

The Holy Spirit wants to help you not only behold the life of Jesus, but unwrap it and experience it for yourself.

Any gift from God is a gift I want.

As James says God is the giver of “*Every good and perfect gift*”

God loved us so much that He GAVE us the gift of his Son, Jesus.

But don’t just admire and behold Jesus’ life. Experience it.

God has given us a priceless gift. Yet so often we’re indifferent to possessing it.

And it’s because we’re indifferent to the Holy Spirit that helps us unwrap it.

It’s hard to read the book of Acts and Church history and not think:

“*man that’s a lot different than what we see today.*”

What’s the crucial difference?

For the Church today the Holy Spirit is largely a matter of doctrine.

For the Church at its inception the Holy Spirit was a matter of experience.

The Holy Spirit isn’t just informational. The Holy Spirit is transformational.

It’s why **Billy Graham** said the following:

I am convinced that to be filled with the Spirit is not an option, but a necessity. It is indispensable for the abundant life and for fruitful service. The Spirit-filled life is not abnormal; it is the normal Christian life. Anything less is subnormal; it is less than what God wants and provides for his children. Therefore, to be filled with the Spirit should never be thought of as an unusual or unique experience for, or known by, only a select few. It is intended for all, needed by all, and available to all. That is why the Scripture commands all of us, ‘Be filled with the Spirit.’

That sounds all good until we get to: “*Be filled with the Spirit*”

...I’ve seen people “filled by the Spirit” and it would qualify as ‘abnormal!’

As a result, The Holy Spirit becomes that one person we all have that you like knowing, but you don’t invite to get-togethers because they have no chill.

So we seek a “**healthy balance**” as if the Holy Spirit is something we add onto our life, but something we wouldn’t want to overdo.

Find me somebody with too much of the Holy Spirit. (You won’t.)

That’s the equivalent of finding somebody with too much of God. (You won’t.)

Scripture speaks clearly:

The Holy Spirit is “*poured out*” and we are to “*be filled.*”

All 4 gospels = John the Baptist speaks to the coming baptism of the HS

(Matt 3, Luke 3, Mark 1, John 1) ... “I baptize with water, he will baptize in the Holy Spirit.”

And this wasn’t an entirely new idea introduced in the Gospels...

Joel 2:28-29, Joel prophecies:

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

This happens centuries later at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, and as Peter goes to preach the first spirit-filled sermon of the Church, he points to this prophecy.
And in this beginning to Acts we see three realities about this outpouring of the Spirit.

THE NEED

Jesus tells his followers in Acts 1:4-8

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (this is Jesus pointing back to what John the Baptist once promised-- it’s being fulfilled!)

Waiting for the Holy Spirit wasn’t advice or a recommendation. It was a command.
What’s wild is the timing. The kingdom work had JUST been laid out in the great commission.
It would seem nothing could be more important than that mission.
But the Holy Spirit isn’t optional to kingdom work. He’s essential.

THE DIFFERENCE

In **John 20:22** Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to his disciples, breathed on them, and said, *“Receive the Holy Spirit.”* This breath of God, breathing into them, gave new spiritual life to them the same way it gave physical life to Adam and Eve in Genesis.

But clearly Jesus saw a difference between that reception and the coming baptism.

Similarly, Luke goes on in the Book of Acts to describe instances in which these two “parts” of Christian experience are separate and distinct.

John 20 & the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The Samaritan revival in Acts 8.

Paul’s experience in Acts 9.

Cornelius and other Gentiles in Acts 11.

And the Ephesian believers in Acts 19.

We see these as two distinct experiences.

Having the Holy Spirit in us, **receiving His presence**

And being filled in Baptism, **releasing His power**

Pastor Fred explains the difference the following way:

“We don’t get more of the Spirit, He gets more of us”

You’ve already received His presence,

But as you conform your will and *immerse* yourself in Him, He releases His power.

THE PROMISE

At Pentecost, after pointing to Joel’s prophecy being fulfilled, Peter goes on to say:

“The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

We are part of that “all whom the Lord our God will call,” future tense.

Many streams of our faith would say the power, the gifts, and the voice of the Holy Spirit are no longer applicable today. It was a door closed in the first century. We would respectfully disagree.

Many would debate the evidence of the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. What can't be debated in light of scripture is that when people were baptized in the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, the apostles witnessed evidence.

But it's possible to get so enamored with the supernatural that we forget the purpose.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit isn't a climactic experience. Acts doesn't end with Pentecost. It's how it begins. It is the key that unlocks the rest of the book of Acts, as from there we see this spread of the gospel and growth of the Church.

Who would you call a world changer? In recent history? In recent culture?

What are some adjectives that you would use to describe these people?

Exemplary? Talented?

What about *Unschoolled*? What about *Ordinary*?

The Apostles appeared unschooled and ordinary to religious leaders, yet they impacted the world unlike any of the aforementioned people.

In **Acts 17:6** - "they are turning the world upside down."

The bottom line game changer: **The Holy Spirit**.

Ephesians 3:20 speaks to doing exceedingly, abundantly more than we could ask or imagine...

how? According to the power at work within us.

What is that power?

The same power Jesus promises in Acts 1 – the Holy Spirit.

How?

THE GIFTS

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.

Here Paul dives into the analogy of the Church as Christ's body.

Tells us something super important about the GIFTS.

They can be described as: **Incarnational**

"We have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit." – that one body? The Church.

The three times Paul writes about the gifts:

1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4 ...he's writing to a Church, not an individual.

Church in Corinth- foggy on the details and they were doing it wrong... Paul spoke up.

The matter for Paul wasn't so much whether this or that was really a gift.

The more vital issue Paul addresses – are these gifts being used in LOVE and service.

1 Cor 13 – famous passage on love often isolated and used at weddings and alike.

But it's sandwiched between chapters on the gifts of the Spirit.

“The most excellent way” in 1 Cor 13 // “The Fruit of the Spirit” from Gal 5

“rejoices with the truth” = Joy

“does not delight in evil” = Goodness

“keeps no record of wrongs” = Peace

“never fails, perseveres” = Faithfulness

“patient” (trusts, hopes) = Patience

“not boastful or proud” = Gentleness

“kind” (not rude) = Kindness

“not easily angered” = Self Control

The gifts aren't meant to operate without the fruit.

WORDS OF WISDOM - A supernatural thought that comes through the Holy Spirit.

“There isn't a verse for that...” answer to a question, a solution to a crisis.

EXAMPLE : Practically in Acts- the church leaders were prompted by the HS to separate Paul and Barnabas for the work he called them to. They didn't have a five step plan or growth strategy that involved this step. They simply heard from the spirit and acted with obedience.

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE - Information impressed by God upon a person that the person simply knows as true.

EXAMPLE: Elisha telling his King where the enemy kept camp.

Woman at the Well – Jesus had knowledge of her past and past relationships that allowed him to open a door to minister.

“They read my mail...”

FAITH

A supernatural ability to believe God's word in spite of adverse circumstances.

EXAMPLE: Paul's faith as the ship he was on was about to wreck, so vibrant that it stirred faith in those with him

HEALING

Impartation of God's supernatural ability to heal.

Not medical science, not mind over matter, but God's supernatural work.

EXAMPLE: Peter in Acts – “silver and gold I don't have, but what I do have I give to you... in Jesus's name get up and walk”

MIRACLES

Events sparked by the Holy Spirit that defy our natural mind and natural experience.

The Supernatural.

EXAMPLE: water into wine, 5 loaves + 2 fish; God showing his power in unique circumstances.

DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

This reality is spoken of in Ephesians 6: *We battle not against flesh and blood...*
This gift discerns the spirits that influence situations and people.

PROPHECY - It is sudden inspiration. Not prepared, not premeditated. It is a message given by revelation from God under the moving of the Holy Spirit.

We sometimes think of it as telling the future. Tell me what's going to happen in my life.
Not **fore-telling**, but **forth telling**. God's way of telling a person how to go forth.

GIFT OF TONGUES

Prophecy is God speaking to man.

Prayer language/Tongues, is man speaking to God.

Vast. A sermon in and of itself. Categories.

Kinds of tongues

1 Cor 12:29-30 – tongues with prophetic interpretation.

1 Cor 12:7-11 – manifestation moment.

1 Cor 14 – personal prayer language.

Is it me or is God taking over?

I've seen people who seem to lose control of themselves. But again - it's the gift without the fruit. The fruit of the spirit? Self Control.

1 COR 14:32 - *“people who prophecy are in control of their spirit and they can take turns”*

1 COR 14:40 - *“be sure that everything is done properly and in order”*

The Holy Spirit was present and active at creation.

Beginning in creation and throughout the God brings order out of chaos, not vice versa.

The Spirit works in cooperation with us.

You have to make a decision and open your mouth to speak in English or any other language.

It's the same with your prayer language. I can't speak in tongues without opening my mouth...

You have free will. The Holy Spirit doesn't hijack that.

“If happiness were like the flowers of June then I would take the best of them, roses and columbine, the lilies, and bind them in your hair. They are not more beautiful but they add meaning to my love. For all our words are short and lame of breath and stumble, and you surpass them though I know not why.”

– This is Shakespeare writing about another human.

– Language and human intellect isn't enough, and even becomes cumbersome.

How much more with God?

God wants us to connect in moments with him that transcend language.

1 Corinthians 14:2 in the MSG version reads – *“If you praise Him in the private language of tongues, God understands you... for you are sharing intimacies just between you and Him.”*

As you go on through chapter 14 it's clear: IT'S A GIFT. It's a gift for everyone:
1 Corinthians 14:5- "I wish you all spoke in tongues."
1 Corinthians 14:18- "I speak in tongues more than all of you." (assumption:EVERYone)
1 Corinthians 14:39- "Don't forbid it"

*Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves,
but the one who prophesies edifies the church.*
Also translated "builds up" ...Building ourselves. Building the Church.

Pentecost – languages – they heard the apostles speaking in their own language.
This points us all the way back to Babel- "*there's nothing that they can't accomplish together*"
He divided them with foreign tongues.
He did it to redirect them to his purposes – in which there's LIFE.

A tower – let's reach to Heaven.
A kingdom – thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.
We are called to bring Heaven to earth.

We need the power of God.
To transform us. And to transform the world.

Peter's words to the people listening at Pentecost are what I want to echo in closing:
Repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit.

Value meals. Three items: Drink, Sandwich, Fries.
I'm a dollar menu guy.
So IF I pay \$8 for a meal, get past the drive through, and look and see that I'm missing one of those items, I'm going to go back for it!! There's no "*oh well.*"

Don't settle for 1/3. Don't settle for 2/3.
Don't settle for a life that's less than the spirit-filled, powerful one God has for you.

How do you receive it?
God doesn't give us a cheat code to memorize.
He doesn't give us hoops to jump through.
We simply ask the Father in faith...

Luke 11:13

"if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."