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Christ Worked In The Power Of The Spirit

God has brought great men from the ranks of the redeemed, and my life has been so greatly blessed by them. It's amazing. Several men, by the way, in this book who've written songs I have known. I'd say three for sure, maybe four or five, but three for sure that I have known. And I had the privilege of ministering with. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you for your word. As we turn to it now, I just pray that you would use it in a powerful way to speak to each heart. I pray that whatever is taught might be taught in truth. That might be taught by the power of the Spirit of God. That people might hear as though they're hearing from heaven. Because your Spirit is speaking to them. In Jesus' name, amen.

Isaiah showed when the Messiah came He would do these works

Would you open to the Old Testament book of Isaiah? Turn to chapter 35 of Isaiah. A very special reason for going back to chapter 35. It's in this chapter that we have some things said to us about the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus that will be here on earth. And I want to just read some of these verses and share some thoughts with you from them. that you might enter into that picture of the Lord's return.

Chapter 35 of Isaiah, verse 1.

1The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them,
 And the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
 2It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
 Even with joy and singing.
 The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
 The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
 They shall see the glory of the Lord,
 The excellency of our God.

Carmel, of course, being that long ridge of a mountain jutting out into the Mediterranean Sea where Elijah had his contest with the prophets of Baal.¹ You go up on top of Carmel, you could see all the plain of Ezra on before you. In Revelation, it would be Har Magiddo. You could see it all there. But Carmel would be the first land mass that the weather conditions would bring rain to as you come off the Mediterranean. So it was really a verdant green. And Sharon is

¹ Kings 18:20-40 A worthwhile read.

the plain along the Mediterranean as you go south. And it was very, very rich. A very abundant plain for growing grains. And so the excellence of Carmel and Sharon means the very best in the land.

So this is the land's response. These two verses. The land is responding to the Lord returning to the earth to set up his kingdom of a thousand years. And Isaiah is trying to tell us the land is going to respond to the command of the Lord. The land's not a person. It's a created thing. And as God's word of power goes out to it, it will respond. And great things will happen. The desert is going to bloom. The glory of Lebanon, which, of course, with the great cedars and the wonderful riches of the land up there, going to be given to the land down below Israel. And you take Carmel and Sharon and all the verdant green and productivity of those lands. He's just saying the whole land is going to be productive, marvelous, beautiful.

3Strengthen the weak hands,
And make firm the feeble knees.
4Say to those who are fearful-hearted,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come with vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and save you.”

And then when you come to verse 3 and 4, you have a turn to the people. Now, this is not the land. This is the people. You have to remember that the people of Israel have been waiting for centuries and centuries for these promises to come true. And they just haven't happened. And they've gone through a lot of trials and unending discouragements and persecution. And they just haven't seen these promises happen yet. And you can as well imagine how skeptics would say, see, where's the promise of his coming? Where's all these wonderful things that are supposed to happen to the land? Especially in the 2,000 years that the Jews were banned from the land. Where is it that we can see the working of God? Because it says in verse 3 and 4, “Strengthen the hands, then make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, Be strong, do not fear. Behold, your God will come with vengeance. With the recompense of God, he will come and save you.”

So, God, their promise, will come. And he's going to come with vengeance. So, on whom? Well, on the ungodly. The Lord will return. By the way, for him to return, he must be here the first time. So, this is not his first coming. He will return and save those who trust in him. Now, even though they've waited all these years, there is this promise. He is going to come back.

He is going to take vengeance on the ungodly. He will be their deliverer. The Jews deliver those, of course, that trust in him. Because he says he'll save you.

5Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
 And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
 6Then the lame shall leap like a deer,
 And the tongue of the dumb sing.
 For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
 And streams in the desert.

Then we see in verse 5 and 6, we see the signs that are given here in the scripture of the one who is to be the deliverer. The Messiah, the Messiah, the Messiah. This prophecy in Isaiah is telling you there are certain signs that you can look for. When they occur, you will know Messiah is there. And so, here's what it says. "The eyes of the blinds. The eyes of the blind shall be opened. And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer. And the tongue of the dumb sing. For water shall burst forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The parched ground shall become a pool. And the thirsty land springs of water for the inhabitants. For in the habitation of jackals where each lay. There shall be grass with reeds and rushes. Well, let me go back. These miracles that are supposed to happen. The eyes of the blind. Well, the blind are going to see. And then the deaf, they're going to hear. And then the lame, they're not only going to walk. The scripture says they're going to leap. And then those that are mute, speechless. They're not just going to talk in the scripture. They're going to sing. Some of us know that that's a miracle. You not only have a voice to use to talk. But you can sing to the glory of the Lord. In other words, that which is totally useless to them will suddenly be made not only useful, but perfectly so. Not just be able to walk, but to leap. Not only to speak, but to sing. These miracles are going to show you who the Messiah is.

7The parched ground shall become a pool,
 And the thirsty land springs of water;
 In the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
 There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

You see, so when he starts talking in verse 7 about the conditions in the land again, you really have a change from one extreme to the other. You have parched ground. Well, that really speaks of death. That becomes a pool. You have thirsty land. Now, thirsty means you want to take in, right? You want to drink. Land that wants to drink in. Well, instead of land drinking in, it becomes a spring. Spring, you see, the water is gushing out. Instead of wanting to drink in, it's just the reverse. It's giving out. And the habitation of jackals, well, the jackal

is a carnivorous animal. It's really, I know you think of lions and animals of that kind, maybe over in India, tigers and so forth. And maybe here you think of bears. And those animals are fierce animals. But the jackal is a, they move in packs and they take advantage, if they can, of any situation. They can actually, in a pack, they can drive a lion away from a carcass. And so, to speak of the jackals and where they lay, well, I'll tell you where they lay. They lay in their lairs, in their places, waiting to pounce and destroy. In their dry places, where there isn't much life. He says, you know, there will be grass and reeds and rushes. Well, reeds and rushes means a lot of water. That's not where jackals stay.

Jackals are out in the, actually, the open, I guess in South America they call it pampas. Or in Africa, you know, the trans wall. Just out in the great stretches where there are lots and lots of animals. And they can lie and wait for them. No, no, things are going to change extremely. God's going to say, no, I'm going to have grass there, reeds, marshes. No jackals. Not death, but life. That's the contrast. Not death, but life.

8A highway shall be there, and a road,
 And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
 The unclean shall not pass over it,
 But it shall be for others.
 Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
 Shall not go astray.

And then he says, in verse 8, he says, A highway shall be there, and a road. It shall be called the highway of holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray. In himself, he has nothing. He's a fool. But if he's on that road, in the kingdom, and roads lead places, don't they? You don't have to decide how to get to a place. If somebody has built a road from where you are to where you're going, you get on the road and you arrive. And so it is for, in the kingdom, you're going to have a fool. If fool's on the road, he's going to get to the place where the road goes. He's not going to go astray. In other words, Jesus will make provision in his kingdom for every person who walks on the road called the way of holiness. The highway of holiness.

9No lion shall be there,
 Nor shall any ravenous beast go up on it;
 It shall not be found there.
 But the redeemed shall walk there,
 10And the ransomed of the Lord shall return,
 And come to Zion with singing,

With everlasting joy on their heads.
 They shall obtain joy and gladness,
 And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

It's going to be a wonderful time when Jesus returns. Well, when you read this in Isaiah, no doubt you don't know the name Jesus. You don't know who this one is. But you know what kind of miracles to look for so you can spot him. You have to ask the question, you know, that the Jews of old would have asked, Who is the Redeemer? How do we know him? And the answer is, of course, by the signs of verse 5 and 6. That's the answer. That's how you'll know him. These signs will not be performed. This is important for you to understand. From chapter 35 of Isaiah. These signs that are listed there were not going to be performed. until the Messiah came.

For instance, before Jesus came, there was never a blind person in the world who ever received their sight. God didn't allow it to happen. Why? Why? It would be so amazing then. So wonderful. That somebody who was truly blind would be able to see. It would be a miracle beyond any explanation. And the person seeing it would immediately be on notice that the one through whom that miracle was performed was in fact the Messiah. And so it was for mute people. Being able to speak. And so, with those who were lame, that they would be able to not only walk, but leap. These were signs for them to be able to recognize the Messiah. He was going to perform them all.

Jesus would do these signs by the Holy Spirit

Matt. 12:22-30

“22Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23And all the multitudes were amazed and said, “Could this be the Son of David?”

24Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, “This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”

25But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons

cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."

So, I take you then to Matthew chapter 12 at verse 22. Matthew 12, 22. "Then one was brought to him who was demon possessed, blind, and mute." There we go. This one is blind and mute. He can't speak. He can't see. He's demon possessed. Would you agree he's in a bad way? This is beyond some little sickness, isn't it? Demon possessed, blind, and unable to speak. They brought one to him like that. And the scripture says, he healed him. So that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed and said, could this be the son of David? You see, the Messiah was to be of David's lineage and therefore they called him the son of David. Could this be the one? Could this be the one? Isaiah prophesied and told you when these miracles occur that the one doing them would be the one.

Now, why? They're the miracles. How dare you ask could he be the one? Of course he's the one. He's performing the very signs that God has given for you to be able to recognize who the Messiah is. Could this be the son of David? My, my, they ask.

Well, let me talk about the Pharisees. No jokes. The Pharisees were an extreme expression of a kind of religious development that had occurred in Israel. If you look at the history of Israel coming through the 400 of what we call silent years between the Old Testament and the New Testament, Israel really goes through some deep valleys of religious darkness. And, in those years, the rabbis still, there are rabbis there, they're teaching and, and a certain segment of them began to teach about law keeping and really to the extreme. And so, there is a kind of spiritual awakening, I can't even call it that. let me call it religious awakening to this Phariseeism because it was taught to them that if they kept the details of the law, they would achieve their salvation. And so, this kind of was fanned in the years before Jesus coming and really is at its peak in the years that Jesus is ministering.

And, and the Pharisees are therefore in the crowd and they're listening to this that Jesus, not just listening, but watching this, that Jesus does, these sign miracles. And so, we learn about them in verse 24 which says this, "Now when the Pharisees heard that, if, heard it, they said, what they heard was people

saying, could this be the son of David? So, the Pharisees heard that. And, this fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. So, here the spiritual leaders, they were self-styled leaders, self-appointed leaders of Israel, the religious leaders, are giving answer to the question, could this be the son of David? God has answered that by saying, look, here are the miracles, you look for the miracles, you see them, you'll know who it is. So, they ask the question, could this be him?

oh, now the Pharisees want to instruct the people about this. Listen to us, we'll tell you the truth. This fellow, as far as we're concerned, you should be concerned, he does cast out demons, but he does it by the power of Satan. Hmm. Well, Jesus speaks when that kind of thought is put out before the people. But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

Here's a principle. It's a principle about destruction, but it's a principle about destruction from within. This is not destruction by an army from outside coming to destroy. This is about how destruction happens from within. You want to destroy a kingdom? Foment trouble from within. Let it eat away at its very inner core. And even in a city. You want a city brought down? Have all the people in the city turn against one another. You will bring the city down. Now here's the part I think you'll get the illustration of. He says even a house, even a house, a house takes you down to the level of the family.

Now hear this. The greatest danger to marriage is not from outside. It's from within. It's from a spouse. You want to tear down a marriage? It can be most effectively, most powerfully, most terribly torn down by the people that are married. By what they do to one another and against one another. That's where you want to look for the real destruction of a marriage, from within. That's the greatest destruction. And as far as family is concerned, the greatest destruction comes from the family members. It comes from the parents and it comes from the children. When they turn against one another, with hatred and divisions, you destroy the family. It comes from within.

Think of Luke 15 with the wayward son. You know, we call him the prodigal son. What does that show you? It shows you a father who had unceasing love. Sure, son was away from him. Was his family broken? It looked like it. It really looked like it. But when you look below the surface, you see the father's heart. And in the father's heart, there was unceasing love. And in the father's heart, there was ever-present forgiveness. was always there. It didn't just come in a moment. It was always there. And then, when the boy did show

up finally, after years of wasting all his living and his very life, his very character, when he finally did show up back home, there was ready acceptance back into the closeness of the family. In other words, unceasing love, ongoing forgiveness, and readiness to receive back into the intimacy of the family. That was always there. And finally could be exercised when that son humbled himself.

So here you have both the things that can destroy from within and the things from within that can bring healing and joy. So, in this case, when they're talking about Jesus casting out demons, and they're saying, well, he did it by the power of Beelzebub, Satan himself. you know, Jesus comes back and says, look, if Satan casts out Satan, he's divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? From within the kingdom of Satan, if that's where the source comes to cast out demons, then his kingdom won't stand. Just like from within a house or a city or a kingdom, if it comes from within, it'll destroy it.

So, Jesus reasons with him, says, no, no, if that's where the source is, his kingdom can't stand. And then he says in verse 27, And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges. Now, he kind of throws that back at him. If the power to cast out demons comes from Satan, then by whose power did your sons, your adherents, who did they cast them out by?

And I take you back for that. Just a quick look at Matthew 7, at verse 21. This is what it says. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? And then I will declare to them I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

Satan has limited power. He is a deceiver, and how he uses that power will always be means, his purpose will always be to deceive. and those who even in the name of religion or righteousness, as these Pharisees did, claim that they have the truth and they can lead you to God, they're likely to also be the ones that Jesus will say, depart from me, you workers of iniquity, I never knew you. they never really had the power of God, and so they question him about what his source of power is.

What is theirs? and then we come to verse 28. Now I know it probably is not highlighted in your Bible. You probably have never heard this said before, but I want to tell you that verse 28 is a very important verse. This is a great verse for explaining the role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of the Son. Okay, I'm going to read it, and I want to see if you can see why this is a great verse.

“But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

What's being said there is this. The signs that Isaiah prophesied about. Those signs are miracles never seen before. Therefore, can only be performed by the working of God. Therefore, the one that's working them is the instrument of God. And what we're told here is that the Spirit of God is revealed as the source of all the workings of power in Christ's ministry. All the miracles that Jesus performed were by the Spirit working through him. When he stood in the water being baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended upon him, right? As a dove. that was God's anointing, the Father's anointing of the Son with the Spirit for the Spirit to do in his life and his years of ministry, to do through him the great miracles, the great displays of power that God was going to use to show who he was and to call men to responsibility, to claim him, to accept him, to receive him. The Holy Spirit is the means by which Jesus did all of these things.

Why did God have it done that way? Because Jesus is our example. He is God in the flesh, yes, but he did not do what he did on his own or in his own power. He is an example of you as a human being. If you want to do the work of God, you cannot do it by yourself. in yourself. You want to do the work of God, you need to do it by and through the person, the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. He's the one that's given to you for God to work through you. He was given to Jesus in an anointing to be the one to work through him as our example and so it is for us. You want to do anything for God, yield to the Spirit of God. Yield to the Spirit of God. Let him do it through you. That's the pattern.

And so we have here revealed that the person of the Holy Spirit was there in Christ from God the Father because now you can see there is God the Father in his role, God the Spirit in his role, God the Son in his role. So, verse 28 tells us that if he casts out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come to you. The kingdom was here, he said. the kingdom is where the Son is. Wherever he is, the kingdom is there. In fact, you could say, he is incarnate in Israel at this time and therefore his kingdom was there if they would receive it, if they would accept it. His kingdom could not be shown and rule and bring all the wonders of it if he were not accepted. But it was there. He was the king.

See, verse 29, how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods unless he first binds a strong man? Then he will plunder his house. Jesus was victor over Satan. In the infinite power of God through the spirit, Satan couldn't prevail. Yes, he could possess somebody with one of his demons or a legion of them, but Jesus, by the spirit of God and the infinite power of God, was victor because he was overruling Satan's power. Satan was, by that sense,

bound. He was powerless when Jesus' power came to bear on that person. He has the infinite power of God in the spirit of God.

You see, he says, he who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad. The Bible teaches us very clearly. There's one Lord, one standard, one righteous kingdom, one will of God, one infinite power, one way, one truth, and only one with the power to give eternal life. There aren't two ways.

Matt. 12:31-32

31“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Why? Listen, you've got to understand this truth. So many Christians have it all wrong. It's because the Holy Spirit is the only means God uses to work in and through man. Hear me, it's only by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, that God works in and through a man. Jesus is the example of that. Now, blasphemy against the Spirit eliminates the only one in the Godhead who brings conviction, conviction of sin. It's the one that brings spiritual sensitivity to what is righteous and what is sinful. when you eliminate him, there isn't anybody else. To reject the Holy Spirit, to regard him and all his working as evil, it would leave you without that standard of righteousness. It would leave you spiritually bankrupt. You'd have no one to help you cry out for mercy. No one by whom you could humble yourself before God. No one that would help you in that sense be aware of your need to cry out for forgiveness. no one to bring you to the place where you would really trust in Christ as your Savior. Therefore, you'd have no hope of salvation.

I've heard some Christians teach, well, if you say these words, I blaspheme the Holy Spirit, you'll forever go to hell. They don't understand the difference between words and meaning it with your heart. Believe me, it isn't the technicality of saying words that brings God's work to bear in your life.

You want to write the words of repentant prayer where somebody gets saved and you have somebody read those words, can you then say to them, well, you're saved now. Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me. Thank you for dying in my place. I repent of my sin. I ask you to forgive me, please, now, right

now, I lay my life in your hands. Please come live in my life. In Jesus' name, amen.

I must be saved now. I'm sorry. You'd be deceived, but you wouldn't be saved. If you don't cry out from your heart, if you don't repent from your heart, if you're not trusting in Jesus with all your heart, you won't be saved, you won't be saved. It's not the technicality of the words, it's not ritual that saves you. We're talking about a spiritual transaction between you and God. God knows your heart. And so if you, in your heart, actually come to the place where you believe that anything that comes from the Holy Spirit is evil, it's sinful, it's despicable, it's awful, who's going to convict you now? Where are you going to have your standard of righteousness? How are you going to be saved? you can't be. It's the only one God uses in this life to do those works in us, to help us, bring us to the place, and help us cry out. Because we recognize our sinfulness.

Listen, I'm not saying he gives you your faith, he does not. you must put your faith in the Lord Jesus. But he will help you see your sinfulness and your helplessness and your desperateness of need. He'll bring you to that place if you will see it, and if you would cry out.

Matt. 12:33-37

33“Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

And so, either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for a tree is known by its fruit. You have to recognize that good comes from God, and evil is sin. And so, you have in this section here, and I'm not going to handle it verse by verse, but it's the section from 34 to 37. where he turns to them and he calls them brood of vipers. How can you being evil speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things. And an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. God's sake. But I say to you, for every idle word men may speak, they will give account

of it in a day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned. don't think that's teaching you that you've got to clean up your language and God will judge your words, and they're all cleaned up now, you're going to get to heaven. It's not that.

It's a question is, have you undergone salvation? Have you undergone transformation? has God recreated your heart? Because if he has, now you'll do good works, and they will prove before God that you're saved. If you haven't been changed, everything you do and think will prove that you're condemned, that you're a sinner, unsaved. Either the tree is good and brings forth good fruit, the only way the tree gets to be good is to be changed, to be reborn, to be saved. Now you can bring forth good fruit. If you're a bad tree, you know, it just brings forth rotten fruit, you haven't been changed. You need salvation. We're talking about the need for change, and that comes by conviction of the Spirit of God, seeing your sin, not turning against him and talk of him or speak of him or respond to him as evil. If you're saved, you're changed. Eternally changed. Wondrously changed.

Father, thank you for your word and the power of it. I know that these people should have recognized Jesus as the Messiah, but they were blind. They were blinded by the teaching that they had. They were blinded by their self-righteousness. They were blinded by their desire to earn their salvation by their deeds, by their works. They were blinded because, Lord, they had hardened their hearts against you. They had accepted evil things as good, and they saw the good things as despicable. They saw Jesus, even Jesus, as evil, the instrument of Satan. Lord, help us keep good and evil separated. Lord, help us in our hearts to respond to the Spirit of God that would help us to see what is right and what is wrong, what is good, what is bad, what is evil, what is righteous, and choose you, Lord. Choose to walk with you. Choose to live for you. Choose to produce fruit that you have delighted. Thank you for showing openly the miracles that should have convinced them, Lord. We bear testimony that we have seen the miracle of redemption. We have seen the miracle that only you could perform. We have seen the

miracle of salvation. And therefore, Lord, we would serve you. You are our God. In Jesus' name, amen.