

# Lift Up Your Eyes

Acts 1 vs. 8 “ *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”

**The Key to All Blessings** The word *receive* is the key word to all blessings in the Christian life. The word implies that all blessings have been provided and given by God. We just need to receive them (2 Peter 1:3-4). Let's look at what God has provided for us to receive.

1. *The blind receive their sight* (Matthew 11:5, Acts 9:12). Healing has been provided by the cross of Jesus and we only need to receive it. Whether it is physical or mental, healing is a finished work.
2. *Let him receive the teaching* (Matthew 19:12). When we come to church, we need to open our heart and receive the teaching of God's word. Listening is a choice, and hearing is a decision. Jesus said if we have ears we should hear what the Spirit is saying (Mark 4:23).
3. *He shall receive a hundredfold* (Matthew 19:29). Financial and material blessings have also been provided by the work of Jesus on the cross. Jesus said, if we are faithful to give, we can receive a hundredfold in this lifetime.
4. *They prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit* (Acts 8:15, John 7:39, 20:22, Acts 2:38). How often have we prayed for the Holy Spirit to come? The Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost and does not need to be given again. The Holy Spirit is in the earth, not in heaven. It is useless for us to pray for God to send the Holy Spirit for Him to come down. The Holy Spirit is here. In ministering, we need to pray simply for the person/persons to receive the Holy Spirit. He is here to be received.
5. *As many as received Him* (John 1:12, Acts 10:43). Salvation is not prayed for or asked for, but received. Jesus has been crucified, risen, and ascended into heaven. He sat down in heaven because the work of redemption was completed. All that is left for the sinner is to receive eternal life. Salvation, like any gift, is to be received.

### **What About Power?**

As Spirit-filled people of faith, where did we ever come up with the idea that speaking in tongues produces power? I know it has been taught and promoted by many good ministers, but it is so far from the truth. Praying in tongues does not give power. Praying in tongues stirs you up in your inner man, yes, and provides sensitivity to the will of God, *but power is received*.

After we are filled with the Holy Spirit, power for any situation is received. “You shall *receive* power *after* the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). After we are filled with the Holy Spirit, God’s power is always available and always present. When a need arises, we draw on the power of God by receiving it - it flows freely from the Holy Spirit who resides within each and every one of us. The power of God is always greater than any circumstance or work of the enemy we face at any given moment.

Listen to God’s word about the ever-present power and personage of God in our lives. We are told that He is a *very present help in the time of need* (Psalm 46:1). He will *never leave or forsake you* (Hebrews 13:5). Jesus said He would be *with us forever* (John 14:16-17). To further emphasize this, He would be *with us to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). David told us we can never go high enough, low enough, or far enough, to escape His presence (Psalm 139:7-13). One of the Lord’s titles is Jehovah Shammah, *the Lord is present*. God, today, is with us in and through the ministry of the Holy Spirit who resides **within** us.

We would be in trouble if every time a need or emergency arose we had to go to prayer to gain God’s power. Many needs do not give us time to pray, only take hold of God’s power. We should pray when we have time to pray and receive of God’s power the rest of the day.

### **What About Jesus?**

Think of a typical day in the life of Jesus. He has finished teaching, thousands of people are pushing and shoving to get close to Him as He walks through the streets of his hometown. He is probably talking with His disciples about the events of the day. Suddenly, a man named Jairus asks Jesus to go to his house and pray for his daughter who is dying. Jesus agrees to go and heal his daughter.

As Jesus begins the journey He feels power move out of His body. He turns to His disciples and asks who touched Him. The disciples are stunned for a moment and think perhaps He is kidding. They tell Him there are thousands of people around Him, pressing up against Him. Jesus told them that this touch was different. This touch caused power to flow from Him. He stops and discovers a woman with an issue of blood has touched Him in faith and has been healed of her disease. He then asks her to give a testimony.

Jairus must have been nervous. Why was Jesus asking this woman to give a testimony when his daughter was dying and needed Jesus' touch? Why couldn't Jesus come back later? After the testimony was given, a servant came to Jairus and told him his daughter was dead. He did not need to bother Jesus anymore. Jesus told Jairus to just believe because all things were possible. Jesus then went to the home of Jairus and raised his daughter from the dead.

Can you imagine the problems which would have erupted if Jesus would have told Jairus and the diseased woman, "I am not prepared for these emergencies? I need to take a few hours and pray before I can meet them." No, Jesus simply *received* the power He needed for the crisis. This power had been available to Him since the time the Holy Spirit came on Him in the River Jordan. Jesus could *receive* power *after* the Holy Spirit came on Him.

Jesus could talk to his disciples about travel plans and meeting schedules, and immediately switch and minister in the power of God. Jesus was not so spiritual that He could not talk of natural things to the people who followed Him. Neither was Jesus so natural He could not immediately pray for a sick person or offer a word of supernatural wisdom. Jesus could flow from one realm to another at a moment's notice. How could He do that?

### **Let's Refocus**

Have you ever seen a news story on television where they refocused from a near object to a far one? One night I saw a news report on a prison riot. The report began by focusing on a chain link fence that surrounded the prison. You could not see the prison behind. It was cloudy and out of focus. The camera then began to focus on the prison in the distance and the fence just seemed to disappear. The fence was still there, you just could not see it anymore. The camera could not focus on both objects, but only on one or the other. So it is with our daily spiritual and natural lives.

We live in two worlds, the natural and the spiritual. Paul told us that we have this treasure in an earthen vessel (2 Corinthians 4:7). Our treasure is the spirit man inside of us, the heart that is born again and growing in the knowledge of God each day. With our spirit and soul, we contact the spiritual world. The earthen vessel is our body which contacts the natural world around us. We have two sets of ears. Our natural ears are for hearing the sounds of the natural world around us. Jesus told us about our spiritual ears in Mark 4:23, "he that has ears to hear, let him hear." We also have two sets of eyes. The natural world is seen with our natural eyes, the spiritual world is seen with the "eyes of your heart" (Ephesians 1:18). Shifting from one set of eyes to the other is a choice, like refocusing a camera.

## **Jesus Is Our Example**

On four different occasions, a phrase is used of Jesus' relationship to God, and His ministry to the people around Him. It is said that Jesus "lifted up His eyes." We often think naturally, we imagine Jesus looking up after looking down at the ground. The Bible does not use phrases like this for no reason. The Holy Spirit wouldn't mention four times that Jesus lifted up His natural eyes from the ground to the heavens, or to the crowd. Jesus refocused His attention from the natural world to the spiritual world, before ministering. A need presented itself, and Jesus, like a camera refocusing, looked into a world with no limits of time or power. Jesus received power.

## **The Four Occasions Jesus Lifted Up His Eyes**

1. Before teaching, Jesus "lifted up his eyes on his disciples" (Luke 6:20). This is an introduction to the sermon on the mount, Jesus first teaching sermon. Jesus knew the importance of every word being anointed by the Holy Spirit to impact the disciple's lives. No sermon, Sunday school lesson, or devotion we give should be done without the touch of the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Before miraculously feeding the multitudes, Jesus "lifted up his eyes and saw a great company" (John 6:5). It would have been easy to fall into unbelief if Jesus only looked at the size of the need in front of Him. Instead, Jesus looked to the world of the Holy Spirit and found the power that created the universe. There was plenty of power to multiply five loaves of bread and two fishes to feed a crowd of several thousand. Let us take Jesus' example and remember to lift up our eyes. We face situations each day which requires the miracle power of God. It will never get done if we only look at the natural world and its provisions.

3. Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he "lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me" (John 11:39 -41). Jesus could have easily been depressed if he would have listened only to the cries of doubt and unbelief from Mary, Martha, and the crowd around the tomb. He received power from the world of the Holy Spirit and raised Lazarus from the dead. Whether teaching, feeding a multitude or raising the dead, Jesus lifted His eyes for the smallest to the greatest of needs. He handled nothing from His own strength.

4. Before praying, Jesus "lifted his eyes to heaven and said." (John 17:1). Every prayer we make, whether over a meal or making intercession for those in bondage, we need to lift up our eyes and receive the power of the Holy Spirit. No prayer will be answered because of our eloquence or passion if we do not depend on the power of God. It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts (Zechariah 4:6). Unless the Holy Spirit anoints our prayer, it is sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal in God's ears. Let's make every prayer count.

### **The Shortsighted Disciples**

In John 4:4, Jesus told his disciples that they needed to go through Samaria. This was more than a desire of Jesus, but an urgency from the Holy Spirit. Something important was waiting on them in that city.

The disciples probably did not look forward to it because the Samaritans were not liked by the Jewish people. In fact, Samaritans were not liked by the Gentiles either. Samaritans were a mixed breed. They were half Jew and half Gentile. They lived in a region by themselves, not mixing or fellow-shipping with the Jewish people.

Upon arrival, Jesus sent the disciples into the city and remained by a well to witness to a woman who came to draw water. Jesus won the woman's heart and she accepted Him as Messiah and Savior just as the disciples returned from the city.

What had the disciples been up to? Jesus sent them to the city for food. They probably wanted to get in and out as quickly as possible and looked for a store close to the outskirts of the city. They did not like being in the city of Samaria, surrounded by Samaritans. They probably walked down the streets keeping to themselves to avoid contact with the Samaritan people. The people of the city probably wondered what twelve Jewish men were doing in their city buying food. On their way, they walked through a field of wheat and noticed some of the best crops they had seen in years. They commented that within a four month period the crop would be ripe and ready to harvest.

When the disciples came to Jesus, they saw a young girl leave him and run back into the city. Why had he been talking to a Samaritan woman? The disciples wanted to leave the area so quickly they did not raise the question. They only presented Jesus with the bag of food. Instead of being pleased with their shopping trip, Jesus responded unexpectedly with:

(John 4:31-38).

“I have meat to eat you do not know about . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.” Jesus did not send the disciples into the city for food, but to do the will of God. Jesus meant spiritual meat, not natural meat.

“Don't say there are four months and then comes the harvest ”. The disciples must have dropped their jaws at that statement. That is exactly what they had said when they walked through the wheat fields, out of the ear-shot of Jesus!

“**Lift up your eyes**, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest”. The disciples could walk through a field of wheat and see a harvest coming, but could not walk into a city and see a spiritual harvest that was ready. Their attention was more fixed on the world around them than the spiritual world.

“One person sows and another person reaps. I sent you into a city where you bestowed no labor. Others have labored and you have entered into their labors”. Jesus sent the disciples into a city, which had seen many come to pray, preach, and evangelize. Yet the people did not receive. Over time, they came to a place where they were ready to receive salvation. All the disciples had to do was walk into the city and proclaim they had the answer. They only had to say they came with the name of the One who brought eternal life. Yet, the disciples were more interested in getting out of the city and away from the people they were so prejudiced against. Jesus sent them into the city to lead the easy ones to the Lord while he won the difficult one who had issues and arguments - the woman at the well.

The conclusion to the story is told to us, “And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did ” (John 4:39). Instead of the disciples leading the city to the Lord, the new convert - the woman at the well, did what they should have done. Jesus intended the disciples to bring the city out to meet Him and the woman. Yet, they came back alone and the woman ran back, won the city, and brought them out to Jesus. If only they would have lifted up their eyes and saw the opportunity in front of them. One day in heaven the woman will receive the rewards for leading the city to the Lord that the disciples should have received.

### **Lift Up Your Eyes**

Each day you walk by those in need of Jesus or spiritual help. Are you more in tune with the natural world than the spiritual? More in tune with trends, social media, popular opinion, and carnal intellect, than the will of God? More caught up with the circumstances that are currently happening in your life and what they are presently dictating to you, than the Word of God? **Then, lift up your eyes!** We are those who have received **power** from the Holy Spirit, and He is to us a constant resource of **now**-anointing. We are not those who rely upon the flesh or our own ability to do the will of God, but those who understand that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to us and is at our disposal in an instant, to bring deliverance, healing and restoration to the world around us. We **have** received . Let us walk a walk **ready**, therefore, to **e** give an answer for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:5)

Let us walk spiritually minded so that we **can be** of earthly good!

Each day, choose to see people and situations through the eyes of God.

Choose to draw from a kingdom that has unlimited power.

God does not know the word *impossible* .

With Him - **in** you, all things are possible!