

REVIVE US AGAIN

I received what I felt to be an interesting word from the Lord two weeks back. He said in this next revival folks who didn't believe the gifts of the Holy Spirit were for today would be filled with the Spirit with signs and wonders following. They would get saved. I understand many already think they are saved, but ask yourself this question: What are you really saying to Jesus when you say 'no' to receiving all of what His Holy Spirit has for you?

I've spoken with quite a few people who don't believe that signs and wonders and the baptism of the Holy Spirit in power with the evidence of speaking with other tongues is necessary for life in Christ. They also believe somehow God changed His mind about empowering us. Jesus said He would send the Spirit and be with us to the very end. If that's the case, why would Jesus change His mind by limiting the indwelling Holy Spirit to some arbitrary time limit called "the age of the apostles"?

John 14:12-17: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, **that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth;** whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

If you have to do linguistic and mental gymnastics to change the plain meaning of God's word, then I would submit what you're changing it to is in error and unsustainable as doctrine. So let's take a simple look at what the "Spirit in power" means for believers today. I want to look at a myriad of reasons why we, as Christians should function in all the Holy Spirit has for us today, as well as why we should pray in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues.

Please open your Bibles to the following Scriptures: Mark 10:43-44; Luke 6:38; 11:11-13; Acts 1; John 14 (see 14:12); John 15-16. After perusing the preceding chapters and verses, you will see the following benefits, (If you don't see a Scripture verse next to the benefit, then it was found in the former verses listed):

Power to receive and the Power to give: Patience; Strength to do; Strength to abstain and Conviction to overcome. Ability to give comfort; Ability to learn; Ability to receive teachableness; Power to serve; Power to receive knowledge.

Power to give Jesus' life ministry: Power to heal the sick (Matthew 8:16); Power to teach; Power to cast out demons (Luke 11:20). Power to bless (Mark 10:13, 16, see Abraham). Power to preach (Matthew 7:28-29)

The Holy Spirit is life; life is synonymous with water; water is synonymous to baptism. Hands are for giving; giving and baptism go together when the Holy Spirit is involved. The following is how the church is involved: Power for cleansing (Ephesians 5:26). Lets you know you are part of the church. Lets you know you are part of God (Ephesians 4:1-6). You are receiving God Himself (Spirit is God).

Displays the promise of permanent residence with God (Acts 2:33-36). Allows the flow of the permanent presence of God and His living water within (John 4:10). Allows you to be able to partake or gives us the ability to receive God within us on a regular basis. It is the mark of belonging to God's covenant people. Gives you the ability to impart the same gift of the Holy Spirit baptism to others (Acts 8:18-20).

Shows sacrifice of God just like in communion. Shows example to unbelievers of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14). Gives you a refreshing drink when you need it (1 Corinthians 12:13). Shows forth the seal of God (Ephesians 1:13). Shows the downpayment or earnest of

God (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14). Enables us to pray and build up ourselves (1 Corinthians 14).

Enables us to unknowingly pray for God's will for others. Enables us to unknowingly pray for circumstances. It is a language devils do not understand, so it bypasses enemy infiltration. It delivers us from enemies within. Opens doors we cannot see (Revelation 1:10; 4:1-2). It is true prosperity (Proverbs 11:24-45). Helps us to function in signs and wonders.

Helps us to understand the love of God (1 Corinthians 12 & 13). Builds faith as you speak and see God in action. Moves God in ways we do not understand (see Genesis 1 and Luke 2, where God moved with the Spirit and creative miracles happen).

Bypasses human intellect thereby humbling us. Embarrasses human pride thereby humbling us. Gives us hope because it is a symbol of the promise. Gives us impartation to worship and sacrifice. Gives us impartation to fast. Gives us impartation to praise.

Helps you to see into the spirit realm: After Paul was filled with the Spirit in healing he was no longer blind (Acts 9:17). Helps you to discern whether people are in Christ or not (1 John 4:2-3). Helps you to discern the times and the seasons (1 Chronicles 12:32). Helps you to forgive because you have been forgiven; redemption is a sign of forgiveness. Helps you to pray, even in your infirmities (Romans 8:26).

When you see the word to pray or intercede in the preceding verses, the Greek word means *to take hold together with*. It doesn't mean God does it. It means the Holy Spirit takes hold of your intercession. In other words, you have to start. He doesn't do it for you. There has to be something you give Him to take hold of and function *together with*. Lots of folks want the baptism of the Holy Spirit but refuse to open their mouths. Usually they are afraid that they will just be making up words. Sit, listen and act in faith. He will show up.

The word tells us there are different manifestations, but the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:6-7). Many become confused between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and when we all receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. That's because we are dead in our sins and need a rebirth into new life. This is just like Jesus' resurrection. He was dead, then made alive by the Spirit. Like Him, we were dead. The difference between us and Jesus is that we are dead in our sins, and need a new birth to be made alive again into a new spiritual birth (Ephesians 2:1).

Likewise, we see a difference between baptism in water and the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. In Acts 8 we see that the Samaritan Christians had been baptized in water, but "He had not yet fallen upon any of them." We can easily see that water baptism had taken place, but something else also needed to happen. Simon, the sorcerer, would not have asked for the same ability as the apostles if there was no result.

In each instance that the Holy Spirit baptized, the result was speaking with other tongues. In Acts 10:44-48; even those not baptized in water, but believing on Jesus, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues first, and then water was made available so they could be baptized in water as well.

As you can see from our previous list a few paragraphs ago, our prayer language is quite amazing. Many ask the question why can't we pray in English or whatever our native tongue is? Paul said that he would pray with his understanding and pray in the Spirit. When we pray in the Spirit, it is the Holy Spirit Himself who is giving us the words to pray. Because the Spirit knows the mind of God, we can rest assured that we will always pray according to the Father's will (Romans 8:26, 27).

Two paragraphs ago I mentioned Simon, the sorcerer (Acts 8). If you are not familiar with this portion of Scripture, turn in your Bibles and review it now before you go on reading. I want to mention another concern some folks have when we mention the Holy Spirit and His gifts of

power, along with the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of praying in other tongues.

I want to discuss being careful not to develop a morbid interest in super-spiritual occurrences. A cult is defined as a false religion, usually one that in some way refuses the Bible's parameters of the Trinity. They will most always base their belief on a strong leader figure and adhere to his teachings. This leader usually professes some type of new or different way to reach God other than through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Occultism might also have been at play with Simon in Acts 8, but occultism is different. Occultism is the belief in the supernatural, psychic ability of humans to harness these powers, either alone or through some type of god or spiritual entity. Ultimately, the god of all occult groups is satan, whether they believe so or not. This is why it is extremely important for believers to renounce and forsake all "works of darkness" (1 Corinthians 4:5; Ephesians 5:11). As we saw from Acts 8 with Simon the sorcerer, any desire other than the desire to follow Jesus and do things His way will result in ungodly ends.

I advise those who have functioned with the occult to receive water baptism and renounce all these works along with the attitudes and desires that mimic these forces, instead of putting on the mind of Christ (Romans 12:1-3). I likewise advise them to ask the Holy Spirit when they are not exhibiting the mind of Christ and instead mimicking our enemy. When Jesus reveals these things, then repentance can be made. In some cases, counseling with a pastor or other Spirit-filled counselor would be advised.

In speaking of the hallmarks of Holy Spirit-filled believers, one area in which I have not gone in depth about is that of sanctification. A hallmark of a Spirit-filled life is that sanctification is ongoing. There will always be evidence of the humility and nature of Jesus being "grown" within the believer's heart and soul. I have sadly seen people that spoke in tongues whom I deemed as not exhibiting Christ's nature. To be sure, we

all fail. We all come short of the glory of God. That means there are moments where we might need to repent on a daily basis. Reading the Bible, prayer and other forms of worship will always keep us moving forward in sanctification. No one has arrived. No pastor, no leader, no saint can say that they are sinless. We all should be sinning a whole lot less as we walk with Jesus in life, but we are not perfect until faith becomes total sight. Yet we should all be walking in a sacrificial way in an effort to follow the Holy Spirit's sanctification process for each of us.

Next month, Lord providing, we will review the Holy Spirit's gifts from the New Testament. But before I end this month, let me say this plainly: We are no longer working for sanctification or salvation. Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father. As a result, we receive His gift of salvation. As we remain in Christ Jesus— why would we leave Him— we are seated with Him in heavenly places (Ephesians 2: see especially verse 18). Belief in Christ and accepting His sacrifice as the payment for our sin starts the process; but, it is the Holy Spirit who comes to abide on the inside of us and enables us to receive His righteousness and thereby sanctifies us as we grow in Christ. There is now a place of rest as we function with the Holy Spirit.

John 3:34-36 says this: “For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he does not give the Spirit sparingly. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things under his authority. The one who believes in the Son has eternal life. The one who rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him” (NETBible®).

In this conversation that Jesus had with Nicodemus, our Lord uses several Jewish idioms that we could miss. When He says He does not give “the Spirit sparingly,” this is translated in most versions as “without measure.” It means: “The Holy Spirit rested on the prophets by measure. (*Leviticus Rabbah* 15:2). Jesus is contrasted to this. The Spirit rests upon him without measure.”¹ When it says that, “The Father loves the Son

¹ See the NETBible. < bible.org/netbible >

and has placed all things under his authority,” it is another idiom and means He “has given all things into his hand.”

This indwelling and reception of all the Spirit of God offers us gives us peace, rest, enablement and power to do. It truly is not I, but Christ who lives within me; and this life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20). In this environment, the Holy Spirit comes to reside and enable us in power to speak, see folks healed, saved and set free. If you have already asked Jesus to come into your heart, then why wait any longer to receive all the Lord has for you? If you have never asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, today is a perfect day to do so.

He is as close as a prayer: “Jesus, come into my heart. Forgive me of my sins. I repent. I believe that you died, you were buried and you rose again from the dead. I believe you are coming again. Until then, Lord, I receive your Holy Spirit to lead and guide me into all truth. Come and live with me and dwell in me as the Bible says. I confess Jesus as my Lord, my Savior and my very best friend. Amen.”