

Real Help in Time of Need: The Spirit Sends Us to Reach the Lost

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The Holy Spirit is not only our Comforter, He is also the One who sends us on mission. He gives us a love for the lost, compels us to witness, strengthens us through prayer, and guides us in everyday conversations. At times He opens doors right in front of us, other times He redirects our steps, and sometimes He speaks with unmistakable clarity. In this message, we'll see how the Spirit equips ordinary believers to carry forward the extraordinary mission of Jesus.

HOW THE SPIRIT SENDS US TO REACH THE LOST

1. The Spirit inspires a love for the lost in our hearts.

- John 20:21-22, *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."*
- 1 John 4:14, *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*
- "If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. If they perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees. Let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for." — Charles Spurgeon

2. That love compels us to be gospel witnesses.

- Acts 1:8, *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
- The call to witness begins at home ("Jerusalem") but is never meant to stay there.
- It's been said, "the gospel is really only good news if it gets there in time!"

3. Witnessing feels scary, but prayer gives us boldness.

- Acts 4:31, *After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*
- "Every great movement of God can be traced to a kneeling figure.... We must talk to God about men before we talk to men about God." — D.L. Moody
- Boldness is not a personality trait...it is a prayer answer.

4. Boldness shows up in ordinary, everyday conversations.

- Acts 8:26-31, *Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch...The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*
- Evangelism starts by listening to people right where they are. When the Spirit prompts you to speak, take the step, and keep the conversation natural.

5. Sometimes witnessing is just opening our door more.

- Acts 10:19-20, *While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."*
- There is nothing more effective than being a good neighbor.
- Live on mission by walking your neighborhood daily, spending time out front weekly, sharing a meal monthly, and hosting something bigger annually like a garage sale, block party, or community event.

6. The Spirit may call us clearly, yet still lead us generally.

- *Acts 13:2-4*, While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia...
- After being sent, they had to choose their starting point. The Spirit doesn't eliminate our decision-making.

7. When we're unsure on His direction, He will redirect us.

- *Acts 16:6-7*, Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them
- *Proverbs 16:9*, A man's heart plans this way, but the Lord directs his steps.
- Even our best ministry plans can be blocked by the Spirit. A closed door is not failure, it's further guidance.

8. When clarity is desperately needed, He'll make it clear.

- *Acts 16:9-10*, During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
- *Acts 20:22-23*, And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

Who is in the 'chariot' this week (Acts 8)? Who has is God asking you to be near to? A coworker, neighbor, or stranger. The Spirit is still setting up those encounters, the only question is, will we listen and take the next normal step?