

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 18

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Topic: The Baptism In The Holy Spirit – Part 3

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What sort of power does the baptism in the Holy Spirit give us and why is it important? This was a critical question for me as I was very anti-charismatic for many years and only slowly changed my mind as a result of several experiences on the mission field that led me to see an increase in the quality and quantity of the Christian life due to having a strong filling of the Holy Spirit. This journey took me the best part of a decade (from 1986 to 1995) and is too long to detail even briefly here.

My questions were: a) Is it biblical and is it real? b) Does it work? c) Is it safe? d) Is it worth the cost of any rejection I might receive? (In those days charismatics were often kicked out of churches and missionary societies or given minor roles in them). Over time I found "yes" answers to all those questions. If you are still exploring may I say that God is generally in no hurry. Just go at the pace that you can honestly proceed at with intellectual and spiritual integrity.

Luke 11:9-13 MKJV *And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened to you. (10) For everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds. And to him who knocks it shall be opened. (11) For what father of you, if the son asks for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake for a fish? (12) Or if he shall ask for an egg, will he give him a scorpion? (13) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?*

The above passage informs us that it is safe to seek spiritual things, especially the Holy Spirit. God is a good Heavenly Father who gives good things to His children. He does not give scorpions instead of eggs or stones instead of bread – or by implication an evil spirit instead of the Holy Spirit. God will not spiritually deceive you as you seek Him. He is simply not like that. His Word, His character and His promises are assurance that it will be well with you as you seek His spiritual blessings.

The passage also assures us that we will receive what we ask for in God. This may take some persistent asking, seeking and knocking however such persistence will pay off in the end. (Also the verses immediately prior to these are about the parable of the persistent friend who receives his loaves of bread in the middle of the night.)

Now the epistle of James warns us that we must ask for godly things, not merely for worldly things to spend upon our lusts and pleasures (James 4:3). Yet in later verses James assures us of the power of persistent prevailing Kingdom prayer (James 5:13-18).

So we are not to ask for things to 'spend upon our lusts' but we are to ask for things to spend upon the Spirit! If we walk in the Spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Our

minds are to be set on the Spirit and not on the flesh. And our prayers and our seeking God are to be for the things of the Spirit and not the things of the flesh (though our daily needs are fine and are part of the Lord's Prayer). Therefore we should especially pray for those things concerning the Holy Spirit that are promised to us in Scripture such as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, and for the gifts of the Spirit especially that we may prophesy (1 Corinthians 14 – whole chapter).

The blessings we receive in Christ include 'all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms' (Ephesians 1:3). Surely we should ask for these also! We should even ask God to show us what these blessings are (1 Corinthians 2:9-13) so that we can receive them through prevailing prayer!

God is love (1 John 4:16) and in His amazing love He wishes to absolutely lavish us with free gifts from Heaven such as salvation, redemption, holiness, grace, peace, love, joy, boldness and spiritual power. Ephesians informs us that this grace-filled gift giving comes about because of Christ's triumphant resurrection and ascension into Heaven:

Ephesians 4:7-12 MKJV *But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (8) Therefore He says, "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men." (9) (Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? (10) He who descended is the same also as He who ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.) (11) And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, (12) for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is this gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the ascended Lord Jesus so we can witness to Christ, receive spiritual gifts for ministry and operate in the various offices of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher.

The power we receive is the power to walk in the Holy Spirit and to do the things that the Holy Spirit wants done.

But what does the Holy Spirit want done? He wants people to be loved and to be built up in Christ, the saints to become holy, the lost saved, and the widows and orphans to be cared for. He wants truth to be proclaimed to those in power, the lepers cleansed, the sick healed, the demons cast out and the dead raised to life.

Matthew 10:7-8 MKJV *And as you go, proclaim, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. You have received freely, freely give.*

I can imagine if Jesus had personally said these words to me at the beginning of my ministry I would have said: "Raise the dead? Did He just say raise the dead? I've just prepared a great sermon on the doctrine of grace and Jesus is telling me to raise the dead?"

I would have raised a thousand objections to healing, exorcism, the raising of the dead and anything to do with leprosy (probably citing the need for a medical degree). I loved

theology and knew my doctrine and that is where I was staying! More than that I knew I simply did not possess the power to do even the least of these things.

Since I have sought God's power for ministry through the baptism in the Holy Spirit I have graciously seen Him work some healings and many exorcisms through my ministry. This is not of me, it is of God. Freely I have received. I have yet to cleanse a leper or raise anyone from the dead. But I now know that it is not just up to me and my 'training and abilities'. It is up to God who works in me and through me. I do not understand how He works, but He does work.

Our original question was: What sort of power does the baptism in the Holy Spirit give us and why is it important? The answer is that the baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us power to carry out our God-given ministry. As we ask for more of God the Holy Spirit we surely will receive - and as we have freely received, we freely give.

Blessings,

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