

## **YOU SHALL RECEIVE POWER**

John White

Where does this power come from?

Think of the power that was unleashed through Jesus' death on the cross. First, though, came separation. The devastating separation between God and his Son, who had never before been separated. Jesus had lived his life in the power of the Spirit, but at his death he was separated from the Spirit. We can't imagine the pain this caused.

There, on the cross, Jesus alone defeated all the powers of evil who wanted to keep him dead. Why couldn't they succeed?

The sacrifice of Jesus, giving himself as our ransom, paying the debt of our sin and taking on himself the wrath of God against that sin, is the most wonderful and amazing event in the whole world. Such a sacrifice deserves thankfulness from the depths of our hearts, worship, praise and honour every day.

Jesus died, but because of his holy sinless life, he rose again. The power of his resurrection is incredible. He defeated Satan and his hosts, and he gives us the Holy Spirit so that we too can live a life of victory as he did. He has given us eternal life, love, and the promise of eternity with him, free from the power of evil.

Be excited about what God is doing for you now. Do you find the Christian life exciting?

What does God ask you to do? Do you know? Are you doing it?

**John White's faith journey**.....God spoke, he heard, but it took a long while to learn to obey God and to see him at work.

Have you experienced God working through you? Does God give up on us if we don't obey immediately, or fully?

As we obey, we see God transforming lives. Those who heard John's testimony, share some of the examples he gave – first of not obeying, and then what happened when he did obey.

Acts 1.8. – *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you*

Does that apply to everyone? To you? What kind of power should we expect to experience? Has he shown this power to you and through you?

What is your picture of God? Is he a father? What kind of father? Stern? Loving? Authoritarian or kind?

Does he hear and answer your prayers? Share how he has done this for you. But what if nothing happens when we pray? How do we respond?

God showed John White that there was a mighty harvest ready to be reaped. Who did he want to do the reaping?

Each of us has a part to play to bring the harvest in. We don't all play the same part in the reaping, but our witness, our prayers, our visiting, our hospitality, and every other way we are gifted to work, helps to bring the harvest in.

How were you harvested? What part did others play in the reaping?

Ephesians 5.18 – what are we not to do, and what are we to do? The words 'be filled' in Greek have the meaning, 'keep on being filled'. It's not a one off thing, it is continuous. We need to be overwhelmed by the Spirit so that wherever we go, we spread Jesus, So everyone knows he is in us, and sees his power at work.

How good are we at spreading Jesus?

In Acts 1.4-5. What were the disciples to do? Waiting isn't easy, is it. Have you had to wait for the promises God has given you? The disciples didn't have long to wait, but sometimes we have to wait a long while. Why do you think this happens? Is it our wavering belief? Or do we have things to learn before the promise can come to pass? Or...?

Acts 8.6-8, 15-17 The Samaritans, those despised by the Jews, received Jesus as they saw his power at work through Philip. These were people who had never heard of the Holy Spirit and weren't looking for him. But as they believed the gospel and saw the mighty power of the Spirit at work, they were ready to receive him when Peter and John came down from Jerusalem,

Acts 9, 1-6. Saul, totally hostile to the gospel, determined to destroy all those who believed, was confronted with the risen Christ. Ananias was sent to him, 9.17-18, to tell him the plans God had for him, (including how much he would suffer), and as Ananias prayed, Saul received the Holy Spirit.

Why do you think Jesus chose to appear to Saul?

What an incredible story, The man who hated Christ and all who believed in him, then began to preach the truth, that Jesus is the Son of God. Filled with the Spirit, he preached the gospel for the rest of his life, in spite of the terrible sufferings he went through.

How do we react to suffering?

Acts 10.1-7, Cornelius was a God fearing man, a Gentile. Why did God respond to his prayers?

Peter, who was a strict Jew, who never ate with Gentiles, was amazed to know that God loved Gentiles. He was given a vision and when God told him to go to Cornelius, he obeyed. 10.19-23. What was the result?

Acts 19.1-7. These people had never heard about the Holy Spirit, they had been baptized to show their repentance for their sins, but when Paul baptized them in Jesus' name, the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke in tongues and prophesied.

When the Holy Spirit comes, he changes our lives. He is given to us as God's gift, we are born of the Spirit, as Jesus explained to Nicodemus in John 3. But we must receive him, welcome him fully into our lives, so that we may walk in the Spirit, be filled continually with the Spirit, See Romans 8 .9-17.

Discuss your experiences with the Holy Spirit, What is your understanding about his presence in Christians? Do you have more to learn? How would you go about learning?