

Dependent

Introduction:

Good Morning!

ME:

- I was 24 years old when I started leading the youth ministry here.
- I had helped out for years but then I had the weight on my shoulders and the responsibility.
- I was humbled and asked God to teach me.
- Around the 5-year mark I realized I had stopped praying during the planning.
- I had learned skills and wisdom to make decisions quickly and could plan and execute without as much effort.
- In a sermon someone mentioned pastors can get into this very habit.
- Like any task or skill in a job, you learn the ins and outs and it takes less time as you get better at it. This is very good and normal.
- We naturally become self-sufficient at things we've done for a long time.
- At first we need help and eventually we learn competence. And that's amazing.
- However the risk is - that competence can quietly replace dependence.

(I was planning in my own effort and not depending as much as I should have.)

WE:

- I imagine it's like learning how to drive in 2026
- When I first moved to Edmonton, before I went anywhere I had to read a map. I had to know exactly the route I was taking and how to get there.
- Learning to drive today. You have a GPS from the start.

- Just tell Google Maps your destination and away you go. It gives you instructions every step of the way – “Turn right in 300 meters”
- At times you look at the screen and it just shows you the next turn or direction. And you're mainly just listening to it.
- You're depending on it because you have absolutely no idea where you're going.
- But then after you make the trip 20 times, something changes. You're going to learn the route.
- Eventually you don't need directions anymore and you don't even turn on your Google Maps.
- That's completely reasonable when driving but it's dangerous when that's how we're following Jesus.
- When we first start following Jesus we have no idea about anything and we need God's direction in everything.
- We pray about things because we genuinely don't know what to do.
- And we learn how Christians respond, how we serve, how we pray, how we read the Bible, and how we lead ministry.
- Eventually without ever deciding to, you get good at doing those Christian things. **So good that we stop asking for directions.**
- To be clear this isn't a rebellion thing. Some of us have been following Jesus for decades and we're not trying to rebel against God.
- Quite the opposite; we're actually trying to serve him faithfully.
- But it's possible we become so familiar with the road and we stop listening to the one who's supposed to be leading us.
- **Big Idea: We need to seek the Holy Spirit's power for the Spirit's purpose, so that Jesus becomes visible through His Church.**
- Last week's sermon about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness was a fantastic reminder of this.
- The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness. He experienced the temptations and afterward it said the Spirit sent him on to preach.
- If anyone could have said, "I know my way from here," surely it was Jesus.
- Yet the scripture keeps showing us Jesus was depending on the Holy Spirit for his ministry.



We need to seek the Holy Spirit's power for the Spirit's purpose, so that Jesus becomes visible through His Church.

- Becoming mature in Christ doesn't mean we're less dependent on God. Sometimes it means being more aware of how dependent we've always been, which in turn produces a deeper dependence.
- Wisdom is good, experience is good, maturity is good, but when we've gotten good enough at serving Jesus, sometimes we forget how much we need the Spirit.

(when was the last time you genuinely thought, "Holy Spirit, I don't want to do this without you")

GOD:

- Last week we saw Jesus was in the wilderness, full of the Spirit, facing genuine temptation and he depended on the Holy Spirit
- Today we're going to see that Jesus didn't stop depending on the Holy Spirit when he left the wilderness.
- Turn to Luke chapter 4 and also get your finger in Matthew chapter 12. We'll jump there too.
- Luke chapter 4 is, of course, where Jesus gets baptized and then in the first few verses after, he starts his ministry.
- And the first thing we see him do is teach in synagogues, which apparently was a normal thing for traveling rabbis to do when they got to a place they were invited to read some of the Torah.
- And you'll notice when we start to read that it begins with Jesus returning in the power of the Spirit.
- Let's read.

Luke Chapter 4:14-22

4 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph's son?”

- So Jesus has been reading in the synagogues and in this location he reads from the book of Isaiah.
- The combination of passages that he reads from here is speaking of the coming Messiah.
- And we can see that people understand the connection and they're amazed that Jesus is claiming that he's the fulfillment of these passages.
- That is, until he shows up in his hometown, in Nazareth, where people have watched him grow up. They know who he is. They know his parents.
- And when you have been in a place where people have seen you grow up, they struggle with treating you like an adult or with authority the same way a stranger might.
- And when they start questioning Jesus, he makes this incredible connection. He calls out the Pharisees. And what he's about to say here is an illustration and connection to the Old Testament.
- He points out that God did not always go to the Jewish people. Sometimes he went to Gentiles instead.
- They would know that the reason God went to the Gentiles instead was because the Jewish people were being unfaithful.
- So Jesus's response is that he references two times where God went to Gentiles instead of Jewish people.

Let's read

23 And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.”

24 And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. 25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in

LUKE 4:23-24

...And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” ...And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.”

the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, 26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.,

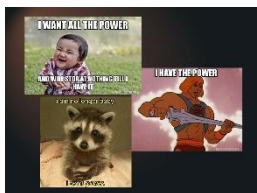
- They did not miss the insult. As you can imagine they were not happy at being called unfaithful.
- So they get super mad and go to throw him off a cliff and Jesus miraculously passes through their midst.
- Seems like a strong reaction to me but...
- So Luke sets this up with the Spirit giving Jesus the power. He then preaches and gets out of trouble.
- Pastor Hugh mentioned last Sunday, even though Jesus is a perfectly and fully divine, he is also completely fully human.
- Jesus endured the temptations in his humanity while he relied on the Holy Spirit, rather than leaning on his divine nature
- This is encouraging to us because it means we, too, have the same Spirit to rely on in our own humanity.

But for what purpose? What does the ‘Power of the Spirit’ do for us today?

Probably throughout all time, humanity has had this desire for power. And that desire seeps into spirituality as well.

From Simon the sorcerer watching Peter and others doing these miraculous things and he wants some of that ability and power.

- And let's not go very deep into the extreme charismatic movements. Where they try to conjure some sort of supernatural activity to look like proof of authenticity
- Beyond that I think we feel like spiritual power confirms something about us. Like: look what God did through me, // how gifted I am// look at this experience I had // look at this miracle that I experienced. // look how spiritual our church is.
- We look for these extraordinary experiences to prove that our own spirituality is justified.
- We feel like if God is really there then something spectacular should happen.



- And we see this kind of thinking in the Gospels. People asking for a sign from Jesus.
- And he's not opposed to doing miraculous extraordinary things. He does plenty of them.
- But he refuses to turn the power of God into a circus act.
- In this passage in Luke, Jesus was doing what in the Holy Spirit's power? Preaching. There are no lightning bolts shooting out of his eyes.
- He's just speaking The Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit
- And this passage Jesus reads in Isaiah tells us what the mission of the Holy Spirit is.
- A newsflash: it isn't for impressing other people or getting a spiritual high. Jesus says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and anoints me too.:
 - Proclaim good news to the poor.
 - Set the captives free.
 - Sight to the blind
 - Bring liberty to those who are oppressed.
 - To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
- Liberty, sight, freedom, healing, good news, restoration.
- This should all sound very familiar when we talked about Jesus as our Jubilee King earlier this year.
- This is exactly what Spirit-anointed ministry looks like for Jesus: it's the Spirit's power moving him towards broken people.
- **The Holy Spirit didn't empower Jesus so that he would look more impressive. He empowered Jesus to bring God's kingdom into these broken places.**
- Now let's turn to Matthew chapter 12.
- In this passage we're going to read that Jesus heals a man who's demon-possessed and he gets accused of casting out demons by the power of Satan. Jesus's response is about how illogical that is and then this is also the passage that mentions blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- There's a lot going on in this passage. We're just going to read from verse 22 to verse 28.

Matthew Chapter 12:22-28

- 22 Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. 23 And all the

people were amazed, and said, “Can this be the Son of David?” 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons.”

25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- So Jesus's point is pretty obvious in saying that Satan's kingdom is being invaded because the captives are being set free! The good news is being proclaimed, the blind can see and the poor and oppressed are being restored.
- Jesus is saying it's the Spirit of God at work in me and through me and this is what the Spirit is for: not just to impress you that I can drive out a demon, but so much more.
- They have to face the reality of his hard conclusion – If it is by the Spirit, then that means the Kingdom of God is here - and the implications of that are repentance and turning to Christ as messiah and eventually savior.

(let's not gloss over that reality)

YOU:

Consider it for yourself: **if Jesus, the man, the historical figure who lived, died, and rose again, and was doing these incredible things, if he was doing these things by the power of the Holy Spirit of God, then what are the implications for you today?**

It depends? Have you believed and trusted your life to Jesus? If not...

- Then you're in a place where you have to face the reality that there are some things you just can't accomplish on your own:
 1. You can't undo the hurtful things you've done to others.
 2. You can't choose to just not make bad decisions anymore.
 3. You can't reconcile yourself to God.
 4. You can't defeat death.
 5. You can't be held responsible and survive the consequences of your sin
- But Jesus did what you could never do because he understands, he empathizes with you, and he cares deeply for you

- He lived the life you couldn't live.
 - He took on the sin that you couldn't remove
 - he died the death that you deserved.
 - he rose from the grave so that you would have a way to receive life.
 - And salvation comes not through trying harder but through believing and depending on Jesus.
 - And if you're interested in taking a step towards full dependence on Jesus or talking about that more, come to the front afterwards. Walter will be up here or you can find me or the person you came with. You can ask some questions, or ask for some prayer, or ask for clarification, or we can just pray with you on whatever step it is for you in your spiritual journey.
 - But taking the next step is simply this: saying sorry for the bad things you've done, for your rebellion against God, and turning your back on Him, and then turning towards Him and depending on Him for your salvation.
 - Ask him for forgiveness. Then believe and trust in His name for the forgiveness of your sins.
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- And the Christian life continues the same way it begins, with dependence. God doesn't say, "Good luck from here."
 - Rather the Holy Spirit comes on the believer, dwells in us, and gives us power
 - Which brings us back around to that question we just asked. **If Jesus, the man, the historical figure who lived, died, and rose again, was doing those incredible things by the power of the Holy Spirit, then what are the implications for you today, now as a believer?**
 - Well just like you don't enter Christianity by your own power, you are never meant to live Christianity by your own power either.
 - Jesus said to the disciples before he went up to heaven, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses."
 - A witness is someone who sees something or experiences something and can share that with others.

Our job is to share who Jesus is with the world, while empowered by the Spirit

Our job is to share who Jesus is with the world. In other words we proclaim the gospel.

And we do that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, just like Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to go and preach in the synagogues.

- And then it's Jesus's job to usher in his kingdom, with us simply as his ambassadors
- Then of course, we live out that kingdom life of love
- We serve, we love, we pray, we bring hope, we care for the broken, we stand against darkness, we announce the kingdom.

- Jesus accomplished his ministry in full dependence on the Holy Spirit and then Jesus gave that same Spirit to his church.
- You and I were never supposed to follow Jesus using our own strength.

WE:

- Most of us don't consciously reject the Holy Spirit; we just slowly stop depending on Him.
- You know the Bible. You know how church works. You know how to pray. You know how to help people when they're hurting. You know how to run a ministry. You know how to lead a small group. You know how to share the gospel. You know how to organize an event. You know how to even sit with a friend who's hurting.
- And that's amazing. Those are good things: experience, wisdom, knowledge, training. All that's great.

- **You're trying to imitate a Spirit-empowered life without depending on the Spirit who empowered it.**

- **Please tell me you understand how limiting that is!**
- When it's all about you, it's maxed out at all you are.
- When you depend on the Holy Spirit you're not going to miss the mark.
- And he will do the work that he is going to do in and through your life.
- And of course there are times when the Holy Spirit will let you lean on the gifts, talents, and abilities that He's blessed you with as His gifts for you.
- But the danger is when you stop even checking to see if the Holy Spirit's still there.

And imagine a church, where it's not just simply everybody asking, "What can I do?"

But imagine if collectively we asked Holy Spirit, "What are you doing and how can I join you?"

Imagine a group of Jesus followers who weren't trying to look impressive but just simply wanted to make Jesus visible.

You're trying to imitate a Spirit-empowered life without depending on the Spirit who empowered it.

We need to seek the Holy Spirit's power for the Spirit's purpose, so that Jesus becomes visible through His Church.

Imagine people who are truly dependent on the Holy Spirit to show them how to love beyond what they can think of and beyond their own capacity.

Imagine how a community doing that, would impact a community and a city and every single individual who walked through our doors.

Let's pray.

Father, thank You that You have not called us to follow Jesus in our own strength.

Thank You for sending Your Son, who came into our world, lived among us, gave His life for us, and rose again so that we could have life in Him.

And thank You for giving us Your Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit, forgive us for the times we have relied on our own wisdom, our own experience, and our own strength and ignored your attempts to lead us or prompt us. Teach us again what it means to depend on You.

Holy Spirit, help us to be a church that seeks you, invites you, and participates with you.

Give us your power for your purpose.

Send us towards the hurting, the broken, the lonely, the captive, those who need the good news, and move through us to make the love, grace, hope, and kingdom of Jesus visible to everyone we interact with.

And may everything you do in us and through us, bring glory to you.

In Jesus' name, AMen

Benediction

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

Romans 15:13