

# “You Will Have Power”

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Unshakable Hope Chapter 12

Acts 1: 1-8 Acts 2: 1-4 CEB

God’s Promise: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. (Acts 1: 8)

My Promise: I will seek to sense, see and hear the Holy Spirit

The disciples had been through a lot. They witnessed the rapid rise and fall of Jesus’ ministry. They thought they had given everything to follow Jesus, but when it all came crashing down and in His greatest moment of need, they either abandoned Him or flat out denied they had anything to do with Him. After Jesus’ death, they essentially returned to their old way of life. Then the rumors started. Jesus was alive -- risen from the dead.

With a mixture of doubt, disbelief and faint hope, they met the risen Christ. Then the disciples must have been confused when Jesus gives them a curious instruction: “. . . He ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised” (Acts 1:4) Jerusalem was the place haunted by the memory of their failure to stay with Jesus. Rather than avoiding Jerusalem, Jesus invites His disciples to remain in their place of failure until they receive the promises of God. This part of today’s scripture that comes before the more familiar - Jesus’ ascension has always intrigued me. I know that I am like the disciples in that I want to run away from my places of failure. Often we want to distance ourselves from those relationships and situations where we have failed. Perhaps today we can spend a little time thinking about how our failures could be a new opportunity to receive the promises of God.

The Bible refers more than 100 times to the Holy Spirit. As Jesus prepared His followers to face a future without Him, He made the great and precious promise - which is the one we are focusing on today: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts 1: 8)

Max in chapter 10 asks us to imagine all the promises Jesus could have made to His disciples, but didn’t. “He didn’t promise immediate success, He didn’t promise the absence of disease or struggles. He never guaranteed a level of income or popularity - but He did promise the perpetual, empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is central to the life of the Christian.”

The Holy Spirit was central to the life of the church. In fact, everything that happens from the beginning of Acts to the end of Revelation is a result of the Holy Spirit’s work. The Holy Spirit came alongside the disciples, indwelt them, and gave them the push they needed to face the challenges ahead. He wants to do the same for us. The Holy Spirit entered our lives when we confessed our faith in Christ. From that point forward, we had access to the very power and

personality of God! As the Holy Spirit has his way in our lives, a transformation occurs. We begin to think like God thinks, love like God loves, and see like God sees. We can minister in power and pray in power and walk in power. The Holy Spirit promises to baptize us in power, just as he did for the believers in the early church. We just need to be open to his promptings and be willing to move in step where he leads.

In Ephesians 1: 13 we learn that the Holy Spirit enters the believer upon confession of faith. “You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ.”

Max talks about how the Holy Spirit knows each saint and the needs of each church. He goes on to say that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts according to what the church will need in a particular region and season. I thought a lot about what that means in each of our lives and here at Calvary UMC. God has raised up the persons needed whether it is new persons joining our fellowship or persons who have been here a long time - trying new areas of ministry.

As I announced my re-retiring June 30, 2021 at our Charge Conference, November 1, I did so knowing the time was right. God has raised up Pastor Chris and Elaine, for leadership here. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Dave Neckers sees the same things in their lives that I see and that is why Calvary UMC will transition with Pastor Chris as lead pastor next summer. We have time to work out the details together with our coach and the Holy Spirit. Max writes “The Holy Spirit unifies the church. And the Holy Spirit supervises the church.” We are trusting God to lead us and will be consulting God every step of the way. My hope is that you will join us by prayer to make this a smooth transition, by working with the Holy Spirit.

Remember God’s promise for today. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”

According to “Unshakable Hope”, here is what the Holy Spirit does for each of us - remember the Holy Spirit lives inside all followers of Christ. Here is the list, Max shares with us of what the Holy Spirit does for the church:

- \* Comforts, the believers (Acts 9: 31).
- \* Guides, the believer into all truth (John 16: 13).
- \* Reveals the things that are still to come (John 16: 13)
- \* Offers prayers of intercession (Rom. 8: 26).
- \* Bears witness that the saint is saved (Gal. 4: 6-7; Rom. 8: !^).
- \* Attests to the presence of God with signs and miracles (Heb. 2: 4; I Cor. 2: 4; Rom. 15: 18-19).
- \* Creates a godlike atmosphere of truth (John 14: 16-17, wisdom (Deut. 34: 9; Isa. 11: 2), and freedom (2 Cor. 3: 17)

This list would be incomplete without the word “Holy” in front of Spirit. For us, individually

the Holy Spirit also makes us holy by cleansing us from sin and sanctifying us for holy work.

The founder of the Methodist Church - John Wesley talks about the day (May 24) when his heart was “Strangely Warmed” is the day he received the Holy Spirit - a time of spiritual transformation for him.

John Wesley struggled with the same plight as the disciples: both a lack of faith and feelings of failure. For sometime he gazed into the sky for the answers to fulfill his unbelief. However as Martin Luther’s sermon “Preface to the Romans” was recited, John Wesley’s heart ascended into the presence of God. He writes, “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Not long after that experience John Wesley began to live out this spiritual transformation. He was a witness of the faith, and through his life, he became a witness for Jesus throughout the world.

May it be so in each of our lives.

Amen.