

Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit Preparing the Disciples for Service

October 23, 2022

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The Holy Spirit works through people, though not necessarily exclusively. We can trace the action of the Holy Spirit in uniting a company of disciples in prayer and then in moving them to continue waiting for the Promise of the Father. We can learn from this for our own lives.

Disciples, those who are learners and who follow Jesus Christ, are Christians first and then called to labor. The first disciples had natural gifts, but they were required to wait for the Holy Spirit in an attitude of humility, praying and waiting until they were endued with power from on high. They were not to proceed with the work Christ had commissioned them to do, namely, to go and make disciples of all nations..., without the power they would receive. They were rather clueless about what everything meant and about their instructions received from Jesus until this power came upon them. They needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Some disciples had witnessed the baptism of Christ. John the Baptist had said, **“Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”** We must see Jesus baptized with the Holy Spirit. We need to try to understand how He needed this baptism, how He was prepared for it, how He yielded to it, how He died His death and was raised again empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was born a child of the Holy Spirit. In the power of the Spirit He grew up a holy child and youth, entered manhood, and came to John the Baptist as He began His public ministry. He submitted to the baptism of repentance in our place and on our behalf. The reward of His obedience was the Father’s seal of approval on His having thus far yielded to the control of the Holy Spirit. **“This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.”** The leading and power of the Holy Spirit became His more consciously (Luke 4:1, 14, 22) than before; He is now anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. (Acts 10:38).

Acts 10:38 -- How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. KJV

Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to face temptation and overcome it. He learned obedience in the things which He suffered. Through the Eternal Spirit, He offered Himself a sacrifice unto God (Hebrews 9:14) and then receives the Holy Spirit with the power to baptize all who belong to Him. (Acts 2:32, 33)

This baptism is not the Holy Spirit regenerating. In Acts 1:4, the disciples were already partakers of the grace of regeneration. It was more. It was the conscious presence of the glorified Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the promised Comforter, and their participation in the power of Christ’s new life. It was a baptism of joy and power in their

conscious, living fellowship with Jesus on the Throne of Glory. I am talking about a living bond with the Father's power and presence.

We see the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in Acts 4, on the Samaritans in Acts 8, on the gentiles in Acts 10, and on the 12 disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is something we need and must know that we have if we are to live the Christian life more fully. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Him. (Acts 5:32) This is the conscious awareness of the Spirit of Christ abiding in us in the power of His glorified nature as He is exalted above every enemy. It is the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus setting us free from the law of sin and death and bringing us into the liberty of the sons of God, the liberty from sin as sinners to the liberty of sons who obey and do the will of their Father in heaven. Boldness and courage come with it.

The Holy Spirit empowers one to be able to obey in loyalty and devotion, in confidence, in gratitude, and with deep reverence. With the help of the Holy Spirit we yield to reproof and seek guidance, listen for His Voice, and learn to love in a God-honoring way.

Jesus had prepared His disciples for a change in the worship system that was coming with the inauguration of the New Covenant in His Blood. In John 4:23, 24 Jesus tells how His coming means that true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth for God is Spirit. No longer would worship be tied to a physical location on planet Earth. So Paul in Philippians 3:3 would say, **"We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."**

With the advent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were empowered to put the soul under the control of the Holy Spirit. For the unregenerate person, the soul is under the control of the flesh. A person's physical senses dominate; but the person renewed and empowered by the Holy Spirit walks in a spiritual wisdom, serving God, having a spiritual mind, the mind of Christ in order to do the will of the Father. Thus there is a worship which satisfies the flesh and a worship that is of God in the Spirit. True worshippers must worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. All worshippers are not true worshippers. The Spirit is at war against the flesh. We need the Holy Spirit's indwelling for life and worship. We need spiritual senses and the flesh and the body need to come under the control of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

Jesus taught His disciples the power of His words. John 6: 63, 68. Jesus' words are spirit and they are life. The word is the seed. The Seed has a hidden life that needs a living soil in which to grow. The Word has a divine life that is to be received in one's spirit, where God's Spirit dwells. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the glorified Jesus. The disciples received the Holy Spirit after Jesus rose from the dead.

The glorifying of Jesus and the streaming forth of His Spirit connect in a vital organic and spiritual union. Trust in the Cross-work of Christ and its pardon but then seek to know the life of glory and divine power to which the Holy Spirit bears witness.

Andrew Murray says, "The Holy Spirit is able to be to us just as much as we are willing to have of Him, and of the life of the glorified Lord." (Murray, page 40) As we enter into the death of the cross, His for me and mine with Him, our hearts can open for the Spirit's revelation of the glorified Christ.

1. Jesus prepared His disciples for the coming of the Comforter. John 14:16, 17. There is within the believer a new spirit within which the Spirit of Christ now dwells. Believers are the temple of this Spirit and thus are and will be sanctified by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit's presence within the believer is permanent and very close. He is always there. We must remember that.

2. Jesus prepared His disciples for the obedience that must precede the baptism of the Spirit. For three years Jesus trained them. He attached Himself to them personally. He taught them and they called Him Master and Lord. They had to learn to do what He said. He spoke of obedience to His commands as the one condition of all further spiritual blessing. Therefore, the obedient must and may look for the fullness of the Spirit.

We mourn over disobedience, especially when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin. But we must go beyond that to seek the gift of repentance, to change, to ask the Holy Spirit's help to obey Him. We are to seek a living obedience and a loving obedience, an obedience born out of loyalty and devotion to Christ. God's will must be accepted as our only law. 2 Corinthians 1:12.

3. Jesus prepared His disciples for knowing the Spirit. John 14:17 cf 1 Cor. 3:16. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Disciples need true spiritual knowledge. This takes humility, not a "know-it-all" attitude. The Word of God is God-breathed. Disciples must by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body to live. God reveals what was hidden. The Holy Spirit is the Divine Revelation of the Glorified Christ as Savior and King. He is a Person; treat Him according to the Person that He is. Believers receive the Holy Spirit in order to know a knowledge that comes from God in order to do the will of God who is True. God is the One, True, and Living God. There are many purported gods, called the no-gods in the Bible; today it is good to refer to the real God as the Living God. The others have no life in them and do not give life. They are "no-thing."

4. Jesus prepared His disciples by charging them to wait. Acts 1:4. Wait for the Promise of the Father. Waiting sets up a longing, a pleading in earnest prayer, a desire for fulfillment, a sense of the lack without what was promised, an acknowledgment of weakness. Waiting in silence can help us remember that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of prayer. He's there to help us. Wait for the Spirit. Ask for wisdom. Feel your weakness. Acts 1:5, 8; Luke 24:49.

The disciples had to wait until the time came to proceed to do their work in the faith of the promise that the Holy Spirit would be given to them. When He showed up, it was obvious.

"The economy of power is one of the great moving springs in all organization and industry. The Spirit is the great power of god; the Holy Spirit the great power of God's Redemption, as it comes down from the Throne of Him to whom all power has been given." (Murray, page 94)

The purpose of this power given is to carry on the work for which Jesus sacrificed His life. Jesus calls His disciples to **Be** witnesses unto Him. Acts 1:8. Jesus bore witness to the Truth. We are to bear witness to Jesus who is Truth. So being a witness is what we are; doing is what we do as witnesses to the watching world.

The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses because He Himself is a witness. Peter preached in boldness on the day of Pentecost of what he knew. We can only witness to as much of Jesus as the Holy Spirit is witnessing to us in life and truth. The Holy Spirit hides Himself in the weak things that God has chosen so that flesh may not glory in His presence. 1 Cor. 2:3-5, e.g. We may feel nothing; and we don't need to. God gives the Spirit to the obedient. God does not give His power for selfish ends, like saving someone from trouble and effort. He gives it to glorify His Son. God exerts power in and through weakness; He owns the power. The power is the power of a Person who has a will and a purpose for it.

Let's go deeper.

The disciples learned to live under the power of another. To be over others, to conquer, we must first be under the Highest Power, and then go...and do what He says.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20:

In the New Covenant, the believer receives God's Spirit within, a Living Person, dwelling within. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of Christ; we might say, God's inmost self. The spirit of man is his inmost self. Andrew Murray says, "He becomes to me what He was to Jesus, the very life of my personality." We strive for harmony between a home and its occupant; an understanding of what it means, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The blood and the oil go together. Leviticus 14:11-18. Jesus cleanses with His blood and baptizes with the Holy Spirit. As the Lamb, Jesus takes away sin; as the Anointed, He baptizes with the Spirit. Only by shedding His blood did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit to pour forth on those for whom He died as promised. Again, the blood and the oil go together. The Spirit comes where the Blood is applied.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14. Paul contrasts unregenerate man with the spiritual. The soul is under the power of the flesh (human nature) and receives sensations from the outer world. The Bible speaks of the attributes of the soul as belonging to the flesh, and being under its power unless there is regeneration by the Holy Spirit and new life given. The following verses contrast flesh and spirit as to wisdom (1 Cor. 2:12; Col. 1:9); service of God (Phil. 3:3, 4; Gal. 6:1-3); mind (Col. 2:18; Col. 1:9); will (John 1:13; Phil. 2:13); and worship (Col. 2:18, 23; John 4:23, 24). "The Spirit fits for worship; worship fits for the Spirit." (Andrew Murray) The great hindrance to the Holy Spirit is the flesh. (Galatians 5:16-25)

A life in obedience to God's will and in His Presence fits us for worshiping in spirit and in truth. There is a connection between what our lives are like and what our worship will thus be like. Something we can do is to consider what problems we have in our lives currently with obeying the commands of Christ and the Word of God. Remember, God knows; His desire is for us to acknowledge the truth and seek Him for the gift of repentance that we might recover ourselves from the snares of the devil wherever we are being held captive to do the devil's will. 2 Timothy 2:25, 26.

Walking in the Spirit, letting the Holy Spirit work through us, dying to self, etc. takes, I have found, a spirit of adventure. The Living God has no fear. He tells us not to fear for He is with us.

For The God has not given us a spirit of fear [cowardice], but of power [dunamis] and of love [agapao] and of a sound mind [self-control]. 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV

PRAY. . LORD God, Thank you for the Body and Blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ on our behalf. Thank you that you accepted that sacrifice and accept us in the Beloved. We ask that you prepare us to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. Cause and enable us to be able to accept Your will as our only law. Help us to accept those in Christ that we might love one another. Thank you for what You are doing now to prepare us for a greater outpouring of Your Spirit in our lives, a greater anointing, a more perfect obedience, and a more perfect alignment with the heart of the Holy Spirit and the mind of Christ.

Lord, we know that there is a difference between studying the Word of God out of human wisdom and studying the Word of God being taught by/of the Holy Spirit. Keep us from soulish interpretations of Your Word, from divisive disputes, and vain philosophies. Father God, please work through the Holy Spirit in us in order to make the Word life and light in us; and if, in humility, we trusted in Your guidance, submitted ourselves to the Word, and asked You to reveal in us by the Holy Spirit YOUR thoughts, YOUR mind, and YOUR will, grant us the ability to obey You without resentment, without resistance, without rebuttal, and with all meekness. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

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