

Most of the world lives in false security. We have tried to insulate ourselves from danger and we live with a false confidence that we are safe. We do not see or understand the spiritual world or the effects sin has had on our safety. The threats to our safety are disease, accidents, wicked people, natural catastrophes, and financial ruin.

I heard a man once say that we are either in a storm, just leaving one, or we about to enter one. I am not an alarmist who uses fear to motivate people to political or social action. I find myself questioning the motives of those who live that way when they personally benefit from the sale of their next book or increased donations. I also find myself questioning the wisdom of alarmist who is always trying to motivate people and their goal is to make this world a better place.

But all the prophets of Israel were alarmist when they saw people living with a false sense of security. They warned people about impending judgment. Sometimes it could be avoided or delayed if the people of Israel would repent of their sin. Sometimes it could not be avoided but the prophets of God gave hope and encouragement to the faithful that the Lord's plans for Israel would be fulfilled.

Jer 29:11

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

KJV

I do not know all that will befall you in your future. It is human nature to do the best you can to insulate your self and those you love. Live healthy, drive safely, lock your doors, build a storm shelter, and save money. These and other practices like living a righteous life and praying for a hedge of protection are wise things to do.

But these safety nets will not always stop you from experiencing tragedy. There will be trials of faith and some of them will be extreme and severe. They will cause you such pain and despair that you will look forward to death, especially if you are in Christ.

How will you survive? If you have surviving loved ones, you will live for them. We all need a significant purpose that is greater than enjoying the pleasures of this world. Loving the living is a powerful motivation to be faithful.

But the Lord Jesus wants us to be more than a survivor as noble as that may be. He wants us to be filled with His Spirit.

Eph 5:18

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

KJV

Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not make us immune to pain physically or emotionally. It does not make us immune to asking why. I would assume that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit during the crucifixion.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is receiving a special endowment of power for the service of the Lord. If we are filled with the Holy Spirit as we suffer, we will receive an

endowment of power from God that will enable us to be faithful to God in ways that are beyond our natural ability. This was certainly true of the Lord Jesus.

We need these endowments of power in life and in death. It is impossible for us to manifest the life of Christ without these endowments of power. It is impossible for us to live the kind of Godly life that pleases God without these endowments of power. It is impossible for us to fulfill God's plan for our life without these endowments of power.

In the summer of 1976, a beautiful young lady became the youth minister at a Baptist church in Bronte, Texas. The summer before she had served as a summer missionary to reach the poorest of the poor in Jackson, Mississippi. She was now a college graduate who intended in the fall to become an assistant to the Baptist Student Director at Stephen F. Austin University in Natchitoches, Texas. She was engaged to a young man who also had surrendered his life to the ministry. As she served the youth of Bronte, Texas he was spending most of the summer as a missionary sharing the gospel with tribes in remote villages in Papua New Guinea.

This young lady was fully committed to follow Jesus but the church in which she was raised taught very little about the Holy Spirit and His power. As she studied the scripture she became convinced that Jesus wanted to give her more power than she was experiencing. She saw that the early disciples were always being filled with the Holy Spirit and receiving special endowments of power. One night she fully surrendered herself to the Holy Spirit living in her and the Holy Spirit gave her an immediate sign that God had blessed her.

This experience and the new power she received to minister to others made a mark on her life that she would never forget. It dramatically affected her, her ministry, her decisions, and the people around her for the next 31 years. Whatever God asked her to do; she believed God would empower her to do it. Whenever she sinned or failed to please her savior or whenever she feared doing what Jesus was asking her to do, she knew it was because she had depended on her own power and was not filled with the Holy Spirit.

This experience and other precautions she took did not insulate her from tragedy. Debbie Wells died at age 53. But through her illness she depended on the power of the Holy Spirit. The testimony of those who walked with her through this time says it all. Through great emotional and physical pain she had remarkable joy and peace. She did everything God told her to do to be at peace with all men. She preached to just about everyone who was brought to her bedside, encouraging believers and witnessing to the lost. There is still a harvest that will be harvested in the lives of those that she touched the last months of her life.

I have never seen anything like it and I give God all the glory. It left a mark on me.

About three months before she died, I attended a funeral of an acquaintance that also left a mark on me. John Cobbs died suddenly of a heart problem at the age of 50. I sat in the very top of the balcony of a crowded church that seats several thousand people. The

service consisted of a parade of people that testified to this man's boldness to win the lost. It appeared that he had no fear about confronting people with the claims of Christ or traveling into dangerous places at dangerous times to share those claims. There was among those who shared a great respect for this man for the affect that he had on their efforts to win the lost. Several of those who had been impacted by his boldness were much older than this man.

I have since discovered that John was like all of us. He did struggle with fear. His secret was that he always prayed and depended upon the Holy Spirit to give him power and boldness before he witnessed to others. He also depended upon the Holy Spirit to give him power and boldness when he confronted men with their responsibilities to church or family.

I told others that it was the most challenging funeral that I have ever attended. It also left a mark on me that I will never forget.

Now these are experiences from the lives of two ordinary people who experienced extraordinary power during their lives. Their lives are not the truth but a testimony to the truth. We all need special endowments of power. We all need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

One of your greatest limitations will be if you believe you do not need these special endowments of power. You are saved. The Holy Spirit lives in you. You believe that you have all that you need. You believe that you do not need to ask for more or expect more power from God. If this is your attitude and your faith you will not receive more until you know you need more and that the Lord is willing to give you more.

Matt 9:27-29

27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

KJV

To receive more power you must believe that God wants to give you more.

Another limitation will be if you will not fully surrender to the Holy Spirit. If your attitude is do not embarrass me or you can empower my natural abilities but don't expect me to do anything supernatural, then, the power you receive will be limited to what you have faith to receive.

When our church was under investigation by the local Baptist association, one local pastor sent me a book entitled "Jesus never spoke in tongues!" Let Jesus determine your faith in what He wants you to receive and not other men or denominations.

To receive more power you must fully surrender to the Holy Spirit.

Fully surrendering to the Holy Spirit would certainly include renouncing any known sin that you have committed.

Isa 55:7

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

KJV

You can confess a sin and not renounce it. You have to turn your back on sin to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Another limitation will be if you are mad at God. You will not fully depend upon Him if you are angry at Him.

Ps 37:8-9

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

KJV

1 Thess 5:18-19

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

KJV

To receive more power you must resolve any anger you have toward God.

Another limitation will be if you have the wrong motive.

Acts 8:18-20

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

KJV

To receive more power you must have a pure heart.

Another limitation will be neglect. Yes, you can just choose to operate in your own strength because of neglect.

1 Tim 4:14

14 Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

KJV

You need to continually stir yourself up to depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 Tim 1:6

6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

KJV

To receive more power you must not neglect the gift that is in you.

It helps to have close friends like Paul to encourage you to depend upon the Holy Spirit and not your own strength.

Are you limiting the work of the Holy Spirit in your life? Are you obeying the command in Ephesians...?

Eph 5:18

18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

KJV

Are you depending upon His power or are you relying upon your own strength? Is there something in your life that is hindering the Holy Spirit from giving you His endowments of power? Are you grieving the Holy Spirit?

Eph 4:30

30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

KJV

Let's purpose today to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's purpose to receive the power that He wants to give us. Let's purpose to become the church that Jesus wants us to be.

Would you confess to the Lord today any way you have limited the Holy Spirit in you life?