

VESSELS OF HONOR

PASTOR BARRY BURNS

MESSAGE FROM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2025

OPENING PRAYER & ICEBREAKER

Icebreaker Question: Pastor Barry taught on starting strong in 2026 - what's one area of your life you want to see God's supernatural power make the difference in this new year?

SERMON OVERVIEW

This message focuses on starting the new year with supernatural strength and power, not relying on our own abilities but on the power of the Holy Spirit working within us. We explored the concept of being "vessels of honor," each created for a distinctive use, that are empowered by God's grace to accomplish His purposes.

KEY SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- **Ephesians 6:10** - "Be strong in the Lord"
- **Acts 1:8** - Receiving power after the Holy Spirit comes
- **Philippians 4:13** - Strength through Christ
- **Zechariah 4:6** - "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit"
- **2 Corinthians 4:7** - Treasure in earthen vessels
- **2 Timothy 2:20-21** - Vessels of honor and dishonor

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding the Message

- 1. The Power Within:** The sermon emphasized the difference between "power not present" and "power now present" (Acts 1:8).
 - What does it mean practically to live with the Holy Spirit's power "present" in your daily life?
 - Can you identify areas where you've been trying to operate in your own strength rather than God's power?
- 2. The Zerubbabel Principle:** In Zechariah 4, God promised that the work Zerubbabel started would be completed, but only by God's Spirit.
 - What "unfinished work" might God be calling you to complete in this new year?
 - What "mountains" (obstacles) are standing between you and God's purpose for your life?
- 3. Vessels of Honor vs. Dishonor:** Pastor Barry emphasized that WE choose whether to be vessels of honor or dishonor — God doesn't assign it.
 - Why do you think we tend to immediately disqualify ourselves as "vessels of honor"?
 - What does it mean to "purge yourself" and become a vessel fit for the Master's use?

Going Deeper

1. **Grace as Power Source:** 2 Timothy 2:1 says "Grace is the source of your strength."
 - How is grace more than just a doctrine but a person (Jesus)?
 - How can we practically "draw strength" from our union with Christ?
2. **Usefulness Defines Value:** The Message translation says, "A vessel's usefulness defines its true value."
 - What does it mean that "each vessel is equally important" even though functions differ?
 - How do you think it would feel to operate as a vessel of honor, in alignment with your unique functions and empowered by God's grace and power...as opposed operating in our flesh?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Supernatural empowerment is available to every believer through the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.
- We cannot accomplish God's purposes in our own strength - it must be "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit."
- We choose whether we are vessels of honor or dishonor - God doesn't assign these labels; we determine our usefulness.
- Grace is not just a doctrine but the person of Jesus Christ working in and through us.
- Your best days are ahead - the path of the righteous gets brighter and brighter.
- Every believer is valuable and indispensable for the Master's use, regardless of age, tenure, or perceived ability.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

Option 1: Daily Empowerment

- Each morning this week, pray specifically: "Father God, I draw my strength from your grace today. I thank you for revealing to me the giftings you have placed within me and empowering me to walk in them for your glory."
- Consciously chose to rely on God's power rather than your own. Try to identify some specific situations where you can do that this week..

Option 2: Identify Your Mountain

- Write down the biggest obstacle (mountain) standing between you and God's purpose for your life.
- Declare over it daily: "You will become a plain by the Spirit of God."
- Share this with one trusted person who can pray in agreement with you.

Option 3: Purge and Prepare

- Are there things you need to "purge" from your life that are not in alignment with being a vessel of honor (negative self-talk, a habit, unforgiveness, etc.)?
- Take them to the Lord in prayer and ask for His grace and power to be brought to bear on your decision to purge those things holding you back.



DISCIPLESHIP

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

1. What specific truth from this message did God highlight to you?
2. Complete this sentence: "In 2026, I will no longer disqualify myself from _____."
3. What is one way you will draw strength from your union with Christ this week?
4. How will you respond to God's invitation to be a vessel of honor?

CLOSING PRAYER POINTS

- Thank God that He has deposited His power within us as vessels of clay
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help each person start strong in 2026
- Pray for mountains (obstacles) to become plains
- Declare that each group member is a vessel of honor, fit for the Master's use
- Ask for grace to be the source of strength throughout the year

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scan QR code for Upcoming Events, News, Giving and more!
<https://linktr.ee/cornerstonejc>

- Communion
- Water Baptism

