

PRAYER FOUNDATIONS

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Last month we looked at some foundational realities concerning prayer. We looked at the need for a foundational understanding within the Bible of grace. Even the feature article looked at grace as a sustainer of our faith. We saw that when we don't have these foundations and how they relate to where we live, we miss the power of prayer. The first one is to know Jesus. The second is to know that because of His grace toward us once we are saved, we come into a relationship that is different and special. We also saw that in America that relationship translated to covenant. We saw how dangerous it is to become a pastor or other leader and not understand or know these foundational realities.

Once you have asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior, a great exchange takes place and you are now set free. Your sins, past, present and future have been paid for. Now, all we are to do is get to know Jesus and do as He asks. Our forebears here in America did this, and as a result began a nation whose laws would reflect this relationship in a covenant. The covenant we have with Jesus is personal. It becomes community based inside the church. The churches back then had governmental bylaws they followed. It became an ebb and flow for their towns and states to keep similar bylaws or laws that reflected their church governmental documents. Over the centuries, these eventually were codified in The Declaration of Independence, The US Constitution and our Bill of Rights.

Keeping our individual covenant relationship with Jesus is easy. If you are married, how do you keep your marriage covenant? Well, you communicate daily, don't you? Whether you are in a family with relatives or are married, you keep your relationships alive by communication. This is how it is with Jesus. This is simple as well. You read your Bible daily to know His words and then you talk with Jesus. Jesus has done something wonderful by sending a Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to live on the inside of you. In this way, your daily communication is personal and private.

We see as well that there are gifts associated with the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 12-14. Once you came to know Jesus, your pastor or church encouraged you to seek water baptism. Either before water baptism or after it, there is another baptism the Bible shows us. It is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. This is a language of communication that the human mind cannot conjure up. We cannot take credit for it. We cannot say it is from us or we initiated it or it's because we're so good, great or smart. All we must do is release our tongue into the able enablement of the Holy Spirit and we receive our personal prayer language or personal line of communication with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Before we go into prayer, I usually go into a basic teaching on the Trinity and talk about grace and how much God loves us. It's very clear from the New Testament that losing our first love is all important to an understanding of grace. When we know that

it is God who loves us first before we ever could love Him (1 John 4:19), we then realize that He drew us into love. That produced a faith in us, so that when we believed and confessed our need and sins, He then saved and delivered us. Wow! All this from love. So it is crucial to have an understanding of the Holy Spirit. It is crucial for us to realize that we don't have to work or be perfect in our love. That the important thing is we realize it is He who loved us and defines love, thus enabling the grace necessary for us to love Him. We can't even love Him perfectly, but God loves us and draws us into the relationship (Romans 2:4).

If our relationship starts with God and ends with God, it stands to reason that we can't even understand any of it without Him. So let's look at what Jesus said about the Holy Spirit. We know the Holy Spirit is God. He is the third person of the Trinity. Let's read Jesus' words recorded in John 14. As you start reading from the beginning of the chapter, you will come to a place Jesus starts talking about prayer. He says if you ask anything in Jesus' name, He will do it (12). He talks about a relationship of love, and that because of love, we keep His commandments. He then says He will ask the Father to give us another Comforter that will stay with us our entire lives. He calls Him the Spirit of Truth. He tells us that He abides in us, dwelling with us. This is the third person of the Trinity. Reading the three chapters of John 14-16, will give you an education on the Holy Spirit that is crucial for your walk in Christ.

We are told that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things and help us remember those things Jesus has said. We are told that all we

need to do is remain in Christ. This is easier when you understand grace. That's why we went into grace last month. Because of His grace, we move in faith and the amazing ability to believe what it is Jesus has told us. From this portion of scripture, we learn that it is the Holy Spirit on the inside of us that keeps us. The whole fifteenth chapter lets us know that abiding in Christ is easy because all we are doing is breathing and moving, like taking a breath. We don't think about it, we just know we are breathing.

Most of the theology I was taught on these pages, I was taught in Bible college. It is classic non-denominational charismatic or Pentecostal in its approach. Yet there is so much a college course on theology cannot teach you, especially when it comes to God and His gifts to His people. Most college courses will tell you that you are enabled by the Holy Spirit through a gift of faith to believe or perform a miracle or sign and wonder. Almost all college courses will teach that it is for the confirmation of the gospel of Jesus Christ— which you are preaching— that you move in a sign and a wonder. This is classic Bible theology.

But the reality I shared with you last month was that it is God's love (Romans 2:4) which displays grace and draws you. The word in the KJV is kindness. It should be translated as loving kindness that draws us. We learned last month that grace is a gift (Ephesians 2:4-8), and that gift gives us an enabling faith that saves. It is a gift in and of itself, and it doesn't come from us whatsoever.

In likewise fashion, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues is a gift; yet, it is as natural in spiritual life and growth as it is for a child to learn to walk after he crawls. It is our prayer language. He teaches and guides us. He comforts us and reveals aspects of Jesus that will help us in our own walk as well as in the lives of those we meet and minister to. If Jesus had not left, the Holy Spirit would not have come to Earth to reside. He lives on the inside of us who have been saved and set free by Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

For now, let's read 1 Corinthians 12-14; all three chapters. Let's clear up another confusion as you read. This baptism is different from water baptism (though, both can happen at the same time). It is different from the gift of tongues and interpretation seen in 1 Corinthians 12. While the gifts seen in 1 Corinthians are given at specific moments in time to minister to the corporate body of Christ, the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues is your personal, private prayer language to speak what God wishes for you to pray. Read the differences Paul enunciates in 1 Corinthians 14.

In Luke 24:49, Jesus instructs us concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. He said *power* would come upon them as a fulfillment of a promise the Father made. We see He continued to talk about this promise in Acts 1:5, 8. In Acts 2:1-21, the first recorded infilling of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues takes place. There are church groups that say that the

baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues is from the devil.

Where did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would come from (John 14:15, 26; Luke 11:11)? In whose name would the Spirit come in; and would He help or hinder (John 16:7)? If this baptism with the Holy Spirit comes from heaven and in Jesus' name; and that He helps and not hinders the church, then He is not from the devil.

We also see that a dramatic change for the better happened to the disciples in preaching the word and witnessing (Acts 2:1-4). In Acts 2:14-36, according to scripture, Peter quotes Old Testament prophets in explaining this occurrence. This added thousands to the church in one day. I would say that not only does this NOT come from the devil, but that we could use *more* churches today that sought the Lord in this area (Acts 2:37-47).

There are tremendous events recorded in the lives of the believers and disciples with signs, wonders, and by adding many to the churches: Acts 4:1-4; Acts 5:12, 14, 16, 19, 41; Acts 8:4-8, 36-40; Acts 9:32-42; Acts 13:4-12; Acts 16:22-34; Acts 19:11-20; Acts 28:7-10. As you read these events, you can see that they confirmed the word of God and won many to Jesus.

There are those that say miracles and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not for today. Over the years, I have covered this in many class discussions. Briefly stated, there is no amount of interpretation of the scriptures that show this. If the Spirit and His miracle working power was needed in the early church, He

and His gifts are needed now, more than ever. One of the most compelling arguments is seen in one word: unity or, as is interpreted in many translations, one accord. In other words, the believers were in one accord or agreement. Please read Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24-32; 5:12. When we are unified as they were then, we could see the entire world saved!

There is no logical or scriptural argument that can be made that we should be fractured or in disbelief in many circles to God's miracle working power. There is no logical or scriptural argument that we should not see more saved and delivered as we preach the Gospel; and, the Holy Spirit confirms that word with signs and wonders!

If you have been in my classes, you have heard me retell a story concerning the author C.S.Lewis. Someone back in the 1940s asked him whether he thought the 'new' movement of God that was taking place was from God or just exuberant human imagination. This new movement concerned the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. It has been reported that Lewis asked the questioner, "Does this gift embarrass human pride and the flesh?" The answer from the individual was, "Yes." Lewis' next question to the responder was, "Does this gift make a mockery of human intelligence?" The answer again, by the individual was, "Yes." Lewis is reported to have responded, "Well then, it must be from the Holy Spirit!"

Whether a true account, I cannot say, except my first Pastor—who was a young believer during that timeframe—remembered

the story and retold it quite often. The moral of this story is that we think we are so smart and have God figured out. What hubris and what audacity to think that God would actually demand an act of faith to give over an aspect of our being to Him to pray and be built up! No one seems to have a problem when we fast. We give over an aspect of our sustenance in worship to Him when we do. Next month we will look at prayer as a form of worship. For now though, since I can find no Scripture that says this gift or any other of God's gifts died with the early church, then why wouldn't I want to function as the Holy Spirit directs?

For now, let's look at over fifty reasons why you should pray in tongues. Read the following Scriptures: Luke 11:11-13; Acts 1; Luke 6:38; Mark 10:43, 44; John 14-15, and lastly, John 14:12.

Power to receive:

1. Patience
2. Strength to do
3. Strength to abstain

Power to give:

4. Conviction to overcome
5. Ability to give
6. Comfort
7. Ability to learn
8. Ability to receive teachableness
9. Power to serve
10. Power to receive knowledge

The Spirit is Life:

11. Power to give Jesus' life ministry

Life needs Water:

12. Power to heal the sick (Matthew 8:16)
Water and Baptism
13. Power to preach (Matthew 7:28, 29)
Hands and Giving
14. Power to teach
Gift and Baptism
15. Power to cast out demons (Luke 11:20)
16. Power to bless (Mark 10:13, 16, see Abraham)
17. Power for cleansing (Ephesians 5:26)
18. Lets you know you are part of the church (see below)
19. Lets you know you are part of God (Ephesians 4:1-6)
20. You are receiving God Himself (Spirit is God)
21. Display the promise of permanent residence with God (Acts 2:33-36)
22. Allows the flow of the permanent presence of God and His living water within (John 4:10)
23. Allows you to be able to partake or gives us the ability to receive God within us on a regular basis
24. It is the mark of belonging to God's covenant people
25. Gives you the ability to impart the same gift of the Holy Spirit baptism to others (Acts 8:18-20)
26. Shows sacrifice of God just like in communion
27. Shows example to unbelievers of the infilling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14)
28. Gives you a refreshing drink when you need it (1 Corinthians 12:13)
29. Shows forth the seal of God (Ephesians 1:13)
30. Shows the downpayment or earnest of God
31. Spirit uses it (Ephesians 1:14)
32. Enables us to pray and build up ourselves (1 Corinthians 14)

33. Enables us to unknowingly pray for God's will for others
34. Enables us to unknowingly pray for circumstances
35. It is a language devils do not understand so it bypasses enemy infiltration
36. It delivers us from enemies within
37. Opens doors we cannot see (Revelation 1:10; 4:1-2)
38. It is true prosperity (Proverbs 11:24-45)
39. Helps us to function in signs and wonders
40. Helps us to understand the love of God (1 Corinthians 12-13)
41. Builds faith as you speak and see God in action
42. Moves God in ways we do not understand (see Genesis 1; Luke 2 where God moved with the Spirit and creative miracles happen)
43. Bypasses human intellect thereby humbling us
44. Embarrasses human pride thereby humbling us
45. Gives us hope because it is a symbol of the promise
46. Gives us impartation to worship and sacrifice
47. Gives us impartation to fast
48. Gives us impartation to praise
49. Helps you to see into the spirit realm (In Acts after Paul was filled with the Spirit in healing he was no longer blind: Acts 9:17)
50. Helps you to discern people whether they are in Christ or not (1 John 4:2-3)
51. Helps you to discern the times and the seasons (1 Chronicles 12:32)
52. Helps you to forgive because you have been forgiven; redemption is a sign of forgiveness
53. Helps your infirmities to pray (Romans 8:26)

This last of the fifty plus— and there are more— is very interesting and sums up quite a bit. The word used here for *intercedes*, in the Greek, 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.

There are different manifestations, but the same spirit. Many become confused because we all receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation 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 being, 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. The *He* referred to in this passage is the Holy Spirit. My own personal experience was that I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit when I came up out of the water!

Simon, the sorcerer would not have asked for the same ability as the apostles had, 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 list, our prayer language is quite amazing. But 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 be praying according to the Father's will (Romans 8:26, 27).

We will get into more detail in a bit, but we must be 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 be at play, but occultism is different. Occultism is the belief in the supernatural, psychic power 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 occult works along with the attitudes and desires that mimic these forces. When the newly saved don’t learn what it means to put on the mind of Christ, they will almost always fall back on to their old mindset practices (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.

While we spoke of hallmarks of Holy Spirit-filled believers, one area in which we have not gone into depth in this study 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 and need to go to Jesus— sometimes on a daily basis— and ask Him why we are struggling with these behaviors.

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 individually. It's not about works, but about a relationship with the Holy Spirit, who will always bring you closer in your relationship with Jesus.

Doing what the Spirit shows you always brings you closer. Your everyday experience with God will grow. No one is perfect, but even when we fail, Jesus will always give you a learning lesson, bringing us into a peace-filled walk. You can't help but realize how much Jesus loves us. It makes us want to love Jesus even more.

I hope this short study has encouraged you in seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues if you have never received this part of your salvation experience. I hope it has encouraged those of you who have, to pray in tongues more than you already do.

If you have never asked Jesus to come into your heart, you can right now. This is what Paul said as he was writing to the Roman Christians: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is

made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed” (Romans 10:9-11).

Take the Bible to heart. If you believe that Jesus died, was buried and God raised Him from the dead, confess this and ask Jesus to come into your heart. You can give our ministry a shout out to confess this, or go to a church in your locality or a believer whom you know. This is as simple as a prayer.