage under persecution (Acts 15:26)

CH Spurgeon said: *"Without the Holy Spirit we can do nothing. We are as ships without wind, branches without sap, coals without fire."*

2. We may preach until our tongues are tired, but no one is converted except by the Holy Spirit's work.

C. The Holy Spirit Power is Personal

1. The Holy Spirit is not a force but a Person who lives in us (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19). Mission power is not emotional hype; it is **the indwelling presence of God**.
2. God deliberately uses ordinary vessels so His power is seen (2 Cor. 4:7).
"My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

II. The Mission of the Holy Spirit — "You shall be My witnesses"

A. The Holy Spirit Raises Witnesses

1. A witness tells what they know and have seen. We are not salespeople—we are eyewitnesses to Christ's grace.
2. Like Peter and John: "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20)

B. The Holy Spirit Sends Missionaries

1. The Holy Spirit is the missionary Director:
 - Acts 13:2-4 — "Set apart Barnabas and Saul."
 - Acts 8:29 — Philip to the Ethiopian

- Acts 16:6-10 — The Holy Spirit forbids and redirects
- 2. Mission is not a career decision or romantic zeal—it is a Holy Spirit calling affirmed by the church.
- 3. John MacArthur put it clearly: *“The Holy Spirit remains the true Director of missions. The church does not send the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit sends the church.”*

C. The Holy Spirit Creates Persevering Witnesses

1. The word witness in Acts also carries the idea of martyr.
2. The Early Church did not just share the gospel—they staked everything on it.
3. History bears witness:
 - Early Christians risked their lives - all the apostles were martyred with exception of John.
 - **John Huss** - In 1415, long before the Reformation fully dawned, the Bohemian preacher John Huss was condemned by church and empire for boldly proclaiming the gospel and calling God’s people back to the authority of Scripture. Bound to the stake in Constance, Germany, Huss was given one final chance to recant. Instead, with calm resolve he declared, *“What I have taught with my lips, I now seal with my blood.”*^{*} As the flames rose around him, Huss sang psalms until his voice was silenced on earth—but his testimony only grew louder in the generations that followed. What enables a man to face fire with a hymn? It is the same Spirit who empowered the apostles, the martyrs, and every faithful witness since Pentecost—the Holy Spirit who compels gospel proclamation even when the cost is life itself. Huss’ courage reminds us that Spirit-empowered missions cannot be chained, and that the gospel advances most powerfully when God’s people treasure Christ more than safety.
 - **Joseph Ton** - In the 1970s, under the crushing weight of communist Romania, Baptist pastor Losif Țon boldly continued to preach Christ even as the secret police arrested and interrogated him for weeks at a time. In one confrontation, officials threatened to kill him if he would not stop preaching. Tson calmly replied, *“Your supreme weapon is killing. My supreme weapon is dying. When you kill me, my preaching will speak ten times louder.”* What gave an ordinary man such extraordinary courage? Not personality, not nationalism, not stubbornness—but the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the

dead emboldened Tson to proclaim the gospel when everything in the flesh would have chosen silence. His story reminds us that Spirit-filled believers cannot be stopped by fear, and Spirit-driven missions cannot be extinguished by opposition. When the Holy Spirit empowers the church, the gospel advances—even in the face of death.

- Countless believers embracing suffering and death for Christ. Tertullian of Carthage (Tunisa, Africa) (c. 155–240 AD) wrote: *“The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”*
- The Holy Spirit gives such courage.

D. The Holy Spirit Drives Global Vision

1. Jesus gives a global assignment:
 - Jerusalem - where you are
 - Judea - your region / nation
 - Samaria - cross-cultural, difficult places
 - Ends of the earth - all peoples, everywhere
2. The early church did not wait for perfect organization; they obeyed, trusted in the Holy Spirit's power, and turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

III. The Ministry of the Holy Spirit — The Holy Spirit Produces Fruit

A. The Holy Spirit Saves

1. True conversion is Spirit-born (John 3:5-8).
 - Acts 2:37-39,41 - Response to the gospel preached at Pentecost.
 - 1 Cor. 2:4-5 - Faith must rest in Holy Spirit power
 - Rom. 15:18-19 - Ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit
2. Numbers and emotion are not proof of mission success; genuine new birth is.

B. The Holy Spirit Unites

1. The Holy Spirit forms one people from all nations (Acts 2, Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Cor. 12:13).
2. Missions is not complete until the redeemed worship together as one body.

3. Revelation ends with a missionary cry: “The Holy Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come!’” (Rev. 22:17)
4. The Holy Spirit and the church speak with one voice until Jesus returns.

IV. The Motivation of the Holy Spirit — The Lord is Returning

A. Jesus ascended and will return (Acts 1:9-11).

1. This motivates faithful mission.
2. He comes with:
 - Accountability (1 Cor. 3:13-15)
 - Reward (Rev. 22:12)

B. If you know the Master is coming, you get busy with His mission.

Conclusion:

Down through the ages, God's Mission for His church remains unchanged. Threatened, beaten, cruelly persecuted, and tortured, the bearers of God's message of salvation by grace alone through faith alone have marched on. These brave warriors of the Cross, empowered by the Holy Spirit, were bold proclaimers of the gospel. They marched to their world and to their deaths, motivated by the fact that they would see Jesus face-to-face and receive the martyr's reward. Rivers of sweat, tears, and blood have carried to us in the present generation the living truths of the gospel.

Ladies and gentlemen: Today, it is our chance. Today is our opportunity. Men and women, I call you to reconnect to the mission of the church! To march forward in the power of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming the unchanging, undying message of salvation through Jesus Christ. To accept for our generation Christ's command to make disciples in every nation. To spend our lives, our resources, our energies on that which brings eternal rewards!

Jesus is coming back! Let us go with Holy Spirit power!

So What Now:

If you wish to reconnect to the mission of the church, you must do four things:

1. Surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit of God daily.
2. Abandon yourself to obey God each day.
3. Tell someone every day what Jesus has done for you.

4. Keep your focus on the clouds – remember daily that He is coming!

Closing Questions:

1. Do you know Christ?
2. Are you surrendered to the Holy Spirit?
3. Are you living as His witness?