All Things New

# (Isaiah 43:18-19)

Today is the day that believers all over the world celebrate the beginning of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church. And so, I want to share with you a message entitled All Things New, talking about who the Holy Spirit is, what he came to do, and what he means to us today.

You see, it’s important for us to understand that God wants to do new things in us, stirring us, and moving us from complacency. He wants to empower all believers to live a supernatural life, relying upon him, and experiencing the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. And yet, today so many of us really don’t understand the Holy Spirit.

In fact, in the church I went to as a child, they would talk about the fact that there was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. And they would say it all the time, that God was actually one being revealed in three persons, kind of like each of us are one person containing body, soul, and spirit. But honestly, what really freaked me out was this creepy Holy Ghost thing and church was like that. It was always dark and quiet, there were candles burning everywhere, and even this bloody dead body hanging on a cross in front of the church. And so, it was a creepy quiet church and people always whispered as if they didn’t want to awaken or disturb the Holy Ghost.

Anyway, I grew up and I didn’t really understand the Holy Ghost, because he was kind of like that uncle that no one talks about; you know that one that you might see once a year at Christmas. And so, for me the Holy Ghost, he was in the same category as that imaginary guy that lived under my bed. You know, maybe you remember, but when I was five or six, I never wanted to let my foot hang over the edge of the bed because I was afraid that he’d grab it and maybe pull me under the bed. And maybe some of you have those wonderful memories of childhood, you know, of being scared of the dark, scared of ghosts or the unknown.

Speaking of memories, it seems as if the older I get the more fondness I feel for the past. You know, whenever I run into a friend from school and we reminisce about the days gone by, reliving those crazy adventures, it’s as if there’s something special, something new about the days of our youth. In fact, when I catch a rerun of Andy Griffith, The Flintstones, or the Roadrunner Show, or when Dana and I go to certain restaurants for dinner, it’s as if there playing my favorites playlist from 1980, and it stirs up so many memories. It’s really amazing the connection we have to the past isn’t it?

Unfortunately, if you’re anything like me, taking a stroll down memory lane can often be counterproductive, because so much of it was like taking a detour down a road that is filled with regrets. I can be listening to that old favorite song of mine from high school and suddenly I’m reminded of that time, of the mistakes that I’ve made, the wrong things that I’ve said and done, the opportunities that I’ve missed and I find myself saddened, thinking about what might’ve been. And maybe you’ve found yourself there before, pondering the missed opportunities, reliving the regrets of yesterday, and yet in Isaiah chapter 43, God speaks some words that may help us avoid reliving the past and rendering us completely ineffective today. He tells us in verse 18,

"Forget the former things; don’t dwell on the past” (Isaiah 43:18).

Behold, he says in verse 19, “See, I’m doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19).

In other words, he’s encouraging us to let go of the things of yesterday and begin focusing on what he’s doing in our lives today and his plans for tomorrow. Now, he’s not saying don’t remember the past or don’t appreciate the past, but he’s saying don’t stay there, don’t live in the past. And I think we all know the difference, because a trip down memory lane is one thing, but being consumed with what your life used to be is another.

God spoke through the prophet Isaiah saying, “Don’t dwell on the past” because our God is not just the God of yesterday, he’s the everlasting God, and so he’s the God of today, he’s doing new things, and he’s going to make All Things New. I love that, because sometimes I just get tired of the same old scenery; and so, from time to time I’ll turn off the main road and take a side road and do a little exploring. Now, it used to be a really good way of getting lost, but now with GPS and Google maps, etc. it’s pretty safe to take a detour off the beaten path, exploring those side roads that you’ve never been on before. And so, it can be an exciting way to explore some new ground, to see something new, to leave that safe and predictable way to chase the unknown.

Well, I’ve been praying this week that you would set out on a new adventure into the unknown, exploring some new ground, maybe some new ways of doing things, so that you don’t miss the will of God. You see, God may be saying to you today, “Look at the new thing I’m putting in front of you!” And he may be trying to stretch your understanding of him, of how he works, and your relationship with him into new and exciting directions. But you’ll miss the power and glory of the deep things of God if you don’t leave the road you’ve been traveling on for so long.

And so, today we’re going to look at those new things that God promised long ago. Things which the Spirit of God revealed to the prophets of old, things that were manifested in Jesus Christ, and things that have now been revealed to us. And so, today we’re going to reminisce, explore, and discover three things that the Holy Spirit does. Number one, the Holy Spirit comes Bringing Salvation.

## 1. Bringing Salvation

You see, it’s the Holy Spirit that draws you to Jesus and so, you’re supernaturally drawn to him just like the Pharisee named Nicodemus in John’s gospel. He comes to Jesus in the middle of the night, not wanting his buddies to know that he’s talking to Jesus, and so, he comes to Jesus and says, “We know that God sent you, the miracles themselves are evidence that God is with you, but how are all these things possible?” Jesus, knowing his heart, addressing his real need, says you must be born of the Spirit, you must be born again, because it’s the Holy Spirit bringing salvation (John 3.7).

In fact, before Jesus was even born, when his mother was discovered to be pregnant, Joseph knew that it wasn’t his child, and so he intended to divorce Mary quietly. But when he’d considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

"Don’t be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because what’s conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit…" (Matthew 1:20).

And it was the Holy Spirit doing a new thing, bringing salvation, and so, Jesus was born, he lived a sinless life, but was accused of blasphemy, of claiming to be God, and was executed on a cruel Roman cross. He was buried, his enemies thought they’d won, but on the third day the Holy Spirit entered that tomb and breathed life into his nostrils. Jesus lungs filled with air, his heart started to pound, his blood began to flow, and he stood to his feet discarding the grave clothes and walked out of that tomb victorious over death.

He’s alive today, he saved us, and redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to all nations, so that by faith we might receive the promise. The Bible says it this way,

“So that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14, NLT).

And so, the Holy Spirit came bringing salvation and after Jesus physical bodily resurrection, all those who’d abandoned him returned, and that Sunday evening the Bible says:

“The disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:19-22).

And so, they had a firsthand, face-to-face encounter with the risen Christ. For the next 40 days he appeared to his followers on many occasions, giving them conclusive proof that he was in fact alive. It was during those days as he continued to teach them that he said to his followers,

"Now I’ll send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised, but stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven” (Luke 24:49, NLT).

And that’s exactly what happened, he ascended into heaven, and the believers all joined together constantly in prayer, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. God had said, he was doing a new thing and he did; they didn’t have to wait long; because just 10 days later, the Holy Spirit came filling them with power. And so, number two, the Holy Spirit came to empower you.

## 2. To Empower You

At this time, Jerusalem was filled with visitors from all over the world celebrating the Jewish holiday known as Pentecost. The believers had all gathered together in an upper room to pray as they had been accustomed to when suddenly a sound from heaven like a mighty wind filled the whole house, and what looked like flames of fire rested upon each of them. The Bible says,

“Everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability” (Acts 2:4, NLT).

Suddenly those who’d been staying out of sight in the upper room moved out into the streets and into the marketplace where in spite of opposition they courageously preached the good news about Jesus. The apostle Peter who’d denied knowing Jesus three times was now emboldened and stood before the crowd of people telling them that this Jesus whom they’d crucified and buried was now alive. Not only that, but Jesus had been…

“Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

Peter’s words inspired by the Holy Spirit pierced their hearts and with his closing invitation the Bible tells us that 3000 people were saved and baptized that day.

Jesus promised that you’ll receive power when you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That’s what happened at Pentecost and the promise remains, the Holy Spirit will give you the power today to share the good news about Jesus resurrection with boldness. Now, I know that some of you are like me and you really dislike speaking in front of people. You may feel nervous, intimidated, and ill-equipped to speak to someone about spiritual things. And so, instead of telling people about Jesus, you often hold back, but the Holy Spirit came to empower you, and so you simply need to ask Jesus to give you the power to share the good news with boldness.

In fact, even the apostle Paul with all of his schooling and knowledge had experienced this insecurity but he said,

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power…” (1 Corinthians 2:4).

In other words, Paul said, “I’m not that good of a speaker, but when I open my mouth the Holy Spirit comes and does what only he can do.” And the same thing will happen when you’re going to tell someone about Jesus. You may be all nervous, thinking that you don’t know what to say, but when you start speaking, the Holy Spirit will suddenly give you a boldness. In the same way, it’s the power of the Holy Spirit that changed the disciples from cowards to being radically courageous.

The Holy Spirit came to empower us, it’s how the church grew and how those first believers lived the remainder of their lives. Because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, knowing that Jesus had conquered death, they realized that there was nothing that the world could do to them. They knew that Jesus had authority over it all and he had told them,

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

These words of Jesus promise that if you’ve trusted in him, receiving him as your Savior, the same Spirit that raised him from the grave lives inside of you. And then, number three, the Holy Spirit comes to give you purpose.

## 3. To Give You Purpose

Today I’m believing that there are exciting discoveries, adventures on the unexplored roads before you as the Holy Spirit gives you purpose, as he gives you the supernatural ability, and as he gives you the desire to make a difference in the world. And so, my prayer is that you would be courageous and bold enough to say, “God, I’m trusting you. I’m trusting your purpose, because I’ve been listening to your Word, I’m looking for new things, and I’m willing to follow you wherever you want to take me.”

This is so important, because the Word of God tells us that the Holy Spirit is absolutely and completely necessary. The power of the Holy Spirit is essential for us to live the life that God wants us to live as followers of Christ. And so, we don’t want to… we can’t have a powerless Pentecost and that’s why Jesus told those first believers,

"Don’t leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you’ve heard me speak about … in a few days you’ll be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You’ll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you..." (Acts 1:4-5,8).

Power to be my witnesses right where you are, or over there, and even to the ends of the earth.

You see, God wants to fill you with his Spirit, giving you purpose, giving you power, and enabling you to live a supernatural life, making a difference in this world, and pleasing him in every way. But it’s only possible in the power of the Holy Spirit and that’s why Jesus breathed his Spirit into his first disciples, making them new creations, preparing them for what was to come and then after he ascended to heaven, he poured out the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This is what they needed to live effective lives for the kingdom of God, they needed to have purpose, that supernatural power, those spiritual gifts in order to make a difference.

And it’s what we need today to effectively minister to one another and to the world; worshiping God, relating to others, helping others, developing our faith, and reaching the lost. This is the five-fold ministry of the Church, the body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to Worship, Connect, Serve, Grow, and Go.

And this is what God desires for you today, this is his purpose, he has these gifts for you, but the choice is yours, he’s not going to force himself on you. He wants you to desire more of him, more of his power, more of his presence, and that’s why Jesus said,

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).

And so, Jesus encourages us to trust him, to seek the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believing that it’s good, that it’s real, that its important, and that it’s for us today. Jesus then poses a rhetorical question to these religious guys, these haters, his enemies,

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, would give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:11-13).

This morning, I want to encourage you to ask, receiving to the Holy Spirit, because God wants to empower you, to jumpstart your spiritual life, to give you spiritual abilities, good gifts that will empower you to fulfill your purpose and make a difference in this world as you witness to what he’s done in your life.

As we close, you may be feeling the Holy Spirit prompting you, hearing him speaking to you, feeling this tugging deep inside, a pull in a spiritual direction and you can’t explain it, but you can’t deny it either. And so, I want to encourage you not to resist the Holy Spirit. In fact, when the Spirit is moving you, you’ll want to obey the prompting, not wanting to resist, hurting his feelings, because you can quench the Holy Spirit like pouring water on fire. And so, instead you’ll want to yield yourself, submitting yourself to God as the Bible says in Ephesians chapter 5,

“Instead, be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit because we don’t walk by sight, we walk by faith. And so, the Holy Spirit brings salvation, he empowers us, and gives us divine purpose, the ability to make a difference, having an effective ministry in this life. God said,

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19).

This wildfire of God’s Spirit signals the dawn of a new era in God’s work of salvation. The good news of Jesus is proclaimed, hearts are convicted, people are being baptized, and faith in Jesus is spreading. It’s a new thing, a movement that spread through the Roman empire, around the world, and is still with us today. The Holy Spirit is making all things new, guiding us, empowering us, causing the power of heaven to spread through human hearts and changing the future of people, family, friends, and nations. As we close in prayer, let’s invite the Holy Spirit to do his perfect work in us today.

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