

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-12 The Holy Spirit Empowers Us for the Mission

It is one thing to want to do something good; it is quite another thing to have the power to do it. The previous lesson taught how Jesus promised His disciples the power they needed to accomplish the work He had given them to do. He said, “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” (Acts 1:8). In this lesson, we will discuss five ways the Spirit empowers us to fulfill God’s mission.

The first way the Spirit empowers us to fulfill God’s mission is that *He compels us to witness* to the lost about Christ. With the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes an inner compulsion to tell others about Jesus and His salvation. When Peter and John were ordered to stop preaching and teaching in Jesus’ name, they replied, “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). The Holy Spirit was in them compelling them to talk about their Lord. Later, when Peter was asked why he went into a Gentile’s home in Caesarea, he replied, “The Spirit told me to go” (Acts 11:12, ESV). Thousands today could share similar testimonies. When they were filled with the Spirit, they began to see people in a new way. They wanted them to know Christ as they knew Him. In the same way, the Spirit compels us to tell others about Jesus.

The second way the Spirit empowers us for mission is that *He enables us to preach and teach* with greater power and effectiveness. In the Book of Acts, once the disciples were filled with the Spirit, they spoke with unexpected ability. The people were astonished that these ordinary men taught with such authority. For example, Peter was an uneducated fisherman. Yet, after he received the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, he stood and preached with power. The people were “cut to the heart” as they listened to his words (Acts 2:37). As a result, 3,000 repented and committed their lives to Christ. Concerning the apostles’ preaching the Bible says, “With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:33). We can have that same “great grace” upon our lives if we are empowered by the Holy Spirit as they were.

A third way the Spirit enables us in mission is that *He equips us to challenge and defeat demonic powers*. The proclamation of the gospel is strongly opposed by Satan and his demons. Paul wrote, “The god of this age [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2Cor 4:4). Jesus overcame demons in the Spirit’s power and so must we. He testified, “I drive out demons by the Spirit of God” (Matt 12:28). Jesus has promised us that same power. When He issued the Great Commission, He promised, “These signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons” (Mark 16:17). This is yet another reason we must be filled with—and remain full of—the Holy Spirit.

A fourth way the Spirit equips us for mission is that *He empowers us to work miracles* in Jesus’ name. In Acts, signs and wonders were a key element in advancing the gospel. Paul testified that he had won the Gentiles to Christ “by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit” and by “fully proclaim[ing] the gospel of Christ” (Rom 15:18-19).

Following the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost, "awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles" (Acts 2:43).

However, the Spirit not only worked through the Apostles, He also worked through Spirit-filled laymen, such as Stephen and Philip. Concerning Stephen, the Bible says that he was "full of grace and power [and] was doing great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8). Concerning Philip it says, "The crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did" (Acts 8:6). The same is true today. If we will be filled with the Spirit and remain committed to God's mission, the Spirit will work through us to perform miracles—to the glory of God.

The fifth way the Spirit empowers us for mission is that *He gives us courage* to witness boldly for Christ in the face of threats and danger. Proclaiming Christ can be a dangerous business. Stephen was stoned for his witness. James was beheaded and Peter was imprisoned for proclaiming Christ. And, Paul was once stoned and left for dead. Nevertheless, because they were all full of the Holy Spirit, they continued to proclaim Christ in the face of persecution. The Bible says concerning the early disciples, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). Today, when we face hostility and threats, we must be like those first Christians. We must be filled with the Spirit and continue to proclaim with boldness the message of salvation.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches five important ways the Holy Spirit empowers us to fulfill God's mission: He compels us to witness; He enables us to preach and teach with authority; He equips us to defeat demonic powers; He gives us power to work miracles; and He gives us courage to witness boldly.

The **main truth** you have learned from this lesson is that all believers must be filled with—and remain full of—the Holy Spirit if we are going to be effective in reaching the lost for Christ.

Let's **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson:

1. In what five ways does the Spirit of God empower us to proclaim the good news to the lost?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "The Holy Spirit empowers us by compelling us to witness, by enabling us to preach with authority, by equipping us to defeat demons, by giving power to work miracles, and by giving courage to speak boldly," you answered correctly.
2. In dealing with the devil, why is it important for us to be filled with—and remain full of—the Holy Spirit?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that it is important for us to be filled with the Spirit because he empowers us to challenge and defeat demonic powers, you are right.
3. Why is it important to God's mission that we allow the Holy Spirit to work through us to perform miracles?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that this is important because signs and wonders are a key element in demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel, you are correct.

4. Why is it so important that we remain full of the Spirit when we face threats and danger?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “We must remain full of the Holy Spirit because He will give us boldness to continue proclaiming Christ in such circumstances,” you answered correctly.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to re-listen to it until you can explain the five ways the Holy Spirit empowers believers to witness. Memorize this verse that affirms what happened to the early disciples: “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31). Then, share these truths with other Christians and pray with them to be filled with the Spirit and speak His Word with boldness.