



Our Way of Life

Sermon Transcript
October 30, 2016

Kingdom Power: Be Filled With the Spirit
Matthew 10:1-5

This message from the Bible was addressed originally to the people of Wethersfield Evangelical Free Church on October 30, 2016 at 511 Maple Street, Wethersfield, CT, 06109 by Dr. Scott W. Solberg. This is a transcription that bears the strength and weaknesses of oral delivery. It is not meant to be a polished essay. An audio copy of the sermon on CD is available by request at (860) 563-8286. An audio version of this sermon may also be found on the church website at www.wethefc.com.

Sermon Text

Matthew 10:1-5

¹ And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. ² The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³ Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴ Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. ⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans

Our Way of Life

The title of this five-week sermon series is *Our Way of Life*. It is first of all a practical series because the invitation we have from Jesus is not just to believe in him, but to follow him. In essence, Jesus invites us to a way of life. And so this series is a practical look at what it looks like to follow Jesus.

It is also a unifying series because this is what we are going to do together. We are asking you to embrace five affirmations and with each affirmation comes a practice that you can do to help you follow Jesus. These five affirmations will also serve as a template as we seek to make disciples through the ministry of WEFC.

We mentioned last week that this is also a biblical series. The parting words of Jesus to his disciples before he ascended into heaven was that they were to make disciples. In other words, they were to do with others what Jesus had done with them. This is a good reminder, because I think we often stop short of what Jesus has called us to do as followers of Jesus. The end goal of our ministry is not to make disciples. Rather, the end goal is to make disciple-makers. You ought to be asking the “rabbi question.” Who is walking in your dust? In other words, who is learning from you what it looks like to follow Jesus? I believe that the five affirmations we share in this series will give you something that you can pass onto someone else to help them follow after Jesus.

Finally, this is a gospel series. This way of life is a response to what God has graciously done for us through faith in Jesus Christ. By God’s grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, we have already been brought into the kingdom of God where we enjoy the forgiveness of our sins. And so it is now our desire and our joy to follow Jesus. Therefore, it is with great interest that we walk through these five messages of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew. Together, they help us understand how to follow Jesus.

Here is where we started last week. We started with a statement about the gospel and we encouraged you to just read it on a daily basis. It went like this: “By God’s grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, I have been delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the beloved Son in whom I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, as Sons and Daughters, Servants and Stewards in the kingdom of God, I will embrace the following way of life. . . .

Then based on the teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount, the first discourse of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, we made our first of five affirmations. ***Kingdom Life:***

I will seek to proactively love God and love people. This is the point of the Sermon on the Mount. This is what it looks like to live in God's kingdom as God's people. There is no privilege class in God's kingdom. No matter who you are or where you come from and what you have done, the same invitation is extended to all. We are all called to repent of our sin and to follow Jesus. In fact Jesus says in this sermon that he did not come to abolish the commandments of the Old Testament. Rather, he came to fulfill the law of God. And so we learn from the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus has come to transform our hearts so that we can truly love God and love people. This is what it means to be God's people living under the good rule of God. In the Sermon on the Mount we hear these words, "*Seek first the kingdom of God . . . whatever you wish others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*"

Along with the first affirmation, we gave you "a practice." In other words, we gave you something to do in order to help you love God and love people. We encouraged you to daily pray the Lord's Prayer. It is a simple practice. But by daily praying this prayer, your mind and your heart are pointed towards God first and then to others.

This morning I want to share with you our second affirmation and practice in *Our Way of Life*. It comes from the second discourse of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew. We find it in Matthew 10. But before we look at Matthew 10, I want to say something about Matthew 8-9.¹ I want to talk about these two action packed chapters that rest between the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 and the teaching of Jesus found in Matthew 10. These two chapters help us understand something very profound about our second affirmation.

After the Sermon on the Mount and telling us about life in God's kingdom, in Matthew 8-9 we see Jesus bringing the kingdom of God into reality in the day to day lives of people. Here Matthew records for us nine stories about how Jesus brings his kingdom into the lives of broken and hurting people. It is with power that the kingdom of God breaks into the lives of people. These nine stories are grouped into three groups of three and they tell us about people who are sick, some with broken bodies or in some kind of danger and by God's grace and power Jesus heals them or saves them. For example we read here about the cleansing of a leper, healing the Centurion's servant, casting out demons, calming the storm, healing a paralytic, raising a girl from the dead, the healing of a woman who simply touched the hem of his garment, healing the blind and giving voice to a man who could not speak. What is interesting is that between each grouping of the three stories is an invitation to follow Jesus. So from this pattern we learn that you can only experience the power of God's grace by following Jesus and becoming his

disciple. And so the point of these two chapters is that the power of God's kingdom has come into this world with the coming of Jesus. And it is the power to heal and to save and it has broken into this world that had long been bound by the domain of darkness.

Now what is fascinating about Matthew 10 is that Jesus turns to his disciples and gives them authority to expand the reach of God's kingdom. That is what it says in verse 1. *"And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction."* In other words, this kingdom power that was on display through the life of Jesus in Matthew 8-9 will now be on display through his disciples. And don't forget, at the time, these were just ordinary men. There was nothing special about them. They were fishermen and a tax-collector and just average people, like you and me. *"The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."* And so in verse 5 we read, *"These twelve Jesus sent out."*

The second affirmation of *Our Way of Life* has to deal with **Kingdom Power**. The power of the kingdom of God to change and transform lives is advancing in this world through average people like you and me.

Kingdom Power: The Power of the Holy Spirit

When we talk about "*Kingdom Power*" we are really talking about the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us and through us. This creates within us a sense of dependency upon the Holy Spirit. The power to advance the kingdom of God in the lives of people does not rest in us. But there is power available to us to accomplish the mission that God has given to us. I want to demonstrate this by looking at what transpired in the lives of the disciples, starting with Matthew 10.

The rest of Matthew 10 is nothing but instruction. Here Jesus is preparing his disciples for their first short-term mission trip. The beginning of it sure sounds exciting and thrilling. They will be given *"authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction."* Just a few chapters ago, we saw some of these guys tending to their fishing nets. And now look at them! And yet, it doesn't take very long for the tone of the chapter to change. The rest of the chapter finds Jesus preparing them for the difficulties they will face. Usually, when you prepare people to go on a short-term mission trip you need to remind the team that it is important to be flexible. I have

never been part of a short-term mission trip where everything happened according to plan. You need to be willing to be flexible so that you can adapt to the unexpected things that happen. But the warning of Jesus in Matthew 10 was more than just being flexible. For the rest of the chapter, Jesus told them that they would be opposed, persecuted and often mistreated. All of a sudden, the prospect of this short-term mission trip sounds rather daunting.

As the story of the disciples transpires beyond the New Testament, we do discover that these words came true. All but John were martyred for their faith. And even John was exiled on the island of Patmos when he wrote the book of Revelation. But that is the upside down nature of the kingdom of God. That is part of how the power of God is on display. It is in our weakness and in our suffering that God often displays his power in advancing the kingdom of God. I heard a television preacher the other week claim that God gets no glory in our suffering. I don't know how you can look at Matthew 10 and say that. I think God gets great glory when we remain faithful and obedient in the face of suffering. In fact, the irony of it all is that the power of the kingdom of God is often most on display in the context of our suffering.

So stop fretting over the upcoming election. I know a pastor in Florida and he recently commented on the election in a blogpost he wrote for his church. He wrote, "I know — I *get* it. You're worried about losing our religious liberties. But countless brothers and sisters around the world have born incredible Kingdom fruit never having known those freedoms. You're worried about abortion proliferating even more than it already has. But the stench of abortion, infanticide and ethnic cleansing in other lands — horrible as it is — has not stopped the spread of the gospel by God's faithful. You're worried about illegal immigration and a huge migration of refugees. You're worried about ISIS and terrorism on our home soil. You're worried about many things. And while I don't like ANY of these possibilities any more than you do, I apparently have a different perspective than many Evangelicals today. And I can sum it up in the words of the Apostle Paul, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" While masses of American Christians have become consumed with current politics, they have at the same time lessened their grip on their mission. Let me put it plainly: no matter the outcome of any election, Christ's mission does not change and His people do not live any differently. In fact, there may be more opportunities for His power and glory to shine through us as things worsen around us. We certainly don't pray for things to worsen, but we also should not fret when they do."² Kingdom Power is not tied to politics. It is the work of the Holy Spirit through us to advance the kingdom of God in this world.

The Gospel of Mark picks up the story in Mark 6:12-13 where we read, *“So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.”* Then in Mark 6:30 it says *“The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught.”* I can imagine when they sat down to debrief their trip and to share their stories with Jesus they were pretty excited about what had happened through them. In fact later, when Jesus does this again, this time sending out seventy-two of them, they too came back all excited. And Jesus said to them in Luke 10:20, *“Do not rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”* Do you know what I think Jesus is doing here? He is tempering their excitement to remind them that the power is not in them. Rather, the power for mission is in the Holy Spirit.

Later when Jesus is up on the Mount of Transfiguration, along with Peter, James and John, the other disciples are down at the base of the mountain. And a man had brought his boy to them because his son was overcome by an unclean spirit. He asked the disciples to cast out the demon, but they couldn't. Finally, when Jesus showed up he said to his disciples, *“O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?”* What is interesting about this is that Luke tells us that this is just over week after the disciples had been out on their short-term mission trip. Had they not cast out demons just over a week ago? Why couldn't they do it this time? I wonder if they had become full of themselves, thinking, “I can do this. I have done this before. Bring the boy to us.” They were a bit perplexed as to why they couldn't cast out the demon this time. In fact, they turned to Jesus afterwards and asked him in Mark 9:28, *“Why could we not cast it out?”* Jesus turned to them and said, *“This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer.”* In other words, *“Kingdom Power”* rests in God at work through us. It is the Holy Spirit at work through us.

Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus said to his disciples in Acts 1:8, *“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 end of the earth.”* But they were to stay put until the Holy Spirit came upon them. Why? The power to advance the kingdom of God through us is the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. In January we are going to spend some more time talking about the Holy Spirit and the spiritual gifts God has given to each of us. But what I want you to hold onto right now is simply this, the power of the kingdom of God is advancing through us as we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and as we call on God to show himself with power in the lives of people. It is exciting and amazing to think that God is using us to advance his kingdom in the hearts of people.

Be Filled With the Spirit

This leads us to the second affirmation in *Our Way of Life*. ***Kingdom Power: I will daily ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit.*** Again, it is just a simple statement, but it reminds us that the power to participate in the mission of the kingdom of God does not rest in us, our programs, our personalities, our circumstances in life, our building, our budgets and so on. Rather, the power to see the mission of the kingdom of God advance through us is found in our dependence upon the Holy Spirit. J. I Packer in his book *Knowing God* suggests that those who know God have great energy for God and have great boldness for God.³ I would suggest that this is also the impact this affirmation has on us as well. We ought to have great energy for God and great boldness for God, because the Holy Spirit resides in us and as we are filled with the Holy Spirit we have the power from God to accomplish his purposes in and through us.

As we proclaim the gospel, it is the power of the Holy Spirit who regenerates the hearts of those who believe. Paul says in Titus 3:5-6, *“he saved us not because of works done by us, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”* It begs the question, “what comes first? The chicken or the egg?” Did the Holy Spirit regenerate us because we believed or did we believe because the Holy Spirit regenerated our hearts? It is the latter, that is true. Therefore, it takes the pressure off of us. All we need to do is be faithful in proclaiming Jesus and the kingdom of God, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings a person alive to God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:3, *“no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.”*

It is also the Spirit of God who empowers us for service. Again, in January we will look in more detail at this idea of spiritual gifts. But for now, we hear what Paul says in Romans 12:6. He says of us, *“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.”* Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 12:7, *“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”* As we collectively serve one another by using our spiritual gifts in dependence upon God, God uses his church to advance his kingdom.

Finally, it is the Spirit of God who produces that internal change inside of us. We call it the “Fruit of the Spirit.” Last week our affirmation was, “I will proactively seek to love God and love others.” This week we see how the second affirmation supports the first one. We can’t produce that change in our hearts on our own. We need to be filled with the Spirit for the Fruit of the Spirit to shine through us. What is the Fruit of the Spirit?

It is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*. And then Paul says, *“against such things, there is no law.”* In other words, when the Fruit of the Spirit are on display, we are actually fulfilling the law of God. But it is a work of the Spirit of God in us that does it.

When Paul commands us in Ephesians 5 to *be filled with the Spirit* he says it this way. *“Don’t be drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.”* With this statement, he is making both a comparison and a contrast. Being filled with the Spirit is like being drunk with wine. In each case you do what does not come natural to you. When you are drunk with wine, you do things you normally wouldn’t do when you are of your right mind. So it is when you are filled with the Spirit. What comes natural to me is to think of myself first. But when I am filled with the Spirit, I love God and I love others. Paul says it impacts the words that come out of my mouth and the tone of those words. Paul says, *addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart, giving thanks always Submitting to one another*. Then he talks about husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves. In other words, when you are filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, it shows up in your most intimate of relationships.

This is why when Jesus teaches us to pray in Luke 11, he begins with the Lord’s Prayer and he ends by saying, *“how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”* This comes in the context of teaching his disciples to persist in prayer. And so daily, we ought to keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking—daily asking for the filling of the Holy Spirit so that we might reflect the love of God and be used by God to advance his kingdom. It is a daily dependence on the power of the Spirit of God. Quite simply put, make this your daily affirmation. ***I will daily ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit.*** Why? Because God wants to advance his kingdom in us and through us as we depend upon him.

Let The Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly

This brings us to the practice I would like you to develop in order to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit of God works through the Word of God. We are people of the Book. We need to spend time in God’s Word. We are told to meditate on it day and night. We are told in 2 Timothy 3:16 that it is *“breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* I want to encourage you to read, memorize and meditate on the Word of God.

In Colossians 3:16, Paul says, “*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.*” As soon as he says that, he follows it with the exact words that follow the call to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5. What that tells me is that the filling of the Spirit is the product of prayer, asking for it, and the product of God’s Word taking root inside of us. So this is the practice we must embrace. We must spend time in God’s Word. Don’t make the next time you contemplate the Scriptures next Sunday when you come to church. Spend some time this week in God’s Word.

Rabbi Akiva was shepherding his flock when he noticed a tiny stream trickling down a hillside, dripping over a ledge on its way toward the river below. Below was a massive boulder. Surprisingly, the rock bore a deep impression: drip, drip, drip. The constant drip of the water over centuries had hollowed away the stone. He pondered, “if mere water can do this to hard rock, how much more can God’s Word carve a way into my heart of flesh.” He also realized that if the water had flowed over the rock all at once, the rock would have remained unchanged. It was the slow steady impact—drip, drip, drip—over a long period of time, year after year, that completely reformed the stone.⁴ So Tverberg says “Through the slow drip of study and prayer, day after day, God shapes us into what he wants us to be.”⁵ A. W. Pink put it this way, “The Bible does not yield its meanings to lazy people.”⁶

So here is the practice we must engage in on a regular basis. We must let the Word of God dwell in us richly so the power of the Spirit of God shines through us and is able to use us to expand the reach of God’s kingdom in the lives of people. Are you looking for a place to start? Spend time reading the Sermon on the Mount. See how many times you can read it this week. Read it one sitting. Read it over the span of the week, section by section. Meditate on it. Memorize the Beatitudes. Take note of what God shows you about what it means to love God and love others. And then pray the Lord’s Prayer and ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit. As we go through this series, read the teaching of Jesus in Matthew. So this week, you could add Matthew 10. Just get in the habit of allowing the Word of Christ to dwell in you richly and the power of the Spirit of God will begin to change you and will use you to bring God’s kingdom to bear on the hearts of others.

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. . . . These twelve Jesus sent out. . . All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus, Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Be filled with the Spirit and may the Word of God dwell in you richly so that we might have kingdom impact for the glory of God.

Conclusion

Lets put together what we have so far. I am simply asking you to read these affirmations and put start putting into practice these things that will help shape the way you live.

Our Way of Life: “By God’s grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, I have been delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the beloved Son in whom I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, as Sons and Daughters, Servants and Stewards in the kingdom of God, I will embrace the following way of life. . .

Kingdom Life: I will proactively seek to love God and love others
Practice: Pray the Lord’s Prayer

Kingdom Power: I will daily ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit.
Practice: Let the Word of Christ dwell in your richly

¹The Bible Project: Matthew 1-13 <https://jointhebibleproject.com/#all-videos>

²John Kimball “Christian You Have Been Distracted” Oct. 10, 2016 blog post www.palmwoodchurch.com

²J. I. Packer *Knowing God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1973) 27-30

⁴Lois Tverberg, *Walking in the Dust of Rabbi Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012) Kindle Reader, Location 2541

⁵Ibid

⁶Ibid., Location 2527

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COMMUNITY GROUPS



Getting To Know Me Questions

1. Our evangelical culture tends to be fond of dramatic conversions and turnarounds. In what ways do you think God has shaped you in slow “drips” of study, prayer, and worship?
2. Over the past week, did anyone attempt to put into practice daily affirming to proactively love God and love others and regularly pray the Lord’s Prayer? Share your experience. What did you find to be helpful about this exercise?
3. As a group, recite together the affirmations as found on page 11 of the transcript.



Diving Into The Word

4. Read Matthew 10:1-5; Mark 6:12-13 and 6:30. What do you think it was like for the disciples to experience God using them to advance the kingdom of God with kingdom power? How does God use us to advance his kingdom with kingdom power?
5. Read Matthew 10:16-25. How does God use our suffering to advance his kingdom? What encouragement do you find about the upcoming election in the last paragraph on page 6?
6. Read Ephesians 5:18-6:9. What does a life look like that is filled with the Spirit?
7. Read Luke 11:9-13. Why do you think we need to persist in praying for the filling of the Spirit?
8. Read Colossians 3:16-17. What do you think it looks like to “let the Word of God dwell in your richly?” What similarities do you find in this passage and Ephesians 5:18-21?



Taking It Home

9. Do you see the study of God’s Word as worship? What are some concrete ways you can incorporate Bible study into your daily and weekly schedule?
10. Try memorizing a passage together. If you need help picking one, consider Matthew 5:2-12.