

Holy Spirit - Empowered to Thrive

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases. Then He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

There's nothing worse than wrapping a present on Christmas Day and realising that the batteries are not included. You open the gift, filled with expectation. You go to switch it on and... nothing. Not even a light. You have this amazing gift in your hands, full of potential but lacking power.

For some people, that's exactly what the Christian life feels like. I remember a quote from John Wimber, the founder of the Vineyard church movement. He was saved out of a life of rock 'n' roll, drugs, and everything that went with it. When he came to faith at age twenty-nine, he had no prior experience of church. He began hungrily reading the Gospels and, after attending church for some time, he famously asked his pastor,

"So when do we do the stuff?"

"The *stuff*?" the pastor replied. "What's the *stuff*?"

"You know," John said, "the stuff in the Bible—healing the sick, casting out demons. The *stuff*!"

"Oh," the pastor answered. "We don't *do* the stuff. We believe they did it back in biblical days, but we don't do it today."

With a confused look on his face, John could only respond, "And I gave up drugs for this?!"

John had a wonderful sense of humour but at the heart of his question was a longing to see a faith with the batteries included. Today, Vineyard remains among the fastest-growing church movements in this season of "The Quiet Revival" in the UK. I believe it's because they "do the stuff". Like us, they believe that by the power and work of the Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name, the lame can walk, the blind can see, the deaf can hear, and demons must flee.

From those early days until now, Luke 4:18 has been critical for the New Testament church. It marks the moment Jesus first announced that, empowered by the Holy Spirit, He and His disciples were here to "do the stuff",

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free"

The gift of salvation comes with "batteries included" because Scripture says we will be filled with the Holy Spirit and He will give us the power to do the mighty works of God - miracles and wonders.

In recent years, a phenomenon known as "The Quiet Revival" has been impacting churches worldwide. Here and in the UK, people, especially those aged 18 to 30, are turning up at church, longing for meaning and purpose. Church attendance has risen by 50% over the last six years, busting the myth of church decline. These findings come from The Quiet Revival, a survey commissioned by the Bible Society and conducted by YouGov. Co-author Dr. Rob Barward-Symmons suggests one reason for the growth is that people are seeking meaning, "With much of the population struggling with mental health, loneliness, and a loss of meaning in life, particularly young people, church appears to be offering an answer." The most significant growth is happening in churches like Living Hope; churches that believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal, restore, and deliver. Churches with apostolic covering. Churches that practise prophecy and speaking in tongues. Churches that "do the stuff".

Crowds followed Jesus because of His compassion and love, His words of life, and His miraculous power. The Church will grow when it demonstrates compassion and love, is devoted to the Word, and operates in Holy Spirit signs and wonders; when it's the real deal, batteries included!

My own experience of this quiet revival is that when Maddie and I arrived at Douglas North in 2023, our average attendance that month was 52. Fast-forward to November 2025, and this month we averaged 100 people! This growth is 100% the result of a church showing compassion and love, being devoted to the Word, and operating in Holy Spirit signs and wonders. It's the real deal, batteries included!

If you want to be part of this amazing journey and be empowered to thrive, with a faith that has the batteries included, then right now, hold out your hands.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 1:8

Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh. Step out of your comfort zone and do the stuff.

Three steps you can take today:

1. **Show compassion and love** to people every day.
2. **Be devoted to God's Word**, unlocking the Bible daily.
3. **Step out and pray** for people who need a sign or wonder as they search for truth and for God.

These simple, daily steps will empower you to thrive through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit in a world longing for meaning and purpose.