

Series: Everyone Gets to Play	Reference: Acts 4:31 / Mt. 19:26 / John 20:21-23 / John 5:17 & 19 & 3:8	Title: Empowered	Date: 09.23.18
Website Writeup:			
We have an impossible task, possible only in Jesus! To minister life, healing & the message of Christ to others we must be led by the Word, while empowered by the Spirit. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? Would you like to live an empowered kingdom lifestyle? Today's the day of invitation, maybe for the first time, or you might need an affirmation of renewal.			

Color changes in text indicate slide changes

Let's recap: the first week we looked at Ephesians 4:11-13, saying some of us exemplify these 5 ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors & teachers* in order to build them into the rest. Ministries not exclusive to people only gifted in them, rather they're to serve the local church in building us up to practice them in ministry. This doesn't make these people super Christians. Remember, they're learning from our gifts as well. It's just that these five are especially directed towards fulfilling the churches calling of reaching all people groups as stated in Matthew 28.

No one's excluded from practicing & extending the Kingdom of God. Jesus is training his church for this endeavor. Right belief leads to right practice - we need to be informed by the Word of God & led by His Spirit in ministry, doing the things God's prepared for us to do (Eph 2:10). We don't do this alone (Mt 28:16-20). The Holy Spirit accompanies us, along with the gift of Christian fellowship. Which we saw in action through an example of listening prayer ministry over 4 people up front - that was powerful.

Last week we said, ministry is taught, caught & practiced as we watch Jesus & others do ministry & invite us into Kingdom lifestyle. As we're sent out to care for people in practical ways, teaching the Word & healing those who need it. God's working all the time - we may not see it until we step out in faith to minister to people. We heard the story of Elysia, Lindley & Rachel doing ministry to their neighbors. We want more of this happening through us as Six:Eight grows in the presence of Jesus gaining his heart of ministry.

For that we need the **empowerment of the Holy Spirit**. We begin today with one verse, *Acts 4:31, After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & spoke the word of God boldly.*

The earliest Christians, empowered by the Spirit to live the message of the Gospel. The Spirit's power bringing boldness in preaching the Word. **We have an impossible task – which is only possible in Christ**. It isn't possible in our own strength. But in relationship to Jesus, there's something divine implanted in us. The Holy Spirit empowers us to participate in building the kingdom of God among peoples.

I recently told all the leaders, I could fake this stuff for a time. There are times when I, as pastor, feel dry, far from the Lord, or things aren't going well. Like you, I'm susceptible to the stresses & temptations my sin nature affords. I'm one of the 'Imperfect' Jesus uses. And although at times I'm simply responsible to go through the motions despite how I feel, faking it isn't my goal, since all this is not about me - it's about Christ's ministry. It's not about how I feel at any given moment. I want to grow more deeply in Jesus, through godly spiritually formative practices. I want to operate out of the Word & leading of the Spirit's power to serve my church & community well in what God gives me to do - no different than any other Christian. Since I cannot lead where I cannot go.

In Matthew 19, pointing out the impossibility of the Rich Man to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus says (v26): *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* When we rely on our own wit, intellect, communication skills, psychology, or what have you, we realize quickly, ministry doesn't hit the mark. Kingdom ministry is a divine partnership, it's not us doing the work disconnected from the voice of God. It doesn't matter how smart or eloquent you are, it only matters you listen & follow The Holy Spirit's lead.

Historically, great spiritual movements in history have come about through God's people in obedience to his Word (right thinking), listening intently to the Spirit's leading in what to do (right practice). All the Great Spiritual Awakenings began this way. The Haystack Movement, a handful of students gathered by a haystack to pray for all the worlds people groups who don't yet know Jesus, birthed the modern mission movement, began this way. Obedient to the Word, listening & following the Spirit's lead.

In short, ministry, moving hearts, changing lives for the sake of the kingdom, is beyond our ability without the empowering work of the Word & Spirit. We're simply a conduit as we follow the Lord's leading. It's not just *being right* in what we say theologically, it's listening the Spirit's voice which leads us in power in what to do for & proclaim over people. The power of the Spirit, exhibited through us, authenticates the message we preach just like the original disciples.

There was a time at Six:Eight when we were experiencing all kinds of little relational fires around the church. Desperately trying to 'talk people off the cliff' just seemed to fan the flames, or prove ineffective. It wasn't until we implemented Prayer Shields for our leadership, all those fires went out. People are complicated beings who don't make logical sense. They cannot, or will not, sometimes see their own issues. They won't, at times listen to simple reason. Ministry to people without the Spirit's leading feels a lot like this ([VIDEO: It's not about the Nail](#)). I don't play that to make fun of women, there's another poking fun at guys, equally funny, but it had a little language unsuitable for our worship service - it's just difficult to speak sense into people at times - there must be divine movement.

There's so much going on inside a person, we can't trust our ability to simply lead them through things, possibly addressing demonic influence, physical disease, traumatic past experiences, or get them to see the nail in their forehead, without the Spirit's power, and

conviction of the Word. We speak truth according to what the Scriptures teach & power into lives as the Spirit reveals where to touch their hearts.

I remember once being pressured by a friend as they confronted me on something in my life. Deep down I knew they were right, but my pride stood in the way. Eventually, as I complained to another brother, he said, "I feel pressed by the Spirit to ask you, never mind what so & so says, what is God saying to you?" And it was done, my pride melted. I made the change.

Jesus was clear, the thinking of humankind nullifies the great range of possibilities. But connected to the Spirit & Word, dreaming God-sized dreams is what the Church of Jesus does! ***We have an invitation to the Spirit, who is waiting for us to engage...***

In John 20:21-23 Jesus is appearing to the Disciples after his resurrection, filling them with the Holy Spirit. He said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²²And with that he breathed on them & said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Resurrected Jesus breathed on His disciples - they received the power of the Holy Spirit & were sent by Jesus into the world to preach the Kingdom & heal the sick. Part of the message is, their sin's forgiven in Jesus! Isn't it interesting that sometimes we need that verbal confirmation from another believer in that truth? They're simply a conduit of Jesus' ministry. Turn to someone right now & say, "Your sins are forgiven in Jesus!"

Here's a question, have you received the Holy Spirit? I'm a believer. we receive the Spirit at the moment of salvation, but for some, that moment isn't always so clear. That's fine, but it does need to be considered.

A friend, Stephen Smallman, wrote a book called, *Spiritual Birth-line*, where he states, in short, we often look at the Pauline experiences of salvation where someone's changed by God in an instant. They seem to be going in a straight line in life away from Jesus, they get knocked off their proverbial horse, which is often accompanied by physical, or emotional healing & there's an about face towards Christ. Clear to all. Powerful change.

But so many of us don't come to Jesus that way. We actually come to Jesus in a slow gentle arc. Which is totally fine & normal. We begin life walking the opposite direction, but the voice of God through Scripture, people, situation & experience begins to speak to us, until one day we wake up & say, "I believe you Jesus!" When it actually happened, isn't always clear, especially to those who've grown up in a Christian home, under Christian teaching - which is actually a great way for it to happen! Just doesn't feel sexy. And there are instances in the New Testament where people had received the Gospel message, but did not understand they needed to receive the Spirit of God.

Have you ever been filled with the Spirit? Have your sins been forgiven? Has anyone ever verbally provided affirmation, leading you in prayer to receive the Spirit of God?

That's a question with which you may want to wrestle today. Maybe you don't know. There's no shame in that, but I'd invite you this morning, to come up & have someone lead you prayerfully in that. If you're sure it hasn't happened, don't leave here today without having someone pray over you - today can be your day of salvation. And if you're not sure, come up front & make this the moment you are. We all need affirmation! Moments like these are divine invitations to it. You saying to God, "I want your Spirit!", or more of His Spirit, or even a renewal of the Spirit's power, is never a bad thing.

Because ***we have a decision to make – which is worth it.*** In John 5:17 Jesus is being challenged by some of the Jewish Leaders. He says, "*My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.*" Then in v19, "*Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*"

God is at work. We want to be about His work! I love that idea - there's a job, a task, we have work to do, God's the foreman on the job site. Like he's saying: "Joanna, go over there & help Rob put that wall up. Jason, go encourage Jaime, she doesn't think her work is valuable. Jack, go give a message to Steve for me, I have something he needs to hear."

We're not trying to force an emotional response. It may be emotional, it may not be, either is fine. We're simply trying to give the Spirit room to speak & for us to respond. Jesus was on the job site of the Kingdom, doing what He saw the Father doing. Are you ready to take the Father's lead as well, deciding to jump in & pick up your hammer? To do so we need to be filled with the Word & Spirit. To be affirmed in our position with Jesus (*'Who Am I in Christ' Verses*). Confident in our place - affirmed that when we believe & receive Jesus, we're filled with the Spirit - growing in our knowledge of the Word, experiencing the Spirit's power through taking risks of faith in a kingdom lifestyle. And God's using others to lead us there.

Remember Jesus told Nicodemus, a Jewish leader who knew the Scriptures inside & out, in *John 3:8*, *The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*

Everyone's invited. Everyone gets to play. No, you can't control the Spirit of God, He blows where He pleases! But, you can be confident, he's inviting you, maybe for the first time to be filled & know for sure, your sins are forgiven! Maybe for others, he's inviting you into a deeper life of experiencing the Spirit's power in your lives today! Come up & receive prayer, don't let this divine moment pass you by.

One of the reasons God loves the diversity in His Church is because everyone has the ability to reach others who will uniquely connect with them on the journey. Let the Spirit direct you today. Christians are the first & true multiculturalists! Racism, agism, division & dividing walls of hostility, all broken down as we come under the Lordship of



Jesus in Salvation & empowerment of the Spirit, submitting ourselves to the directive work of the Spirit, informed by the Word of God!

From the little boy who shared his lunch which fed over 5000 people, to the woman at the well whose story impacted an entire village, to a young Jewish girl, Mary, who said, 'Yes!' to God & gave birth to the Messiah, to the few students who gathered under a haystack to pray for the people groups of the world which birthed the modern missions movement, to Elysia praying over her neighbors while looking out her window at the lights of their houses, to Stef listening to the Spirit's lead grabbing a neighbor to help put together a neighborhood party - everyone gets to play.

He's commissioning us into kingdom work of bringing freedom, peace & power into the lives of each other, and those who don't yet know him. Let's say 'yes' today! If you want to filled with the power of the Spirit in your life today, for the first time, or just more of it, or find affirmation in Jesus invitation to kingdom life, need healing, come up to be prayed for today.

(Instruct the Prayer People to ask when someone comes up, "What do you need from Jesus today? Healing, sins forgiven, to be filled with the Spirit?")