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ENRICHING AND EQUIPPING SPIRIT-FILLED MINISTERS

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Jesus, the Anointed One: Our Example for Supernatural Ministry

By Tim Enloe

I will never forget the balmy August evening when I encountered Jesus as my baptizer in the Holy Spirit. Though I was not fully aware why I wanted this empowering, I had a driving desire to experience it. As I began to yield my speech to His direction, a new era in my young spiritual life began. The next several days demonstrated the possibilities now available to me — along with the responsibilities that were now expected of me — as I led someone to the Lord and witnessed healing while praying for someone.

The doorway to supernatural ministry had opened.

Supernatural ministry fuels the New Testament's expansion of the Kingdom. I cannot imagine any minister not desiring to experience and fulfill the supernatural aspects of his God-given calling. Perhaps even the most starched clerical-collared pastors would love an empowering visitation from the Holy Spirit — even if it stretched his theological framework. How can you read the Gospels and Acts without having hunger pangs for supernatural ministry? Walking down the dusty roads within earshot of Christ's teaching and eyeshot of the miraculous would ruin even the most sedentary pew potato.

The concept of Jesus as our model for Spirit-empowered ministry needs to be re-examined. If He did the supernatural and told us to follow His lead by doing it too, why are we not doing it? Within this question are sub-questions.

1. HOW CAN WE FOLLOW JESUS AS A MODEL SINCE HE IS DIVINE AND WE ARE NOT?

Did Jesus perform miracles purely out of His divinity (as the eternal Son) or was there another factor at work? The Scripture is clear. As the Messianic God-man, He would never be divested of His deity (Colossians 2:9), but He would operate under the auspices of the Spirit's anointing.

Luke 4 records the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "The Spirit is on me because he has anointed me" (Luke 4:18ff; Isaiah 61:1ff). The apostle Peter revealed Jesus' Christological pneumatology when he taught the Caesareans that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Jesus operated under the auspices of the Spirit's enabling — not

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because His divinity was insufficient, but because as our example He would need to lead us in paths we would be able to follow. His promise of the power coming with Spirit baptism (Acts 1:8) would allow us to operate in realms not accessible to mere humanity.

The promise of “greater works” (John 14:12, KJV) has kept many a minister up late at night in introspection. Jesus spoke about us doing these “greater works,” but how can earthly novices expect that to happen? Talk about being under-qualified. In the context of Christ’s words, He spoke of the eminent sending of the Holy Spirit — the same Holy Spirit who came on Him at His baptism in the Jordan — to empower believers.

More than a Trinitarian photo op, the baptism of Jesus and the subsequent descent of the Spirit — along with the audible expression of the Father’s approval — should speak volumes about the process of our personal quest for supernatural ministry. Jesus did not need forgiveness for personal sin nor the Spirit’s power to enable for personal weakness, but as our example. He followed the Father’s will step by step, clearing the path that we — who desperately need forgiveness and empowering — could follow. The Holy Spirit’s descent on Jesus at His baptism established another facet of the pattern we are to emulate, for immediately afterward Luke records that Jesus was “full” of the Spirit (Luke 4:1).

Christ’s reliance on the Spirit’s power speaks of our desperate need for Spirit baptism and the “fullness” of supernatural power that comes with it. We can follow Christ’s example as our ministry model because, like Him, we can experience and rely upon the Holy Spirit’s power.

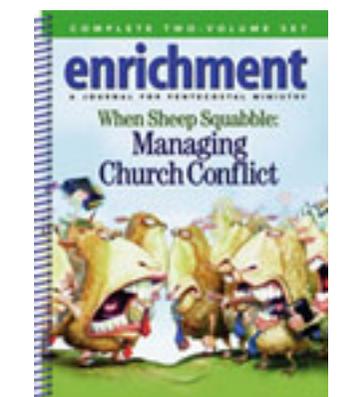
2. IN WHAT WAYS CAN WE FOLLOW JESUS, THE ANOINTED ONE, AS OUR GREAT EXAMPLE?

In Luke’s commissioning account of the Messianic ministry of Jesus (Luke 4), we find two generalized areas of supernatural expectation: Spirit-empowered speech and Spirit-empowered acts. The preaching/teaching/prophetic ministry of Jesus exemplifies supernatural, Spirit-empowered speech for us. The Synoptics reveal the awe of the crowds as they marveled at the authority and power of Christ’s spoken words (Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32). Likewise, the Holy Spirit displayed His power in the supernatural acts of healing, exorcism, and miracles (Matthew 9:8; 15:31; Mark 1:27; Luke 4:36). These acts drew attention to the person and message of Jesus.

The continuity of this pattern extends to us. Although Jesus, the divine paragon, has the Spirit “without measure” (John 3:34), we see the outworking of our Spirit baptism opening up the same doors for us. Acts 1:8 outlines the procedure: first, receiving power, and second, being witnesses; a prophetically empowering and commissioning experience followed by a prophetic and empowered ministry.

Notice that immediately following the initial outpouring at Pentecost, Peter declares that Jesus is the Christ with such power that the people are “cut to the heart” (Acts 2:37). Compare that to the previous reaction of people to Christ’s words. Then chapter 3 shows Peter and John demonstrating not only Spirit-empowered speech but also Spirit-empowered acts as the lame beggar is publicly restored near the Beautiful Gate. Luke wants his readers to see that Christ’s followers fulfilled the pattern of Christ’s ministry: Spirit-empowered speech and Spirit-empowered deeds follow Spirit baptism. Receiving and being are the hallmarks of the experience of Spirit baptism.

3. HOW CAN MINISTERS HAVE THE CONFIDENCE THAT THE SUPERNATURAL WILL HAPPEN THROUGH US?



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We may have received Spirit baptism years ago and yielded to the occasional supernatural ministry event along the way. But how can we confidently step up to a level of greater experience, dependence, and obedience today? We often base the answers to this loaded question on our fears and the awareness of our weaknesses. Simply put, often we can testify that the Dove descended on us at Spirit baptism, but the chicken still lurks somewhere deep inside. We can be so easily paralyzed by our fears.

So what major fears sap our confidence? Probably the two consistent ones we face in supernatural ministry are:

1. The fear that nothing will happen, and
2. The fear that we will in some way botch up the process by our inexperience or ineptitude.

We must conquer both of these fears by the Spirit, the Word, and prayer. No amount of cheerleading or pep talks can rouse us from this prison of fear. Only spending extra time soaking in the voice (particularly the Gospels and Acts) and presence of God can reframe the concept of what normal supernatural life really looks like. There is no study course, ministry center, or donation to a prayer tower that can guarantee a true increase in our faith and level of anointing; however, a simple immersion in the Word and presence of God will reset our expectations. The Scriptures testify that “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the words of Christ” (Romans 10:17, NASB).¹ We can build up our faith by “praying in the spirit” (Jude 20).

When we dilute this fear with the Scriptures, prayer, and the presence, a holy dissatisfaction can consume us to the point of obedience — no matter what the results may appear to be. I am not advocating a reckless or cavalier approach, but living in the words and presence of Jesus, the Anointed One, fills us with confidence. Many have presumptuously tried to step out in the supernatural without a strong commitment to the Word, prayer, and presence; and, like the seven sons of Sceva, their ministry is sidetracked by the search for bandages and fig leaves. Certainly pain and humiliation are guaranteed products of disconnected presumption.

If we are truly focused on our divine example, Jesus the Anointed One, and are committed to fulfilling His delegated mission, the supernatural tools of Spirit-empowered speech and Spirit-empowered deeds will likewise stir in our lives. That focus on Christ and lifeline of prayer, presence, and the Word will also protect us from natural impetuosity, presumption, and pride.

My experience of Spirit baptism followed by action — receiving and being —changed my spiritual trajectory, more closely aligning my life to Christ’s example. But perhaps you, along with me, have noticed that our historical experiences can make wonderful memories that bear less impact as the clock spins. Why not join me in a fresh pursuit of Jesus, the Anointed One, in prayer, study of the Word, and time in the Spirit’s presence? Scripture is clear. The reason the Spirit comes upon us is to anoint us for supernatural ministry, receiving power and being witnesses (Acts 1:8).



Note

1. Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible®®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission (www.Lockman.org).

Enrichment Journal
1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802
Email: enrichmentjournal@ag.org
Phone: 417-862-2781, ext. 4095
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