

Series: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

Message Two: *Baptism and Fullness*

This is "part two" of the message we began last week on the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. It is part of four messages we are adding on as an "addendum" to our study in the Book of Acts.

And we are adding these messages because we want to take a closer look at the gap that exists between how the first century church lived out their faith, experienced God...and how we live our faith and experience God in our own day.

How is it, that in the span of just a few weeks, the early followers of Jesus went from *huddling in fear behind closed doors*, to *"turning the world upside down"* wherever they went.

According to the biblical record – the difference was ***the person and work of the Holy Spirit***. This is clear from Jesus' words in the upper room on the night He was betrayed. From that conversation, we noted ***nine truths*** about the person and work of the Spirit...

1. The Helper is a Person
2. The Helper is *with* us and *in* us
3. The Helper is the Holy Spirit
4. The Holy Spirit is fully God
5. The Holy Spirit *teaches* and *reminds* us of Jesus' words
6. The Holy Spirit *tells others* about Jesus
7. The Holy Spirit *in us* is better than Jesus incarnate *with us*
8. The Holy Spirit guides us into all the truth about Jesus
9. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus

If the Holy Spirit is so essential and central to our faith, why is it that most Christians are unaware of how He works in and through us?

In 1979, I had been a Christian for about two years –

but for most of those two years I was confused, frustrated, guilt ridden and angry. I had no doubt that I was a Christian...

But if you asked me about living the Christian life in the here and now, I would have told you...*"the Christian life is just not working for me."*

This is going to sound like blasphemy, but it was true. After the initial excitement of my salvation wore off, I was on the whole a happier person *before* I trusted Christ...than after.

And it did not begin to change until a friend said something to me that put me on path that we are on right now, a path to understanding the person and work of the Holy Spirit. And I have never been the same since. He said...

"Lloyd, you cannot live the Christian life."

I'm standing before you today because *after trying to live the Christian life*, someone *helped me see that I could not*. But that there was someone who did, someone who could, someone who would through me...if I trusted Him to...

We are going to look at four truths that tell us not just what it means to trust the Holy Spirit...**but HOW to trust the Holy Spirit.**

- **A Condition**
- **A Contrast**
- **A Command**
- **A Choice**

A Condition...

Let's go back to the upper room discourse in John's Gospel. I want you to turn in your Bibles to **John 15...**

Jesus is telling the disciples these nine things about the Spirit. And smack in the middle He tells the disciples what my friend told me...*and I don't want us to miss it.*

John 15:4-5...[read...]

Let me ask you, according to Jesus, what can you do "apart from Him." *Nothing.* Unconnected to the "vine"...a "branch" *cannot live on its own.*

But don't miss that Jesus says *He also must abide in the disciple.* But if Jesus is *leaving*, how can He "stay, remain" in the disciples? By the person of the Holy Spirit. While the Spirit is not the Son in person or role, the Spirit and the Son are *one in essence*. Thus...in Romans 8 Paul will speak of the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9) and go so far to say in Galatians 2:20 that *Christ lives "in" him.*

By sending His Spirit, Jesus is not just present *with* each Christian, He is present IN EVERY CHRISTIAN. Thus, it is *by the Spirit that Jesus abides in us!!*

So, to abide in Christ is in fact to abide...to "remain, stay" in the Holy Spirit.

The blessed necessity of inadequacy...

Until you know that ***you cannot live the Christian life***, that you are incapable, inadequate, unable and powerless to live the Christian life...*you will not fully depend on the Spirit.*

That means...*dependence, powerlessness, inadequacy*...the very things we will move heaven and earth to avoid, are in fact the gifts of grace God uses in your life and mine...in order to bring us *to complete dependence on Him.*

This is the **Condition of a person who is filled with the Spirit: *Inadequacy***

No wonder Jesus commanded the disciples to wait in Jerusalem – in other words, don't go and tell others about Me, don't try to make disciples – UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT!!

Now we need to answer an important question...**When does the Holy Spirit take up residence in us?** Three important doctrines of the Spirit's relationship to us...indwelling, baptizing and sealing.

- ***Indwelling of the Spirit*** – to be a Christian is to have the Spirit.

“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.” **(Romans 8:9)**

- ***Baptism of the Spirit*** – identified with Christ...placed in the body of Christ

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” **(1 Corinthians 12:13)**

- ***Sealing of the Spirit*** – the Spirit is God's pledge that we are His, we are secure, and He will bring us home to Himself. The Spirit is like the “earnest” money given to a home seller...“we are buying this house!”

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph. 1:13)

***All three happen **at the moment of salvation.**

Let's turn our attention to the **Contrast** and **Command...Ephesians 5:18...**

Here is how the work of the Spirit in the life of the believers in Acts is described...

Acts 2:4

⁴And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak...**

Acts 4:8

⁸Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...**

Acts 4:31

³¹**and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.**

Acts 7:55

⁵⁵But **being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven...**

Acts 13:9

Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him...**

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit, and how is one filled with the Spirit?
Ephesians 5:18 answers this...

*First **the contrast...***

The contrast is not between wine and Spirit, but between the effects of being filled with wine, or being filled with the Spirit. In both instances, the issue is CONTROL.

Drink too much wine, your attitudes and actions are under the CONTROL of the alcohol. Be filled with the Spirit, and your attitudes and actions are under the CONTROL of the Spirit.

*Now let me explain **the command...***

1. **Imperative mood** – this is not a suggestion, this is a direct command
2. **Plural form** – this is for the whole church, this is for every Christian – being Spirit filled is to be normative for all believers (no “special” Christians...)
3. **Passive voice** – this is not something you do, it is something God does for us.
4. **Present tense** – being filled is not a “one time” experience, it is continuous.

The **Condition** – *Inadequacy*

The **Contrast** and **Command** - “Don’t be controlled by other things; Instead, keep on being under the control of the Spirit”

Now we are ready to consider the **Choice...how does a person “keep on being filled with the Spirit?”**

First, let’s acknowledge that *there is mystery* here that we are not meant to resolve. No wonder “being **filled with the Spirit**” is described by Jesus as “**abiding** in Him” by Paul as **being “led by the Spirit,” living by the Spirit,” “walking by the Spirit,”** and “**Keeping in Step** with the Spirit.” All of these phrases describe the same thing.

Secondly, there is no “magic formula,” you will not find anything resembling “five steps to being filled with the Spirit.”

So, allowing the **mystery** to remain, and avoiding a **formula**, we find the answer from Scripture to be way simpler and clearer than we seem to make it.

Start here: the command to be filled *is in the passive tense*, it is something God does for us. And it is fair to ask: "How do we do something that can only be done for us?" It's like being commanded to throw yourself a "surprise party."

I can't make myself "filled with the Spirit"...it must be done for me. But how do we do something that can only be done for us?

It is not as confusing as it sounds. According to the Scripture, *we can do nothing to save ourselves...apart from the grace of God...is there anything we could do to secure a right standing before God?* No. And yet, if you have put your trust in Christ for the forgiveness of your sin...*you are the recipient of something you could not do for yourself.*

What did you **do** to receive Christ? **You believed.**

Ephesians 2:8..."For by grace you have been saved, THROUGH FAITH..."

What we could not do for ourselves, secure a right standing with God, God did for us...***and it becomes ours BY FAITH.***

So how are we "filled with the Spirit?" *By faith.* We come to experience the **presence** and the **power** of Spirit, *by faith.*

Galatians 3:2-5

²This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you **receive the Spirit** by the works of the Law, **or by hearing with faith?**

³Are you so foolish? Having *begun by the Spirit*, are you now being *perfected by the flesh*? ...⁵So then, does He who **provides you with the Spirit** and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, **or by hearing with faith?**

What Paul is saying is this..."if it was BY FAITH that you received the Spirit (at salvation)...why are you now trying to live the Christian life by *your own efforts* (your *flesh*)!"

Now here is where the rubber meets the road. Biblical faith, the kind of faith that saves us, the kind of faith by which we are controlled and empowered by the Spirit has **two distinguishing characteristics...**

1. Biblical faith is keenly aware and accepting of *inadequacy*. Biblical faith is marked by the person who knows they are *powerless* and *incapable*...The person who knows that they "can't" (fill in the blank...)
 - Stop the lustful thoughts
 - Be content not having what I long for

- Stop living a lie, putting up a mask on a painful life
- Love their wife as Christ loves the church
- Forgive as you've been forgiven
- Love your enemies
- Be kind to people who have hurt you
- Be holy
- Do the right thing all the time
- Keep from doing the wrong thing a lot of the time

Let me give you one word for this mark of biblical faith: **DEPENDENCE**

2. Biblical faith is always *a faith made visible*. Biblical faith begins in the mind as a thought, but it never remains there: it always finds expression in a choice, in an act that shows this faith is not just a thought in my head.

James call it a "faith that works" – for "faith" is not biblical if it is not demonstrated, made visible by choice and action.

I will give you a word for this characteristic of biblical faith: **ACTIVE**

So, faith by which we are filled with the Spirit is...**Fully Dependent**, and **Visibly Active**.

Now this next sentence puts my attempt to make this as simple and clear...as I believe the Scripture tells us it is.

The person who is filled with the Spirit trusts the Spirit to do what they cannot do...as they do it...by faith.

Illustrated by me studying this, and teaching in this moment...recognizing my inability, yet trusting the Spirit's ability...and trusting such that I do the studying, and I do the teaching. And as I do...I am filled with the Spirit...

- When I'm interacting with Lisa this afternoon...and we get in a disagreement...I hope in that moment...I recognize I can't do this on my own...I must depend on the Spirit in me...
- And this week, when you sense the Spirit inviting you to take a step of obedience, a step of faith...maybe it is to talk to someone about Christ...I hope you recognize that you can't do it in your own power...so depending on the Spirit, and trusting that the Spirit will fill you...you open your mouth and start talking...
- And when you find yourself between a rock and a hard place, when you cannot see your way out, or through...you realize you cannot make something happen, you cannot get through this...and so you choose to depend on the Spirit...and you take a step of faith...believing the Spirit is

empowering and enabling you...as you take the step of faith. It may the step of faith is to "wait."

Can you imagine what a church would look like...where each of us is continually being filled with the Spirit...in our worship, in daily life where we live work and play.

We don't have to imagine it. *We would become a people who turn the world upside down...*