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## RECEIVE POWER

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Part 4 of God's Work, Our Witness

Pastor Mark Driscoll | January 01, 2012

### MARS HILL CHURCH ALBUQUERQUE

*Before he returned back to heaven, the Lord Jesus told us that we would receive power, and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to apply the work of the cross to us and to cause the presence of God to dwell in us. And we figured what better place to preach that message and show that truth than here in beautiful, sunny Albuquerque, New Mexico: a place that is light physically, but very dark spiritually.*

*This was our first out-of-state Mars Hill church. Since they joined us a few years ago, they're now our fastest-growing church and also the highest percentage of conversions and baptisms among any of our Mars Hill churches, as we're seeing people saved from sin and religion and demonic spirituality in large numbers. It's a really exciting work in a very needy place, and we're very encouraged to allow you to witness God's work here in Albuquerque.*

### SINNERS, RELIGIOUS, AND SPIRITUAL

Three categories of people. You've got to find which one you're in.

Some of you are good, old-fashioned, stuck sinners. Don't raise your hand, but you're with us. And what can happen is you just sort of assume that the life you've lived is inevitable, that you're sort of stuck. You're powerless to change. Maybe you've tried. It didn't work. Maybe there's even sin that's been in your family for generations. You just assume, "This is who we are, this is how it is. We're just sort of doomed to stuck fate of sin. We can't get out of it, so we need to learn to manage it, or accept it, or—" maybe even for some of you, "celebrate it and make it an identity."

Some of you are religious, meaning you have some sense of guilt or God-consciousness. You know that certain things are right and wrong, and you really want to be obedient and you want to be moral, you want to be compliant, you want to live a good life, so you're trying your hardest and you're doing your best, but religion ends up in one of two places: pride, to where you feel like you're a good person and you look down on everyone else with a bit of smug self-righteousness, or despair: "I tried hard, but I can't change my life. I can't obey God. I know what I'm supposed to do, and I just can't do it," and that's where religion ends up.

And the third category is spirituality. So sinners assume they can't change, religious people assume they can change themselves, spiritual people want to change but they know that they can't change themselves, and so they're seeking some outside source of power and life. And the result is they get involved in Native American spirituality, they end up worshiping creation rather than the Creator, or they end up opening themselves to any spiritual force, being, or power, and as a result, they welcome the demonic into their own life, into their family. And for some of you in this area, this has been the case for generations of your family.

*Pastor Donovan: I love the culture. Raised hunting with my dad, planting corn, planting chile. That is the sun symbol. It is from Zia; that's where I'm from. It's where my family is from. The circle, it represents morning, noon, evening, and night, and the seasons of just life, like, from infancy all the way to old age. It represents north, south, east, and west; winter, summer, fall, and spring. It's also the New Mexico state flag symbol. And the whole idea is that the sun gives energy, the sun gives life, the sun gives sustenance. It sustains all things. When all that is said and done, they take the sun, and they actually deify it, and they make it a god, and they call it—you know, they'll refer to it as their father.*

Now the truth is you need to change, but you can't change yourself, and you do need another power to change you, but that has to be the power of the Holy Spirit. It has to be God coming to take residence in you and to birth new life through you. So what I want to talk about today is the person and work of the Holy Spirit because we're in an area that believes in the spirits, but doesn't know who the Holy Spirit is; believes in supernatural power, but doesn't understand the power of God.

### JESUS LIVED BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When you look at Jesus' life, even if you're not a Christian, I'm assuming you respect his life—the most famous, powerful, amazing person who's lived in the history of the world—and you've got to ask the question, "How did he do it? How did Jesus live his life?" And the Bible is repeatedly, emphatically clear. He lived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I believe this is really important for us because Jesus is not just a good example. You can't just look at Jesus and say, "Well, he lived this kind of life; I

want to live a life like him,” thinking you can do it by your own power or thinking you can do it by just any old supernatural, spiritual power. You need the power of God to live a life that is patterned after the life of Jesus.

And so Albuquerque has, what, three hundred days a year of sun? And it looks like an area of great sunshine, but where there is physical light, there is great spiritual darkness. And some are trapped in sin and some are trapped in religion and some are trapped in general, vague spirituality. And sometimes these even combine to where spirituality will combine with religion, and this happens in forms of compromised Catholicism and weird Pentecostalism in your town.

*Pastor Donovan: This is just like New Mexican Catholic spiritual life right here. There's a church here. It's become like a shrine for New Mexicans. Some people walk hundreds of miles to get here on Good Friday, as penance, asking for forgiveness. There's a lot of—I think there's a lot of superstitious beliefs around here regarding the spirit. So this is Chimayo. You take the dirt, rub it on your hands, rub it on your body. It's supposed to heal you, relieve you of pain. When I'd come to this place as a kid, this place really did feel sacred. Like, with the icons, the dirt, the setting, just always seemed like there was some sort of spirit here. I mean, you could see the hurt and the pain, I'm sure when you see little shoes there, a kid probably died. Even though Christ is here, the crucifix is here, there are images of Jesus, it's all detached from the Gospel. There is a sense of spirituality here. There's healing. There are miracles that they believe are taking place.*

*Pastor AJ: I think any credit would go to the dirt. Or would go to the crucifix that was found. It would go to this place and the trees that were planted and the derelict way that it was found, and yet the glory that it stands in now, and less about the Holy Spirit actively working and serving people.*

And what people are trying to figure out is how do we live a new life? How do we become a new people? Where is the power for change? It's in the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. And so we're going to look at the life of Jesus and we're going to ask, “How did he live his life?”

The first thing I need you to know is Jesus is eternally God. He is the Creator of heaven and earth, and we sinned against him, and he came into human history on a rescue mission. So God added to his divinity, humanity, and Jesus came to live on the earth among us, and he did so humbly. He did so humbly because, see, this is the opposite of spirituality and religion. Spirituality and religion both teach—whether it's a compromised pagan shaman or it's a Catholic priest—that the idea is there's a holy man out there and he has spiritual power and if we get close to the holy man, then we'll receive the power. There is one holy man. His name is Jesus. The rest of us men and women are sinners, and we need him. And no one makes us close to God and the power of God and the life of God except for Jesus Christ.

And Jesus comes—not that a man became divine, or God, or highly spiritual, but that God humbled himself and came among us as a man, and he lived humbly. He had all of the divine attributes, but he chose to set them aside and live like you and I, to show us how life is supposed to be lived by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. So God the Father sends God the Son, and God the Son's life is empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

## **THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE**

Now, I want to talk to you about God the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of Luke. We're going to go through the whole book of Luke, all right? So it's going to take a while, but we're going to look at one theme and thread, and that is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and around the person and the work of Jesus.

### **JOHN THE BAPTIZER**

So we will start in chapter 1, verse 14. If you've got a Bible, go there. If you've got an app, find it. Luke 1, beginning in verse 14, it starts talking about Jesus' home-schooled, rural, odd cousin John. He was an odd kid. He wore a Jedi robe, and his diet consisted of bugs and honey, all right? You're a weird kid under those circumstances. But he comes as the Old Testament prophet, preparing the way for Jesus, preaching repentance of sin.

And so speaking to his mother, Elizabeth, it is said, “And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord.” How many of you want to be great before the Lord? You say, “I want to live a life, that when I stand before God, he says, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. That life looked like the life I intended for you.’” That aspiration for a great life is not a bad one, but then it goes on to say how that is possible.

“He will be great before the Lord, but he must not drink wine or strong drink.” This is a very important word. Alcohol consumption is not a sin. Jesus makes alcohol and consumes alcohol, but for some of you it's a sin, and God would give you the same command that he gave to John. Don't drink. Don't drink to forget your problems. Go to the Holy Spirit to conquer them. And that's exactly what he says regarding John.

“He will not drink wine or strong drink, but he will be filled with,” what? “God the Holy Spirit.” If you want to live a life that is great before the Lord, that overcomes your addictions and compulsions, maybe even delivers you from a family history of something like alcoholism, the answer is not sin: “You can't change.” The answer is not religion: “Try harder and feel more guilty.” The answer is not spirituality: “Just try and connect with the world that God made.” The answer is meet Jesus and be filled with the Holy Spirit. So then you can live a new, powerful life by the same power that Jesus did.

It goes on to say, “He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.” That's what we want for our children, right, to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

It goes on to say, “He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him,” that is, John will go before Jesus, “in the Spirit,” or the Holy Spirit, “and the power,” which is the Holy Spirit’s power, “of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

Part of the Holy Spirit’s work is to save people, particularly even when they are young and little, to give them a new life, to give them a new power, so that they might serve Jesus. And you know that the Holy Spirit is at work when children love the Lord and when their fathers love them.

There are many patriarchs in this room. There’s something that I am seeing here in New Mexico that, quite frankly, I don’t see anywhere else in the world. Men are patriarchs. And if men get saved, their families get saved. If men follow Jesus, their wives and children follow Jesus. So you men need to know one of the things the Holy Spirit wants to do in your heart is to cause you to love your wife and to love your kids and to turn your heart toward your family.

And it says, as well, that the Holy Spirit wants to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers. There are a lot of problems in New Mexico, as well as in my city and all over the world. Most of them can be attributed to the sins of the fathers, men behaving badly and doing that which is dishonorable. And the work of the Holy Spirit is to change men to be like Jesus, and to change children to love their father, so that the reconciling power of God happens not just between us and God, but between us and the generations in our family.

*Pastor AJ: Yeah, some of the ways that we’ve seen the Holy Spirit work in this church is saving people. He’s reconciling relationships, key relationships between families that go back hundreds of years, and just—he’s changing how they see each other, the grace they extend to one another. We’re seeing husbands that have been absolutely unfaithful to their wives, reconciled through repentance, through walking away from that unfaithful lifestyle, and God blessing them and allowing forgiveness on her part and repentance on his part, and then they come together, and then a baby was just born, the fruit of that grace in their life that the Holy Spirit brought.*

You can change. You men can change. You can’t change yourself. And you don’t just need to be generally spiritual. You need Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

## **JESUS’ CONCEPTION**

The story continues. Verse 35, “And the angel answered her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.’”

Mary asks, “I’m a virgin. How am I going to have a baby?” God shows up and says, “The Holy Spirit is going to do a miracle in your womb. He is going to have God the Son birthed through your womb.” The Son of God will also be the Son of Mary.

This is what the Holy Spirit does. He does the miraculous. And here we are to see that even Jesus’ conception is through the person and the work and the presence and the power of God the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ life doesn’t make any sense apart from the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

This is why I would beg you, I would implore you, don’t just look at Jesus as a great example. Other religious leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi and others, have done this. They’ll say, “Oh, he’s a great man. He’s a great example.” He’s not just a great example. He’s God among us, come to save us, to save us from sin, to fill us with his Spirit so we can live a new life patterned after his. He’s not just our example; he’s our God. He’s our Savior. He’s the sender of the Holy Spirit. He’s the one who changes us.

And even his birth was by the power of the Holy Spirit in a way that is not unlike our new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit. If you’ve been born again, you’ve been born again like Jesus was born: by a miracle of the Holy Spirit. He’s still doing that kind of miracle.

## **ELIZABETH WORSHIPS JESUS**

And then there is Elizabeth. Elizabeth, her relative, is also pregnant. We read in verse 41, “And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” Elizabeth comes into the presence of Jesus. Elizabeth has John the Baptizer in her womb. Mary, her relative, has Jesus in her womb. They come together. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and worships Jesus.

One of the ways you know that you have the Holy Spirit is if you worship Jesus. And the Holy Spirit loves Jesus. The Holy Spirit serves Jesus. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. And when the Holy Spirit is in us, we want to do the same. We want to know Jesus. We want to love Jesus. We want to say Jesus. We want to sing to Jesus. We want to be like Jesus. And when we sin, we tell Jesus we’re sorry and we run to him.

The story goes on, chapter 1, verse 66, back to John, his cousin, who’s the prophet preparing the way for the coming of Jesus. “All who heard them laid up in their hearts, saying, ‘What then will this child be?’ For the hand of the Lord was upon him.”

As John was a young man, and as he was growing, people could see there’s something different with this boy. He lives as someone who is connected to God by the power of God. He’s not a sinner. He’s not religious. He’s not spiritual. He belongs to God. There’s something different about this boy, and the analogy is given that the hand of the Lord is upon him. And when the Bible uses that language, it denotes that the Holy Spirit is active in his life.

Have you seen that? If you’re a parent, if you see your children convicted of sin, if you see them love Jesus, if you see a deep humility and a concern and an empathy for others, if you see spiritual insight through the Bible that has been made known to them, you should also celebrate and say the hand of the Lord is on them, that God is working in them and through them.

## **ZECHARIAH PROPHECIES**

And then the Holy Spirit shows up, we will read, to a man named Zechariah in the next verse, verse 67: “And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.” And he’s going to talk about Jesus and his prophecy is all about who Jesus is and why Jesus came and what Jesus does.

I want you to know this. You cannot understand who Jesus is—why he lived, why he died, why he rose, why he’s coming again—you can’t understand what the Bible says apart from the Holy Spirit. How many of you have had this experience? You maybe had some religion in your background. You grew up going to mass or church, or you were taken to some student or youth ministry. You had some God-consciousness, but you really didn’t know who Jesus was. You didn’t love him, you didn’t see him for who he was, and then all of a sudden, the Holy Spirit opened your understanding and you realized, “Oh, he’s God. He’s Savior. He’s the forgiver of sins.”

If you’ve had that experience, then the Holy Spirit has, in a way that he did to Zechariah, revealed to you, revealed to you. And so even if you understand that Jesus is God, you’ve already experienced a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit in your life, just as Zechariah did. He saw Jesus for who he was.

## **SIMEON SEES SALVATION**

We jump over to chapter 2, verse 25. Here’s a man named Simeon. “Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”

How did Simeon live his life as a righteous man? Through the power of the Holy Spirit. The way you and I can live righteous lives, say no to sin, really have change, to live as new people with new desires and new hearts and new minds, is through the presence and power and person of the Holy Spirit.

“And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” So he’s an old man. He’s been in ministry for years and the Holy Spirit told him, “You will not die until Jesus is born and comes into the earth.” So he’s waiting and waiting as an elderly man.

“And he came in the Spirit,” so he’s going to do his ministry. He’s kind of like—to use the nomenclature of our day—a pastor. And the Holy Spirit is upon him, and the Holy Spirit is leading him. And we believe, friends, that the Holy Spirit can still reveal things to you. He can still guide your steps. He can still inform your mind. He can still instruct your days.

And then Jesus shows up. “He [Simeon] came in the Spirit into the temple, and the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him in accordance with the custom of the Law.” So it’s kind of like a baby dedication, right? Mary and Joseph are bringing in Jesus, and here’s basically Simeon, like the pastor, to dedicate Jesus to the Lord.

“And he blessed God and said, ‘Lord, you are now letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation of the Gentiles, and for your glory to your people Israel.’” Isn’t that amazing? He says, “God, you’ve answered your promise to me. Here is salvation!” Jesus is the source of salvation: forgiveness of sin, eternal life, reconciliation with God.

And he says, “You know what? It’s a light to the Gentiles.” Friends, you live in a Gentile land. This is the place of those who are not descendants, physically speaking, of Abraham. And Jesus comes to bring light to the Gentiles. And some of you will struggle with this. And let me say this: You cannot mix Christianity with other spirituality. You can’t. Jesus plus anything ruins everything.

Some of you want to have Jesus and the way of the Gentiles. You want to have the darkness and the light.

*Pastor Donovan: You know, that was a huge decision that I had to make, when I told my dad that I didn’t believe in his god anymore, or his gods, or what he taught me to believe. It crushed him. It hurt him. But I guess that’s what truth does.*

Some of you need to go home. You need to throw out whatever dolls, dream catchers, pagan spirituality, native spirituality. You need to get rid of it because it is not holy. It is not godly. And some of you will struggle because you will think, “Am I denying my ancestors?” You’re not, but you’re denying the lie that was told to your ancestors by their enemy. You’re denying the lie that was told to your ancestors by their enemy, a deception that would want to enslave your family for generations; to worshiping created things, rather than the Creator God; to living in darkness, spiritually; to being captives held in a prison of demonism. That is the story of this region. It’s only Jesus, it’s always Jesus, it has to be Jesus. And Jesus plus anything ruins everything.

If you’re not happy with the history of your family, if you’re not happy with the history of your city, if you’re not happy with the history of your life: Jesus. Repent of sin, get rid of everything that dishonors him, receive the Holy Spirit to become a new person, to live a new life, and leave a new legacy for your children and grandchildren. The way that life has been done here isn’t working. It’s not working. The women are not honored. The men are not noble. The children are not hopeful. And he says, “Revelation for the Gentiles.” We’re the Gentiles. Jesus is the revelation.

## **JESUS GROWS**

Well, the story continues. Jesus is growing up, beginning in verse 39. “And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth, where the child,” that is Jesus, “grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.”

That language of “the favor of God” is the presence of the Holy Spirit. How did Jesus grow from being a baby, to a boy, to a young man, to a grown man? How did he learn the Bible? How did he grow in holiness? How did he say “no” to sin and “yes” to the will of the Lord? By the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is what I want for you. I want you to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want you to grow: wisdom, stature, favor with men and God. I want you to have a new life. I want you to be like Jesus. I want the same thing for your kids and grandkids.

## **JESUS' BAPTISM**

Well, chapter 3, it really picks up here, verse 16. Here's the baptism of Jesus. Chapter 3, verse 16, “John answered them all,” his cousin, “saying, ‘I baptize you with water.’” So John had a ministry of baptism. He's like an Old Testament prophet calling people to repent of sin and get ready for the coming of Jesus.

“But he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” Do you know how you receive the Holy Spirit? From Jesus. From Jesus. You don't need a priest. You don't need a holy man. You don't need a shaman. You don't need to go to a sacred place. You don't need to go to a place where there's spiritual energy that you can connect into. That's all demonism.

You go to Jesus. One mediator between man and God, the man Christ Jesus. That's what the Bible says. You say, “Jesus, here's my sin.” He says, “Here's the Holy Spirit.” Wow, what a trade. What a trade. “You take my sin. Give me the Holy Spirit. Deal, done, thanks, awesome, great.” And that's the offer that Jesus gives. That's the offer that Jesus gives. He gives you the Holy Spirit. That's what John says.

The story continues. Verse 22, now Jesus is going to get baptized, showing his life, death, burial, resurrection. “And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven,” verse 22, “‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’”

I love this. Here's the whole Trinity, one God, three persons. God the Father speaks from heaven. God the Son is coming up out of the water. God the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus in the form of a dove. Here's the whole Trinity, and God the Father speaks from heaven, “In you I am well pleased.”

And I would say this to you: if you are in Christ, then God the Father says the same thing to you. If you are in Christ, then he is well pleased with you because your life is in Christ, your forgiveness is in Christ, your righteousness is in Christ. We don't labor so that God will love us. We labor because he does. We don't labor so that God would make us holy, but in Christ he has.

Before Jesus even started his public ministry, the Father was well pleased with him. Before you do anything, if you're in Christ, God is pleased with you. Don't let the enemy whisper in your ear. Don't let him condemn you, shame you, cripple you. Receive Christ. Receive the Holy Spirit. Receive righteousness as a gift, and then let the Father tell you, “I'm well pleased with you. Now we're going to go do some things together, not so that I will love you, but because I do because you are in Christ, and I love Christ, and if you are in Christ, I love you.”

And so here we see, and this is not that Jesus was without the Holy Spirit to this point in his public ministry. He was living by the power of the Holy Spirit, but at this point, the Holy Spirit shows up publicly. You know why? Because people couldn't see it. So people are looking at Jesus, “How does he do it? Oh, the Holy Spirit descends on him, and that's how he does it.”

Matthew 3 has this account of the baptism as well, and it adds one interesting piece of information. It says that the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus. It uses that language. The Holy Spirit stayed on Jesus, so that as Jesus continued forward with his life, you were to see the Holy Spirit in and with and through the Lord Jesus. So you and I, if we look at Jesus and we say, “I want to live a life like Jesus,” by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **JESUS IS TEMPTED**

The story then continues over in chapter 4, verse 1. Some of you were wrongly told, “Give your life to Jesus, and he'll take all your troubles away.” You got saved and it got worse. You go, “I don't think it worked.” It did work because, see, there is God and Satan, and there's a great war. And if you're on Satan's team of darkness, and you join Jesus' team of light, then you will receive a heavier assault and attack because now you've aligned yourself with Jesus.

So Jesus publicly begins his ministry, and then in Luke 4, he gets tempted. “And Jesus, full of the,” what? “Holy Spirit.” You see it's right there, right? So oftentimes what happens is people will talk a lot about the Holy Spirit and not connect him to Jesus. And the result is people have a really weird idea of who the Holy Spirit is or what he does. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be like Jesus. To be led by the Holy Spirit is to be like Jesus. I want you to see that.

And so here, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.” The Holy Spirit can lead you, direct your life course. “Live here, marry them, work here, do that, don't do that.” He can direct your steps. He will. He will.

“For forty days, being tempted by the devil.” This is forty days of fasting and prayer. And we don't know exactly what Jesus was doing. I think it is possible that he was studying the book of Deuteronomy because you'll see, if you read the rest of the chapter, as Satan comes to him, he repeatedly quotes, from memory, Deuteronomy.

“And he ate nothing.” How many of you guys really struggle even missing a meal? I do. Jesus, for forty days, fasts and prays. I would say just practically, don't do this unless you get a little medical counsel. Otherwise, you won't just be like Jesus, you'll see him, right? You're gonna die.

*[Congregation laughing]*

But here's when Satan really will hit us: when we're hungry, isolated, and tired, okay? That's when he's going to hit you: when you're hungry, isolated, and tired because then you're weaker. Here is Jesus getting hit. He's hungry, isolated, and tired. He's in a weak moment. And if you have weak moments, you're hungry, isolated, tired, you're vulnerable.

"And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry." So the devil comes to him and tempts him and tests him. And I won't read it all, but Jesus said no to temptation and yes to God. The Bible says in Hebrews 4 that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Have you ever wondered how did Jesus say no to temptation? And he had big temptation. Satan comes, says in this context, shows him all the kingdoms of the world: any woman you want, any money you want, any house you want, any glory you want, any position you want, any fame you want, any power you want. Satan says, "I'll give it to you. You can have a crown without a cross. You can have ruling without suffering." How tempting would that be? How did Jesus say no? By the power of the Holy Spirit. How can you say no to temptation? By the power of the Holy Spirit.

It's not a sin to be tempted. You need to know this because Satan is also a liar, it says in John 8. He's going to lie to you and say, "Well, you're tempted. It's too late. Might as well finish." Temptation and sin are different. Temptation is not a sin. Temptation is an opportunity to sin or to worship God. Jesus was what? Tempted. You will be what? Tempted. But Jesus never sinned. He said no to sin and yes to God. You can do that by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When tempted, you can say, "Okay Jesus, the enemy is hitting me now. Holy Spirit, please give me a new mind. Let me think differently about this temptation. Give me new desires. Make me not want to do this. Give me new passion to obey. Give me new pleasures for holiness. Holy Spirit, please help me. I want to be like Jesus now. I want to say no to that and walk away from it." Will the Holy Spirit show up and empower you in that moment? Yes or no? Absolutely. So when you're tempted, know it's an opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit to empower you to say no and live a new life.

## **JESUS TEACHES AND LIBERATES**

Chapter 4, verse 14, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. A report about him went through all their surroundings. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all." So Jesus overcomes temptation. He returns back into town, it says that he's full of the Holy Spirit, and he teaches.

How many of you want to teach? You want to teach your kids the truth. You want to help your spouse by being a good counselor and confidante. Maybe you want to lead a Community Group here at Mars Hill, or you want to lead a Redemption Group, or you're feeling God's call on your life to teach others. This could be one-on-one in counseling or in small groups. This could be in classes, or maybe it's even preaching, and God is calling you to plant a church, but you have this desire to teach others.

How can you do that? By the power of the Holy Spirit. The difference between mere teaching and Spirit-empowered teaching is great. It's not enough to just say the truth. The Holy Spirit has to be involved to not only take your words, but take their hearts and open them both to the purposes of God. And some of you might have fear, saying, "I don't know if I'm going to do it right. I don't know if I'm going to do it well." Let me say, as a teacher, one of the most important things about teaching is being filled with the Holy Spirit, being led by the Holy Spirit, trusting the Holy Spirit to guide your instruction and to open their understanding.

And so Jesus here opens Isaiah, and he opens to Isaiah 61:1-2. "'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.'" What's he saying? "The Holy Spirit is on me." He's taking Isaiah 61:1, which was written seven hundred years before Jesus was even born on the earth, and he's saying, "This was about me and here I am. The Spirit of the Lord is on me." Jesus tells us openly, publicly, plainly, clearly. How is he going to do all of his life and ministry? How is he going to do it? By the power of the Holy Spirit.

"'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, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'" What Jesus is saying is, "I have a message of liberation," that certain people live in captivity.

There are two kinds of slavery, friends. There is slavery where someone or something you hate overtakes you. There is also self-selected slavery, where you give yourself to someone or something you love. Many of us, our slavery is self-selected. In our culture, we use the language of addiction. The biblical language is slavery, whether it's sex, food, money, power, people. Whomever or whatever you worship, you give yourself to, you're enslaved by, it or they control and master you like a lord. That's self-selected slavery. And Jesus is saying that people are held captive in slavery, and they need to be set free.

And the Spirit of the Lord is on him to proclaim good news, and the good news is different than good advice. Good advice tells you what to do. Good news tells you what Jesus has done. Good advice tells you how to be spiritual or religious. Good news tells you how to be a Christian. The good news is also called the gospel. It's that Jesus is God, that God became a man, that God was tempted as we've been tempted, but God resisted all temptation; that he lived by the person and the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit; that he went to the cross, substituted himself, died in our place for our sins. Atonement is necessary.

The wage for sin is death, and Jesus pays that penalty. He goes into the ground, and he resurrects three days later, triumphant over Satan, sin, death, hell, and the wrath of God. And if you trust in him, you receive the Holy Spirit, you become a new person with new desires, new heart, new mind, new life; so much so that in the Bible, many who become Christians get a new name because they're not just better versions of themselves, they're new people altogether.

How many of you at Mars Hill Albuquerque, that has been your experience? We are this close to our three hundredth baptism in this church since it became Mars Hill a few years ago. There are people here who have absolutely, radically changed. They were captives, and they've been set free. They were maybe sinners, or spiritual, or religious, and now they're filled with the Holy Spirit, living new lives—not perfect lives, but new lives patterned after Jesus. Jesus starts his public ministry, saying, “That’s why I’m here. This is what I’m doing.”

## **JESUS COMMANDS DEMONS**

Go over to chapter 4, verse 36. “And they were all amazed and said to one another, ‘What is this word? For with authority and power—’” that’s another word that Luke uses for the Holy Spirit “—he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out of him.” Not all spirits are clean spirits. Not all spirits are holy spirits. There are also demons, not just angels.

One of the great lies that the enemy has told is that everything in the spirit realm is good or trustworthy or helpful. It’s not true. Satan will even perform counterfeit signs, wonders, and miracles, the Bible says. He will masquerade, the Bible says, as an angel of light. In this land of great light, this is the cause of great spiritual darkness. People just want to connect to the spirit world. They want to be spiritual people, but they open themselves up to the demonic. And Jesus comes along, and he literally casts unclean spirits away from people.

Some of you, this has been your history or your family history. You live in fear of the spirit realm. This is why some of you have traditions or incantations, or you have physical objects trying to protect yourself. None of that can help! That’s all demonic! Remove it from your house! Remove it from your children and invite in the Holy Spirit and know that Jesus has authority over all spirits.

If you are in Christ, he gives this authority to you, and you can command, in the strong name of Jesus, “I command you to depart from us. I demand that my children would sleep well tonight. I ask that the Holy Spirit would reside in our home, and I pray that we would be filled individually and collectively by the Holy Spirit and that Jesus, you would cast away our enemy, his servants, and their effects that have plagued our family for generations.” That’s exactly what Jesus wants.

Again, it is not rejecting your heritage. It is rejecting the lie that the father of lies told your ancestors. And Jesus comes along, and he gets rid of all the spiritual darkness, oppression, and damage, and the people are shocked. And Jesus is alive and Jesus gives you that power, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you, and you can exercise your authority in Christ, and you don’t need a shaman, you don’t need a holy man, you don’t need a pastor, you don’t need to go to a sacred place, you don’t need to go to a powerful object. All you need is to belong to Jesus and use his authority that he’s delegated to you. That is such good news. If Albuquerque knew this, the whole city would change and generations would be affected.

*Pastor Donovan: People are looking. They're looking to worship something. They want to believe in something greater than themselves. I was raised in a Catholic church. I saw the cross, I saw the crucifix, I saw the stations of the cross, but I had no idea what the gospel was. I needed somebody to tell me about Jesus. Someone needed to tell me, “Hey, have you ever asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins?” People need to hear in a very clear, in a very bold way, who Jesus is and what he's done.*

## **JESUS HEALS**

The story continues, chapter 5, verse 17. “On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there.” These are religious leaders, and some of you come from religious backgrounds. Tradition, morality, self-righteousness, pride, those are the people who murdered Christ. Religion does not save. Repentance of religion and faith in Jesus is what saves. We’re not trying to make you religious. We want you to be Christians. And there are many religious people who are not Christians, and these people are sitting here listening to Jesus, not so that they could learn from him, but so that they could criticize and judge him.

“They were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.” Did Jesus heal? Yes or no? Yes. How did he heal? By the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus can still heal. Again, we don’t need to go to a sacred place. We go to Jesus. We don’t need to manipulate the spirit realm. We need to ask Jesus, the great physician. Jesus hears and answers every prayer. Sometimes he says yes, sometimes he says no, sometimes he says later. But the truth is we can pray for the sick, and God does heal some.

The truth is that even if we die, we will be healed then. Ultimately, there is the resurrection of the dead, that the blind will see, that the lame will run, that the mute will sing the glory of God because as Jesus rose from death, his people rise from death. As Jesus got a glorified body, we get a glorified body. The truth is some get healing in this life. All who belong to Jesus get healing in the life to come, and it’s by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The story continues, chapter 6, verse 19. “And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.” Again, Jesus heals by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for the sick. Pray that Jesus would heal them. But hear me, friends. It’s better to not be healed and belong to Jesus than be healed by a demon and not belong to Jesus. The goal is not just physical healing, but spiritual healing that leads to an eternal resurrection and complete and full healing forever in the presence of God.

## **POWER AND AUTHORITY**

Go over to chapter 9. I know we’re covering a lot. I’m only here one weekend; I’m trying to pack in all I can and eat a lot of green chile. So far, it’s all going really well. Luke 9, “He called the twelve together,” so Jesus gets his disciples together, “and he gave them power and authority.” Again, this is biblical language for the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is going to go with you. The Holy Spirit is going to empower you. He’s going to lead you. He’s going to guide you. He’s going to enable you.

“. . . over demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.” The kingdom of God is really important, that there is God, who is a King, and there is Satan, who is his adversary, an enemy. There is God, who rules and reigns, and there is Satan, who is trying to rule and reign, and there’s this cosmic battle. And, ultimately, Satan was defeated at the cross, and he will be destroyed at the Second Coming.

But as God’s people go out, they need to know that they’re going out to war. You don’t just go to work, you don’t go home; you go to war. That there are people that are held captive by sin; that Satan and demons are at work; that lies have done their destruction and damage. And as you go as a citizen of the kingdom, you are like a soldier heading into enemy fire.

But as you go, you go with power and authority. You go with the person and work of the Holy Spirit to tell the truth, to pray for the sick, and to call a lie a lie, and to invite people to meet Jesus, and to be part of his great kingdom.

You need to know this. Some of you wrongly thought, “As soon as I become a Christian, my life will get easier.” It won’t. In fact, it oftentimes gets harder because Satan does particularly hate and declare war against those who love and serve Jesus. And it’s a war, friends. It’s a war for your marriage. It’s a war for your children. It’s a war for your grandchildren. It’s a war for your community. It’s a war for your city. It’s a war, and there are two kings and two kingdoms. And if you’ve gone from darkness to light, you have become a soldier in the army of God, and through the power of the Holy Spirit you can live a new life and introduce others to Jesus and help set captives free.

The story then continues. Flip over to chapter 10, verse 19. He says something else. “Behold, I have given you authority,” there’s the language for the Holy Spirit, “to tread on serpents and scorpions,” that’s language for demons, “and over all powers of the enemy, “and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Here Jesus is course correcting. He knows that some will come along and say, “You can have power! You can command demons! You can walk in victory. You can have authority.” And he knows that then Satan would even use that to tempt certain people’s pride to think, “Yes, I’m very powerful. Yes, I’m very spiritual. Yes, I have great authority.” And then it would lead to spiritual excess and to boastfulness, and it would lead away from Jesus to me, away from his victory to mine.

And so Jesus says, “Don’t rejoice that you have spiritual authority. Don’t rejoice that demons are subject to your name.” If you want to get excited about anything, get excited about the fact that you’re a Christian. Get excited about the fact that Jesus died for you. Get excited about the fact that Jesus rose for you. Get excited about the fact that Jesus loves you. You know what’s even better than casting out demons? Being loved by Jesus. And that’s what he’s saying.

Some of you come from Pentecostal and Charismatic backgrounds where every Sunday was cast-out-the-demon, freak-out, make-it-weird Sunday. *[Congregation laughing]* What he’s saying is we shouldn’t be pursuing signs and wonders. We should be pursuing Jesus. But as we pursue Jesus, signs and wonders should follow us. That’s what Jesus says elsewhere: “A wicked and adulterous generation seeks for a sign.” We don’t chase spiritual power. We want Jesus. We don’t focus all our energy on demons. We want to get to know the Holy Spirit. We do exercise our spiritual authority as is necessary, but do you know what we’re really excited about? Jesus. He’s our God, he loves us, and our names are written in his book and we’re going to be with him forever.

## THE JOY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

And then Jesus has something amazing that he says. And some of you will struggle with despair, discouragement, and depression. The number one category of prescription medication in the U.S. is antidepressants. People are bummed out. And I’m not saying that there’s never an emotional reason or a biological or physiological reason, but it’s amazing we live in a land that was created for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and a lot of people just aren’t happy. And Jesus was broke, homeless, hated, going to be crucified, and he had joy. That’s different. *[Congregation laughing]*

Here’s what we read in Luke 10:21. “In that same hour he rejoiced in,” what? Where did Jesus’ joy come from? “The Holy Spirit,” not from circumstances. See, sometimes you can’t change what’s going on in your life, but you can have a change of attitude by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I’ll give you an example. I was talking to a woman recently. She’s dying of cancer. Her body is wasting away. She’s very sick. She’s very unwell. I was talking to her. I said, “How are you doing?” She said, “Well, I’m dying and it’s horrible, and I don’t want to die. I want to see my kids. I want to see my grandkids. I want to live!” I said, “Well, how are you doing?” She said, “You know what’s really weird, though, I have a lot of joy.” I said, “Explain that.”

She said, “Well, as I suffer, I really appreciate that Jesus suffered for me. It makes me really appreciate his suffering more.” And she said, “As I’m dying, I really appreciate that Jesus died for me.” And she says, “Because Jesus rose, I’m really excited that one day I’m going to get a new body, and it’s not going to have cancer and I’m going to be with Jesus forever.” And she says, “And as I’m dying, I’m talking to people about Jesus, and they’re becoming Christians, and I’m really excited about that.”

And she said, “So I’m even hoping that Jesus saves the rest of my family, so that we could all be together with Jesus forever.” She said, “So, if I think about the cancer, I’m really depressed, but if I think about Jesus, I’m really encouraged.” That’s the joy of the Holy Spirit. That’s where the Holy Spirit is letting you think of things in connection to Jesus.

If you want to have joy, ask the Holy Spirit, “Teach me about Jesus. Help me to think like he thinks and to feel like he feels so that even if I can’t change my circumstances, I can have a change of attitude in the midst of my unchanging circumstances.”

## JUST ASK

Chapter 11, verse 13, “If you then, who are evil—” sort of an offensive statement, right? You probably wouldn’t put that on your bumper sticker, “You who are evil.” But what he’s saying is this: apart from the work of the Holy Spirit—and the Holy Spirit is the one who takes the cross of Jesus, applies that salvation and redemption to us—apart from the Holy Spirit’s work of applying the work of Jesus, we’re evil. We’re selfish. We’re inward-looking. We don’t exist for the glory of God. We exist for the glory of self.

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who,” what? “Ask him!” How do you receive the Holy Spirit, Mars Hill? Ask. Ask the Father. You know, when my kids come to me and they ask for gifts, they don’t have to ask it perfectly. They don’t have to get all the language right. I’m their father, I interpret, I understand. And I’m a dad who loves his kids, so do you know what I say if it’s a good gift? “Yeah sure, that’s great. I’d love to give that to you.”

God the Father is a Father. He loves you. And if you go to him and you say, “Father, give me the Holy Spirit so that I might live by the power of the Holy Spirit like Jesus did, my big brother,” what will his answer always be? “Yes.”

And some of you have been wrongly told, “Well, you don’t know if you have the Holy Spirit unless you speak in tongues. You don’t know if you have the Holy Spirit unless something happens.” Here’s the truth. You know you have the Holy Spirit if you love Jesus. Some of you will speak in tongues; some of you won’t. There’s a whole bunch of spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit gives, and not one of them is altogether indicative of whether or not you have the Holy Spirit. But Paul does say in Corinthians, “No one says Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.” If you call Jesus Lord, if you love Jesus as Lord, you have the Holy Spirit.

For me, I’ve never spoken in tongues. I’ve had people come up and say, “It’s so sad you don’t have the Holy Spirit.” Really? Then how did I become a Christian? Then how do I teach the Bible? Then how do I repent of sin? Then what accounts for all the changes I’ve seen in my life since I was a nineteen-year-old boy from a blue-collar family with a violent temper, sleeping with his girlfriend? Well, the difference is the Holy Spirit. And if you want the Holy Spirit, all you’ve got to do is ask. “Father, please give me the Holy Spirit.” And Jesus says the answer is always yes, and your life will begin to change.

## THE WORDS TO SAY

Chapter 12, verse 12. How many of you, you don’t talk about Jesus boldly and clearly and frequently because you’re afraid? You have anxiety? You want to talk to them, but, “What if I say it wrong? I’d love to speak up in Community Group, but, ah man, what if I say it wrong? I’d love to lead a Community Group, but what if I don’t know what to say? I’d love to even talk to my kids about Jesus or my family, friends, coworkers, but there’s anxiety. What if I say it wrong? What if I don’t get the words right? What if I make it worse?”

Here’s what Jesus says. Chapter 12, verse 12, “For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” You know what? The Holy Spirit wants you to talk to people. He wants you to serve people. He wants you to minister to people. He wants you to tell people about Jesus.

So here’s the key. When it’s time to talk, just take a moment, even quietly in your mind. Say, “Okay Holy Spirit, I’m claiming Luke 12:12. Give me the words to say.” How many of you have had that experience? You open your mouth, and you’re like, “I don’t know where this is going,” and you say it and you’re like, “That was awesome! That was awesome! Yay, I didn’t duff it, yay!” That was the Holy Spirit, right? How many of you have said something and you’re like, “I didn’t even know that!” [*Congregation laughing*] “And I said that. That was great! That was a verse I didn’t even memorize, but I remembered it right then, because the Holy Spirit brought it to mind.”

What that is in faith stepping forward saying, “I’m going to talk about Jesus now, and I’m going to trust that the Holy Spirit is going to give me the words to say.” Because, friends, it’s not just you speaking; it’s God speaking through you. And God wants to use you. He wants you to be the mailman or mailwoman to deliver the mail.

How many of you have had this experience? And you see that God uses your words and then he opens their heart and then it ministers to them and it makes a big difference and you walk away feeling so joyful, like, “Man, I just got to help somebody for Jesus.” God wants you to share in his joy. God wants you to help his people. God wants you to speak of his Son. And you don’t need to be timid, anxiety-filled, or fearful. You just need to, by faith, open your mouth, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words, and he will. He does.

## WHAT NOW?

Jump over to Luke 24. This is now, in the storyline of Luke’s gospel, after Jesus’ death in our place for sins on the cross, after Jesus’ resurrection. At the end of Luke’s gospel, beginning in verse 49, Jesus gets his followers together. Acts tells us that there was about 120 of them, and they’re all wondering, “What now? I mean, Jesus lived, died, rose. What now?”

And they’re really excited and they want to go tell everybody about Jesus. They want to go preach the gospel and plant churches and be missionaries and let everybody know Jesus is God! God came among us! He was tempted as we are. He said no to sin. He went to the cross. He paid our penalty for sin. He conquered Satan, our enemy. He forgives our sin. He sends the Holy Spirit. He changes our lives. He makes all things new. We could rise from death and be with him forever! Jesus is Lord! They’re really fired up.

And Jesus looks at them, and here’s what he says. “Not yet. Don’t go. It’s not time.” What do you need? Power. Power. Verse 49, “And behold, I am sending you the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Again, Christianity is not the life you live for God! It's not. It's the life of Jesus put in you by the Holy Spirit and lived through you by the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, you don't have to sin! You could change. You shouldn't be religious and try and change yourself! You need the Holy Spirit. And you shouldn't be spiritual and just accept any old spiritual power. You need Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And he tells them, "You can't go live the Christian life yet. The Holy Spirit has to come, and he has to take the work of salvation and apply it to you. He needs to do a changing work in you so that then you can go live a new life and tell people about Jesus." And it happens. Luke is a prequel. The book of Acts is a sequel. He wrote one book in two parts. Luke is about the life of Jesus. Acts is about the life of the church. Luke is about the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus. Acts is about the application of the work of Jesus to the church, and then the work of the Holy Spirit through the church.

Today we are two thousand years removed, and what we see early on in the book of Acts is that the church is gathered together, about 120 people, and just as the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, so God the Holy Spirit descends on the church, and he applies the work of Jesus to their life by the power of the Holy Spirit. And then the church explodes! Thousands of people become Christians and Christianity goes from 120 people in Israel to now billions of people spread across all the nations of the earth.

You and I are here as part of the witness, the testimony, the evidence that Jesus is God, that he died and rose, and that he has sent the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit has been at work and that captives have been set free and that light has been brought into darkness and that the nations of the earth belong to Jesus. You and I are part of the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus didn't rise, if the Holy Spirit wasn't sent, we are not here! The church does not exist! But Jesus is alive. The Holy Spirit has been poured out, and we're here as witnesses to that.

*Pastor Donovan: My hope for Albuquerque is that more and more people would hear the gospel. The Spirit is working here, the Spirit is moving here, and we can see the evidence of the Spirit. People are worshiping and singing out the name of Jesus for the first time ever. People that despised the name of Jesus and rejected the name of Jesus, or were ashamed of the name of Jesus, are now singing out the name of Jesus. When you're in a room full of people singing to Jesus, there's the evidence right there.*

## LIVE A NEW LIFE

And so here's fantastic news. Some of you have experienced tremendous life change, and some of you are going to experience tremendous life change.

For those of you who are sinners, you're just stuck, and you've sort of accepted your sin, you've either claimed it as an identity, "Well, this is just who I am," or you've tried to hide it in shame and you hope no one knows. Jesus knows. You don't have to be a sinner. Give your sin to Jesus, receive the Holy Spirit, become a new person, get a new life.

Some of you are religious. Repent of your religion. Stop trying to change yourself. Give your religious sin to Jesus, receive the Holy Spirit, become a new person, live a new life.

Some of you are spiritual, and you've been trying to change by external spiritual power, but you've not gone to Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. Repent of your spirituality, receive Jesus, be filled with the Holy Spirit, become a new person, live a new life.

The way we demonstrate that is in baptism, where we show Jesus lived for me. He died for me. He rose for me. And as water cleanses from filth, Jesus cleanses from sin. So as Jesus rose from death, I'm going to ask you to rise from your seats. I'm going to pray for us. Donovan's going to lead us in song, and you guys are going to be filled with the Holy Spirit and worship, amen?

All right, Father God, we pray against the enemy, his servants, their works and effects. Father, you said to ask for the Holy Spirit. We ask for the Holy Spirit. We ask for the Holy Spirit to apply to us the saving work of Jesus, to fill us, change us, give us new lives, free us from sin, free us from religion, free us from spirituality. Holy Spirit, we ask right now that you would change people, that you would break their heart, that you would change their will, that you would renew their mind, that you would regenerate their soul. God, we ask that today we would see people changed from the inside out and that we would see their lives change. And God, I pray particularly for the men because, Jesus, if they worship you, their wives will worship you. If they worship you, their children will worship you. I pray for the young men who have not had fathers, that, God, you would today adopt them as their heavenly Father and make them good fathers. For those, Lord God, who are there, and they're older men, and maybe they're proud, and they don't want to bend their knee and bow their head, and they don't want to get wet in front of others, I pray that they would be humble, and they would know that the best leaders are the most humble leaders, and that their family would worship you, too. And God, I pray for those families who have suffered under spiritual darkness for generations; that today you would save people; that you would break those chains of bondage; that you would raise up men as patriarchs, women as matriarchs, and that for generations the story would be told that on this day, the Holy Spirit filled someone with their last name, and their family has never been the same. Holy Spirit, we love you. We thank you that you empowered the life of Jesus, and we ask you to apply his salvation to us and empower us to live for him, amen.

*Note: This transcript has been edited for readability.*