

Power for Proclamation

Many today are interested in the Holy Spirit. They may be curious about His gifts. They feel this mysterious third Member of the Trinity has been neglected. They (rightly) want to sense His presence and experience His power.

But fascination with the Holy Spirit can sometimes lead people to be interested in His powerful manifestations, as if the experience of His power were the end goal. When we look at the Holy Spirit's work in the New Testament, however, we realize that the Holy Spirit does not just give us power; He gives us power **for something**.

The Holy Spirit gives us power for a specific task – He leads us to **proclamation of the gospel**. When we are filled with the Spirit, we are necessarily focused on Jesus. Curiosity about the Spirit's gifts is not the sign that you are filled with the Spirit. Talking about Jesus all the time is a more likely indication of the Spirit's presence.

What Kind of Proclamation?

I love the story of Pentecost, primarily because Luke has already informed us of Peter's back story. Here you have a disciple who, just weeks before, was denying Jesus and then cowering for fear in a locked-up room. But now we see him standing before thousands and proclaiming the resurrection. What could possibly account for such a transformation other than that he is filled with the Spirit's power?

Peter's testimony is a terrific display of the Spirit's power. But his transformation does not lead him to declare his own testimony. Rather, the Spirit empowers him to give testimony to Christ.

Testimony to the Risen Christ

Watch how Peter proclaims the gospel. First, he focuses on the story of Israel. Then he zeroes in on Jesus Christ and His resurrection. Finally, he exalts Him as King and Lord.

This is a message *about* Jesus Christ crucified and raised. But it is also a message *for* the people who are listening. That's why Peter confronts his hearers: "You killed Jesus!" he says.

As readers, we may scratch our heads at such a remark. Were all those people present responsible for Jesus' death? In one sense, no. They weren't all in Jerusalem that fateful week. These aren't the same people who said, "Crucify Him!" Peter isn't saying that everyone

there was responsible, like Pilate, for crucifying Jesus.

Still, Peter has no problem with indicting them all. Why? Because all people are guilty before God. Because in our guilt before God, we have all contributed the sins that put Jesus on the cross.

Here's my paraphrase of Peter's Pentecost address to those present:

Take sides! God has vindicated Jesus Christ. The government condemned Him. The religious rulers condemned Him. They executed Him.

But God overturned their verdict, and in the moment of resurrection, the heavenly court ruled that Jesus Christ was the innocent Lamb of God sent to death for the sins of the world and now exalted as King over creation.

So which side are you on? If you persist in your sins, you are agreeing with Rome and agreeing with the Jewish leaders that Jesus was a false Messiah. But if you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, you are standing with God's affirmation. You are saying, "I stand with Jesus." And in standing with Jesus, His verdict is yours!

The verdict of the evil one – that you are worthless, that you are helpless, that you are hopeless, that you are nothing but a hell-deserving sinner – it is overturned. The accuser's mouth is stopped. You are vindicated along with Christ in His resurrection. His death was your death. His life was counted as your life. His resurrection is your resurrection.

Gospel Proclamation as the Evidence of the Spirit's Work

When Peter was filled with the Spirit, he immediately began proclaiming the gospel. The Spirit's power is mission-focused.

All this means that we are not filled with the Spirit if we are not proclaiming the gospel regularly.

The Spirit indwells us and gives us power, yes. But it is **power for proclamation**. He is lifting up Jesus. And the more we are filled with the Spirit, the more we will lift Him up too.

Read more from Trevin [here](#).