

e-CWIP interactive apostolic ministry training

Class 102

Doing the Stuff: An Introduction to Ministering in the Supernatural Session Two Pulpit Notes

1. Powerlessness In The Church: How Did We Get Here?

A. Spiritual Factors: The Mystery Of Iniquity Begins To Work

Paul said that “the mystery of iniquity was already at work.”

John said, “Even now there are many antichrists.”

Two factors began very quickly to weaken the early church or at least act as seeds which would later blossom into bad fruit.

“For I know this, that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among your own selves men shall arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts 20:29-30.)

Three factors undercut the power of the church:

1. The introduction of false doctrines
2. The introduction of false men
3. The direct spiritual effect of the enemy's attack on the Church. The spirit of antichrist is the spirit that works against the anointing and anyone who is anointed to pull them into unbelief and shut down the working of the Spirit.

B. Historical Factors Contributing To A Great Falling Away

1. **Separation** of the Church from its Jewish roots, which could have served as a brake against idolatry and *syncretism*.
2. **Incomplete catechism and discipleship**: the Church became a victim of its own success.
3. **Institutionalization**: a typical sociological cycle in which dynamic leaders are replaced by bureaucrats; apostles and prophets are replaced by bishops.
4. **Clericalism**: the growth of emphasis upon professional clergy at the expense of the ministry of all believers. In time, of course, only the clergy could do anything deemed spiritual, including read the Bible itself.
5. The rise of a naturalistic, **anti-supernatural worldview** which now inoculates Western society against the possibility of the miraculous.
6. The development of theological systems such as **cessationism**, which argues that the supernatural power of the Spirit is no longer available to believers.

C. God uses three major restoration movements to renew His people in the Word and power

1. **The Protestant Reformation (1500's):** although there were glimmers beforehand, we can trace the real beginning of this movement to 1517 and the ministry of Martin Luther. From this point on, God began to correct the errors of the established Church and restore numerous beliefs and practices of the ancient Church by spotlighting them within the Word.

2. **The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (1900-1980):** consciously embraced the entire spectrum of Holy Spirit renewal – helping people to receive the Baptism of the Spirit and engage in Spirit-directed evangelism. By 2000 A.D., Spirit-filled movements embraced 500 million of the world's 2 billion professed Christians.

3. **The Apostolic and Prophetic Movements (1980's - present):** are being used by God to (a) call forth the fullness of the “five-fold” ministry according to Ephesians 4; and (b) see those ministers equip all the saints for ministry.

4. **Summary of the effect of these movements:** Luther restored the idea of the *priesthood* of all believers; the Pentecostals and Charismatics restored the idea of the *empowering* of all believers; the 21st century fivefold ministers are restoring the *ministry* of all believers.

D. The End of Cessationism and the Start of the Second Apostolic Age

1. Cessationists typically teach that the gifts: (1) were **limited** to the Twelve and those ministering under them; (2) were **temporary** and were only given to validate the Gospel; and (3) have become **unnecessary** because of the completion of the Bible.

Cessationism gained strength in the 20th century as a reaction to Pentecostalism but has been in decline recently. Most cessationists accept charismatics as fellow believers in Christ, but some continue to view tongues and prophecy as demonic in origin. The most notable American cessationist is probably John MacArthur. Some denominations are strongly opposed to the exercise of spiritual gifts even today.

2. The idea of **prophetic revelation** in the present day is disturbing to most cessationists as it implies to them that the Bible is incomplete and the canon of Scripture is not closed (or, that charismatics equate prophecy with Scripture).

3. Several factors are contributing to the end of cessationism: (1) the decline of mainline and other historically Protestant groups; (2) the rapid growth of churches embracing the present-day ministry of the Spirit; and (3) the writings of authors in the late 20th century such as Jack Deere.

E. Biblical Arguments Against Cessationism

1. There is no direct statement in favor of cessationism in the New Testament; it can only be inferred.

2. Cessationist proof-texts are weak. The passage most often used to support the doctrine must be taken out of context in order to support it:

Charity never fails: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1 Cor. 13:8-12)

3. By contrast, biblical arguments for the **perpetuity of spiritual gifts** are broad and numerous, and include: (1) the promise of the Spirit to all whom God will call; (2) the promise of the Lord to be with us until the end of the age; (3) the promises of supernatural ministry to those who believe; (4) the giving of the five-fold ministry until we all come into the fullness of the faith, etc. (See: Deere, *Surprised By The Power of the Spirit.*)

4. Historical examples from the lives of godly Christians indicate that the gifts continued in the Church well beyond the first century A.D.

F. Religiously-based False Choices Which Hinder Supernatural Ministry

Religious thinking and training cause people to set up false choices in their minds which God has not asked them to make concerning supernatural ministry. Many times these

become strongholds which keep people from moving in supernatural ministry and reinforce their own fears, inadequacies or prejudices.

1. The Word vs. The Spirit
2. Purity vs. Power
3. Fruit vs. Gifts
4. Seeking the Gifts vs. Seeking the Giver

2. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

A. What is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

1. All genuine Christians have the Holy Spirit living within them, but there is a deeper dimension of life and power in the Spirit available than what many have experienced. Among other things, Jesus described different levels or aspects of our experience of the Spirit in terms of three prepositions: **with, in, and upon.**

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16)

“...the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:17)

Then said Jesus to them again, “Peace be unto you: as my Father has sent me, even so send I you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:21-22)

Therefore when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power. But you shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:6-8a)

B. The “Upon” Experience

The Baptism in the Spirit is a “coming upon” of the Spirit and an immersion in the power of the Spirit and should not be confused with the Spirit coming into a person at the point of conversion to Christ. It is received by faith.

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but remain in the city of Jerusalem, until you are clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17 NKJV)

C. The Doorway to the Supernatural Power of God

1. Jesus Himself promised that believers would receive *dunamis* power from God from Him when they were baptized in the Spirit.

2. The unmistakable mark of being baptized in the Spirit in the New Testament is speaking in other tongues, which is either seen or implied in the case of every person receiving it in Acts 2 (the 120), Acts 8 (the Samaritans), Acts 9 (Paul), Acts 10 (Gentiles at Cornelius's house), and Acts 19 (disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus).

3. Jesus was described in all four Gospels as the One who baptizes in the Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2 was a direct sign from Heaven to the Jews that Jesus was in fact the Messiah and had poured out on God's people the "Promise of the Father." God's people had been waiting for the day prophesied in the Word in which all of them could experience God, rather than just a few prophets and special people. A new age, the age of the Spirit, had begun:

"...this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, 'And it shall come to pass in the last days,' says God, 'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh'... being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He (Jesus) has shed forth this, which you now see and hear." (Acts 2)

4. The baptism in the Spirit should not be viewed as an end in itself but as a door into a fuller life in the Spirit and a new dimension of empowerment to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. It is typically only after a person is baptized in the Spirit that we see frequent manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit in his or her life.