

Engage the Helper and Hit the Accelerator

Introduction:

We're part way into a new year and so far so good, but as we move forward we don't know what lies ahead for us, personally, nationally or internationally. Will it be plain sailing or are there stormy seas ahead for us? Or a combination of both? No question, we live in a troubled world and I have the feeling we're heading towards some "stormy seas". No doubt time will tell.

However, whatever lies ahead there are two things for certain:

1. We need to live in **constant** and **total** dependence on the Holy Spirit to direct, guide, lead, instruct, give wisdom, encourage and empower us on life's journey. If we walk hand in hand with the Lord it will not matter whether times are good or bad. If He's in your "boat" even the worst storm won't be a problem. With Him you're safe. Apart from him you can do nothing and will be unfruitful, and it sure won't be plain sailing without Him. But if we abide in Him we will be fruitful and at peace. *Be anxious for nothing ... Phil 4:6-7.*
2. The Father's purpose for us has not and will not change – we are to draw near to Him and allow Christ to be formed in us so that He can be seen in us, so that we can be the salt and light this dark world so desperately needs.

So, putting these together, I believe that the Father's desire is that His people, that's us, the ecclesia – the "called out ones" – move from a place of complacent self-trust and partial trust in God to a place of **absolute and continual trust and surrender** to the Holy Spirit. That means **throwing** ourselves upon Him in **full and extravagant trust** – with no holding onto any "just in case" backup plans.

When I say "just in case" backup, just picture a little child next to a swimming pool with dad in the pool encouraging his child to jump in towards him assuring the kid he will catch him/her. Now if the child is uncertain and fearful it will run off and put on his or her "water wings" or flotation suit before jumping in just as a "backup plan" in case dad doesn't catch them. Well with Father God we don't need any "backup plan", just jump – He will not let you down. He wants **extravagant trusting faith**. Prov 3:5-6 ... *"Trust in the Lord with ALL of your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding"*

Like Abram, when God said to Him, "leave everything and go. I will make a great nation out of you. I will bless you." – Even though Abram had no idea of where he was headed for, in absolute trust he obeyed and went. No questions. No keeping a business going and a house back in his home town to fall back on if God did not keep up His side of the deal. No, he simply obeyed and in extravagant and bold faith just went, according to God's word. And he was blessed and used of God beyond anything he could have ever imagined. That is what God wants of you and me.

So today we want to focus on casting ourselves in absolute trust upon our Lord and walking in tune with the Holy Spirit – and seeing where He leads us and how He uses us to His glory.

I have recently read and meditated on the thoughts put forward in Tim Chester's book "Enjoying God." And now we as a home group are going through this book week by week. It's a book about experiencing the power and love of God in everyday life. And through this God has seriously challenged me concerning His purpose for my life and the way He expects me to live in total dependence on Him. This is not something new as he has been working on my case for a long time,

but this reading really struck a chord and stirred up things within me. It brought me to a sense of the **urgency** of walking in **total dependence** on the Holy Spirit **all the time**. Our heavenly Father has a specific purpose for each of our lives and he has made **every provision** for us to fulfil His plans.

Eph 1:3 ... *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with **every** spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."*

2 Pet 1:2-3 ... *"Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us **everything** pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."*

All he is looking for is our co-operation. He has made the **provision**, but we need to take **possession**. So I am sharing this conviction with you today.

To start with, we first need to look back at ourselves and ask ourselves some questions regarding our daily lifestyle and habits in the days, weeks, months and years that have past. These are probing questions that we must answer openly and honestly before God. Questions like:

- Were there any moments when I felt the need for the help of the Holy Spirit? If there were, were they frequent daily occurrences or just a few now and then? To answer this, we need to look back and consider how we spent the average day - from wake up time to bed time each day. What are our daily routines or habits? How often do we **intentionally** engage the Holy Spirit in our daily pursuits? Or do we just plod along happily living a "status quo" lifestyle, not really giving much thought, or only occasional thought, to the Holy Spirit? Come on, let's be honest with ourselves here.
- What evidence has there been in the past year in my life of the mighty work of the Holy Spirit – things He has achieved in or through me?
- Have I made my life so "safe" that I have had little or no cause to call upon the Holy Spirit for help? Typically we may say, "Things are going along okay and I don't see why I should hassle the Holy Spirit when I'm handling things just fine." Does that sound familiar?
- What are my expectations of the Holy Spirit? Do I live in expectancy of Him?
- Do I **really** believe He is who he says He is and that He wants to empower me to accomplish His purpose for my life? Is there evidence of the outworking of my belief?
- Have I reduced Christianity to a set of religious beliefs rather than a vital and dynamic relationship with the living God?
- Have I taken the supernatural out of my Christian experience? Too often we are fearful and super cautious about getting to "far out" there! You may argue that the supernatural was only for the early church. Well one relatively recent experience of continual amazing supernatural works of God was documented in "Like a Mighty Wind" and "Gentle Breeze of Jesus" books by Mel Tari concerning the Timor revival of the 60's and 70's. That's just one example.
- Am I forever explaining why I "can't" instead of why I "can"?

Okay, so those are some serious questions (some come from Tim Chester's book) just to get us thinking, and for which we need to give honest answers to God.

Have a look with me at God's Word to us in the Psalms. This Psalm (Ps 78) is looking at how God's people consistently neglected and rebelled against God despite the numerous ways in which He

delivered them and did marvellous wonders for His people. There's something particularly important for us to note here.

Psalm 78:40-43 NASB ... *"How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert!"*⁴¹ *Again and again they tempted God, and **pained** the Holy One of Israel.*⁴² *They did not remember His power, the day when He redeemed them from the adversary,*⁴³ *when He performed His signs in Egypt and His marvels in the field of Zoan."*

The word translated "pained" (NASB) or "Vexed" (NIV) comes from the Hebrew word *tavah* (תוה) which more literally means "set bounds", or, "limit". If you have a KJV you'll see it correctly translates and uses this word "limited."

The people "limited" God. That's impossible! That's what "pained" or "vexed" Him. They tempted Him by ignoring Him and by not remembering His power, and thereby "limited" Him.

Really! Limit God!! Come on! He who is infinite and all powerful in every way cannot be limited, so what an insult, what arrogance to even think or act in a manner that attempts to limit Him.

Yet, is that not what you and I are doing every day? By simply ignoring Him and leaving Him out of our daily routines.

1 Thess 5:19 says ... *"Do not quench the Spirit."*

What does that mean? – "Quench the Spirit" - I think we sometimes think that it means something like doing some really bad thing that grieves God. But while it may include that sort of thing, more simply it really includes ignoring Him in our daily lives. We quench Him by ignoring Him. We "limit" Him. How foolish and insulting is that! Oh how we need to repent and stop this behaviour and ask forgiveness.

That's a bit like a daughter who battles with cooking a decent meal have her mother, an excellent cook, stand by and be ignored instead of being consulted for help. Or like a son battling to catch a fish, using the wrong tackle and wrong bait while he ignores his father who is an experienced and successful fisherman standing right next to him. How foolish is that! But is that not what we do sometimes with the Holy Spirit, the Helper. We quench or "limit" Him by simply ignoring Him thinking we can do it alone.

Keeping those thoughts and questions in mind, let's move forward and look to the Holy Spirit to bring us to where He wants us in this discussion. Let's consider how we can **"engage the Helper and hit the accelerator!"** because that's the title of this message.

So moving on, let me read you a quote I found in Tim Chester's book by Francis Chan:

"I don't want my life to be explainable without the Holy Spirit ... I don't believe God wants me (or any of His children) to live in a way that makes sense from the world's perspective, a way I know I can "manage" ...

If we never pray audacious, courageous prayers, how can He answer them? If we never follow Him to positions where we need Him, how can He show up and make His presence known? ...

No matter where you live and what your days look like, you have the choice each day to depend on yourself, to live safely, and to try to control your life. Or you can live as you were created to live – as a temple of the Holy Spirit of God, as a person dependent on Him, desperate for God the Spirit to show up and make a difference.” (End of quote).

Turn with me in your Bibles to Isaiah 40:21-31. In response to Israel’s complaint that the Lord was no longer concerned about them, the prophet Isaiah affirms that God is Creator of the world who rules all nations. He also goes on to remind us to look out at the starry skies and know that God created each star and planet putting each one in its unique place and keeping them there; He knows exactly how many there are and knows each one by name! He who is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent never lacks strength or power or wisdom, and His desire is to empower those who are weary and who will put their trust in Him.

Isaiah 40:21-31 ... *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? ²²It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. ²³He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. ²⁴Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble. ²⁵“To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?” says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. ³⁰Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, ³¹yet those who **wait** for the Lord will **gain** new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

Now there are two things I want you to take note of here:

First: the word “**wait**” comes from the Hebrew word qavah (קוה) which literally means “gather to act”, and, “Strive to a particular goal.” So the “waiting” here is a determined or striving waiting or gathering with a particular action goal in mind. It’s waiting on the Lord with strong expectation.

Second, the word translated here as “**gain**” comes from the Hebrew word chalaph (חלף) which more literally means “**exchange**” or “**transfer**”.

For those who **wait** with strong expectation and dependence on the Lord He grants an “**exchange**” or “**transfer**” of power – His limitless power to replace our puny strength. That transfer of power is for some intended action. He fetches up and the miraculous occurs in and through you!

Let me give an example: Think of the steel rope of a crane which lifts extremely heavy objects like containers. It has no problem lifting these weights. Then think of a piece of cotton thread. Even a modest weight, let alone a large shipping container, tied to the thread would instantly break the thread if you tried to lift the weight. You and I are like the cotton thread and God is like the strong steel rope. We are weak and He is strong. But if you entwine the cotton thread around the steel rope the cotton thread takes on the strength of the steel rope and does not break when attached to lift the heavy load.

When we “wait” on the Lord with strong expectation we become entwined with Him and experience an exchange or transfer of power. We become clothed with His power and are able to do the “heavy lifting” the situation in front of us calls for.

Tell me, who doesn’t want that?

Then, I ask, **why** do we so consistently try to live by our own puny “cotton thread” strength and neglect God’s “steel rope” strength and help in our daily lives? Or is it only me who does that?

Acts 6:7 ... *“The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”*

Acts 13:44 ... *“The next Sabbath nearly the whole city assembled to hear the word of the Lord.”*

Acts 13:49 ... *“And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.”*

Acts 17:6 refers to Paul, Silas and the early believers as ...*“these that have turned the world upside down.”*

Do we see this happening here! The whole town turning out to hear the preaching of the Word. What are we doing in our world? How effective are we in seeing this region and nation turn to Christ?

God has not changed in His purpose or power. So it must be us that have changed. How is it that the early believers had such a radical influence in their regions and world and we don’t? How is it that in those early days people turned to God in thousands, whole cities turned out to hear the word of God, and miracles were daily occurrences, and yet we see so little of this today?

Why? Well Acts 13:52 tells us why. Because ... *“the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”*

Now there may be those who say, “But, I’m not trained to spread the word, but I haven’t been to Bible school. But, I’m not good at speaking. But, I’m not sufficiently well educated. And so on.

Well let’s put aside the “billy goat” faith (but, but but ...) and please just consider this:

Moses. Check him out in Exodus 2:11 onwards. A murderer. A fugitive. A shepherd in the outback. Shepherd was the lowliest job anyone could have in those days. He was on the lowest rung of society. He had a speech impediment. He was not given to public speaking. Well how’s that for a set of credentials for a potential leader of the nation? You see, with God it’s not all about our inadequacies, it’s about our submission to Him and His transfer of power to us that gets the job done. Moses, as inadequate as he was, had an **encounter with God** at the burning bush, and thereafter he continued

to walk **every day** “under the cloud by day and under the pillar of fire by night”. Cloud and fire are types of the Holy Spirit. So Moses, entwined with God, with an entire nation standing around him at the edge of the Red Sea and with Pharaoh’s army closing in behind them lifts his rod and the sea miraculously parts. Not by his power but by his absolute trust in, and his expectant waiting on the One who commissioned him to lead the nation to the Promised Land. And an exchange of power, a release of God’s mighty power took place. And they walked through the sea on dry land. Not on muddy sea bottom! On dry land! And then as soon as they were through the sea, the walls of water suddenly fell back and drowned the whole of Pharaoh’s army! And remember (Ex 33:15) Moses said, *“If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.”*

David. Youngest and smallest in the family. The runt of the family. A Shepherd. Lowest job in the land. He too was an adulterer and a murderer. Again, wonderful credentials for the potential leader of a nation! But ... one whose **absolute trust** was in the Lord. **Absolute trust and daily dependence.** He killed lions and bears bare handed; he slew Goliath with a stone from a sling shot; he became king and leader of the nation. Not in his own wisdom or strength but through the strength and wisdom of the One with whom he was entwined. God even referred to David as “a man after His own heart.” (1 Sam 13:14).

Peter, James and John. Uneducated fishermen. Rough as guts. Peter betrayed his close Friend. But they made the lame to walk. Performed many mighty miracles. Preached the word with boldness and saw thousands and thousands come to salvation, daily! Not in their strength or wisdom did they do these things. They were given to prayer and waiting on the Lord. **Expectant waiting**, and were duly endowed with power from on high. Daily, continually they walked in the Spirit and the manifest presence of God accompanied them and wrought mighty works.

We could go on and on looking at individuals in history who have had the most unlikely credentials for what we would call “mighty men or women” but who walked in a constant state of being filled with the Spirit, dependent on the Holy Spirit to lead, teach, guide and empower them for the task to which they were called. Those who were in daily, moment by moment communion with the Spirit. Those who cast themselves upon the Holy Spirit in **absolute trust**, through whom God moved.

So what about you and me? No matter what your or my perceived credentials are, no matter whether you think you “can’t”, know this:

*... “Those who **wait expectantly** for the Lord will **gain new strength, an exchange of strength will take place**; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.”*

For them nothing will be impossible. Through them the Lord will do the impossible! They will turn the world upside down for Jesus! Are you ready? Are you available? Will you obey?

Wrap up:

So let’s wrap this all up now and come to a conclusion and a decision.

- ✓ We started with some serious questions for which we need honest answers
- ✓ We understand that our Heavenly Father is desirous that we cast ourselves completely upon the Holy Spirit in absolute and expectant trust and become entwined with Him so that He can endue us with His power from on high

- ✓ We have seen that no matter how poor our natural credentials or abilities may appear to be, in God's hands nothing is impossible and He will turn us into mighty men and women of valour
- ✓ The question now faces us: Are we going to continue to plod along happily living a "status quo" lifestyle – one of complacency and partial trust (trust when convenient to do so) – in which we "quench the Spirit" and "limit" God? Like those Pauls spoke of in 2 Tim 3:5 ... *"holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power."* Or, are we going to cast ourselves upon the Holy Spirit in absolute, continual trust and dependence, and see Him ... *"do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us"* (Eph 3:20)?

Consider a few final scriptures:

John 6:63 (Ampl) ... *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh conveys no benefit [it is of no account]."*

That means that it's not our talent, education, oratory powers or programs that will bring change – it's **only** by the Holy Spirit sealing and empowering our lives and ministry that change will come.

Acts 14:3 ... *"Therefore they spent a long time there speaking **boldly with reliance upon the Lord**, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands."*

"Boldly with reliance" ... that's extravagant and absolute trust!

Next, we pick up after Peter and John had been thrown in prison and then released:

Acts 4:23-31 ... *"When they had been released, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, 'O Lord, it is You who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, said, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things? ²⁶'The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.' ²⁷For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. ²⁹And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, ³⁰while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.'" ³¹And **when they had prayed**, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness."*

Acts 6:4, 7 ... *"But we will **devote ourselves to prayer** and to the ministry of the word" ... "The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith."*

Luke 6:12 ... *"It was at this time that He (Jesus) went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God."*

If Jesus needed to spend the whole night in prayer to gain wisdom and power to carry out His ministry, how much more do we need to do so!

Time in the presence of God at the throne of grace is essential if we are to be directed for the task and endowed with power for the execution of our ministry to the needy. Are we drawing on the treasures of Grace? He has made the **provision**, will we take **possession**?

John 15:5 ... *"he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

So what will be your and my decision? We need to ask ourselves the question. Will I devote myself to prayer? Will I cast myself completely on the Holy Spirit in absolute dependence upon and trust in Him, all the time? Will I allow His potential and power to be released through me? Or will I limit Him? Will I quench Him?

My encouragement from God to you is ... **Engage the Helper, and hit the accelerator! ... And expect the mighty hand of God to move and do great things through you in "your world" and our our land!**

Let's go back to the beginning and do it God's way! Let's be filled with and walk in the power of the Spirit. Let's turn our world upside down! Let's see Jesus reign in the people of this land!