

## Talk 1: God's Love

- I. God is not beyond our contact, but someone who loves us and wants to be in a personal relationship with us, and who wants to give us a better life.
  - A. Our misconceptions of Christianity can be an obstacle to our finding this better life through Christ:
    1. Christianity as a restrictive morality (Christianity as rules to keep so we can go to heaven);
    2. Christianity only as loving your neighbor (“as long as I live a good life it doesn’t matter what I believe”);
    3. God as someone whom we cannot contact, who does not do anything that we can experience or know to be his work.
  - B. The truth is:
    1. God loves us;
    2. He wants to make contact with us and have a personal relationship with us
    3. He wants to give us a new and better life;
    4. For this reason, he sent his only Son Jesus (John 14:15-27)
  - C. Personal testimony...
  - D. We can experience a better life as a result of authentic Christianity:
    1. The knowledge of the power to live the Christian life;
    2. Happiness, peace and joy; better personal relationships; healing;
    3. Genuine community
- II. In the Life in the Spirit Seminars, you can take steps which will allow Jesus Christ to establish or restore or deepen a relationship with you.
  - A. Everyone can experience change:
    1. Those who have not been Christians or have been nominal or fallen-away Christians: during this seminar Jesus will come into your life in a new way so that you will know that you can find or recover a genuine relationship with him (be baptized in the Spirit and experience spiritual gifts).
    2. Those who have been trying to live a Christian life in some way but who have found it difficult or who have not experienced much contact with God: During this seminar, Jesus will give you an experiential contact with him so that you will know that you know him, and he will give you a new power to live

the Christian life (he will baptize you in the Spirit, let you experience spiritual gifts).

3. For Christians who have already experienced a personal contact with Christ, during this seminar, Jesus will give you a new and fuller relationship with himself (prayer “in the Spirit”, spiritual gifts).
4. For those of you who are already baptized the Spirit, the Lord will teach you more during this time about what it means to be baptized in the Spirit and he will lead you into a deeper life in the Spirit.

A. But the Life in the Spirit Seminar is only the beginning:

1. To experience the better life Christ offers, you need to grow to maturity in your relationship with him.
2. In the next three weeks (sessions) we will help you to understand and take first steps
3. In the fifth week (session) we will pray with you to enter into the fullness of God’s life that He has for you
4. In the last two weeks (sessions) we will explain to you how to continue growing in the new life God has for you
5. After that, there are other opportunities and helps which will make it possible for you to grow in what you have begun here.

III. You can begin today to turn to the Lord

A. The Lord will reach out to you, but you must reach out to him.

“When you call to me and come to me, I will listen to you. When you seek me, you shall find me.” (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

B. Starting today:

1. Begin praying every day to the Lord (even if only a few minutes)
2. Meditate on God’s words (use the list of passages)
3. Read some of the recommended articles and books

## Talk 2: Our Need for Salvation

- I. There is something seriously wrong with the world (with society as a whole and individual lives) – something major is needed.
  - A. God made the world a place of peace and justice and happiness, a place in which he would reign. He still wants the world that way. (Isaiah 2:1-5)
  - B. But everyone agrees that there is something seriously wrong with the way the world is now (war, poverty, riots, racial conflict, abortion, greed, etc.)
  - C. It is more than just a number of individual problems – society as a whole, the system as a whole, has something wrong with it.
  - D. Individuals suffer from the situation and from lack of help, and they experience many problems (loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety, insecurities, lack of direction, meaninglessness, personal relationships characterized by fear, suspicion, mistrust, exploitation).
  - E. Something major is needed to correct the situation in the world.
  
- II. Since the cause of what is wrong with society is something bigger than man can handle on his own, men need God to find the new life they want.
  - A. Men make various efforts to improve the world:
    1. There are a variety of secular efforts, but they are not succeeding
      - Even the most educated men in our universities are having a hard time making a go of their own lives, work, and relationships
      - Even the most highly placed executives in our modern business corporations are having a hard time making a go of their lives, work, and relationships
    2. Religions which men have developed try to achieve a solution Buddhism, yoga, transcendental meditation, etc.
    3. Human government always holds promise but consistently falls short. God offers a new government in Jesus. (Isaiah 9:6, Psalm 2)
  - B. God tells us that:
    1. We are not just confronted with particular wrongs in society or ourselves, behind the particular things that are wrong there is something bigger than most men can handle. This is why there is evil in the world.

- The pervasive power of sin (Romans 3:9,23)
  - A kingdom, the dominion of darkness (Colossians 1:13)
  - A force in rebellion against God, at enmity with him (Ephesians 6:12)
  - Satan is behind it (I John 5:19-21)
  - We are not free, nor is society (people are in spiritual bondage, under oppression of evil) (Ephesians 2:1-3, Ephesians 6:12-18)
2. Man was created to need God to achieve true peace, justice, and truth:
- The spiritual realm is not an optional extra (John 15:5c)
  - Only in God's kingdom (under his rule) are these things possible (Isaiah 2:1-5, Isaiah 45:22)
  - Under God's rule, life can be changed now (Isaiah 48:17-18, Mark 1:14-15)
3. There is a choice before us: to live under the dominion of darkness or in the kingdom of God.
- III. God sent his son Jesus to break the hold of Satan and give us a new life through his death and resurrection. Jesus is the Lord and Savior – we need to be saved from sin, Satan, and a system impacted by them significantly.
- A. God sent his son to free us from darkness and Satan. Jesus is the Christ (the messiah, the one God sent) (Colossians 1:13, John 11:21-27, Matthew 16:3-17)
- B. Jesus died for our sins and rose to give us new life (Romans 4:25, Titus 3:3-7, Colossians 1:18-20)
- If he had not died, we would not have been freed from our sins (Isaiah 53:4-6, Hebrews 9:11-28)
  - He broke the hold of Satan (John 12:31, John 3:8)
  - Salvation is more than just going to heaven; it is a whole new way of life on earth as well (John 10:10b, John 4:14, I John 5:12)
- C. Jesus is Lord (God gave full power and authority to Jesus to bring freedom and new life to those who accept him) (Matthew 28:18, Philippians 2:5-11)
- D. Next week (session): we will discuss what the new life is and what a person can expect from being baptized in the Spirit.

## Talk 3: New Life in the Power of the Holy Spirit

- I. The Father wants all men and women to have new life and to have spiritual power. He sent his son Jesus into the world so that we could be given the source of new life and the power of the Holy Spirit.
  - A. Often the Christianity which we come in contact with has not been spiritually alive, but today God is renewing his Church by a fresh outpouring of his Holy Spirit, restoring power from heaven (Acts 2:17-18)
  - B. The Father sent his son into the world to bring us new life and spiritual power:
    1. Jesus is Lord; if we accept his lordship, we can experience a new freedom and a new life.
    2. In him all our sins can be forgiven (no matter what we have done), and every barrier between us and the Father can be taken away.
    3. After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit to bring us new life and power (Acts 1:1-5)
- II. When the Holy Spirit comes to someone, they become a changed person. (Acts 2 or Acts 19:1-7)
  - A. We come to know God by experience:
    - We come to know God as our Father who loves us and cares for us personally.
    - We experience God's love and presence in a new way
    - We experience God speaking in our heart, teaching us, guiding us
    - We come to know Jesus as our Lord
    - The Lordship of Jesus begins to be the basic principle for our way of life
  - B. We can pray in a new way:
    - Our prayer becomes more centered on God; less on ourselves
    - Our prayer is more often prayer of praise and thanksgiving
    - We discover that we can pray in tongues; the gift of tongues is:
      - a means of spiritual growth
      - prayer in the Spirit inspires within us a desire to praise God, to "worship in the Spirit" (John 4:23-24)
      - prayer in the Spirit inspires within us the ability to pray when we cannot pray adequately with our mind/words (Romans 8:26-27)
  - C. The Bible comes to life.

- D. The fruit of the Spirit develops within us (love, joy, peace, etc. – Galatians 5).
- E. We can receive the gifts of the Spirit to serve God (prophecy, healing, discernment of spirits, inspiration to speak – I Corinthians 12).
- F. We can discern the temptations of Satan more clearly, resisting him and sin more successfully.

### III. Full life in the Spirit begins when we are baptized in the Spirit.

- A. When we are baptized in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes to us in such a way that we can experience his presence and see it change us.

- For many of us, this will not be our first reception of the Holy Spirit, but the release of his power that already is within us.  
(John 20:22-23 vs. Acts 1:4-5,8)

- B. Different people see different changes happen to them as a result of being baptized in the Spirit.

1. Those who have not been Christians will be given a full working of the Spirit, those who have already experienced something of the Spirit's presence in their lives can receive all that is lacking. Everyone can experience a new presence and working of the Spirit.
2. Those who have been Christians will see that our years of Christian living have provided us with many resources that will be brought to life by the new presence of the Spirit in us.
3. No Christian should lack contact with God or be powerless as a Christian. Everyone, even beginners in the Christian life, can be baptized in the Spirit.

### IV. Baptism in the Spirit is only the beginning of a new life.

- A. With the help of committed Christians as our brothers and sisters, we can grow in spiritual maturity.
- B. We can develop a daily communication and friendship with Christ.
- C. We can experience a new peace and joy, see ourselves being healed, becoming loving people.
- D. We can develop better relationships.
- E. Next week (session) we will look more closely at how we enter into the new life God has for us.

Handout for Talk 3  
**What is Baptism in the Holy Spirit?**  
(Excerpts from **Baptized in the Spirit**, by Steve Clark)

**Baptism in the Spirit?**

“A simple definition... to be baptized in the Spirit means that we have a change in our relationship with God such that we can begin to experience in our lives all the things which God promised that the Holy Spirit would do for believers... There is another way we might want to talk about it...[Catholics] believe that the Holy Spirit is in them...through baptism, and through confirmation. But [some of them] do not experience in their lives all the things which God promised the Holy Spirit would do and which the early Christians experienced. If the Holy Spirit is in us, there must be some barrier or block to our experiencing his presence and working. Therefore, we could describe our being baptized in the Spirit as the release of the Spirit in us or as our being opened to the Spirit.”

**Not a conversion**

“Being baptized in the Spirit does not always involve having a deeper conversion. When I asked to be prayed with to be baptized in the Spirit, I came having tried to give my whole life to God for a number of years. I had been praying daily for some length of time each day, been reading the scriptures and spiritual books regularly, been spending most of my time working to bring others to Christ, been trying to pattern my life on Christ’s teaching, etc. When I was prayed with, something happened. I began to pray in a new way, experience the presence of God in a new way, experience the guidance and working of God in a new way...”

“Conversion is a turning towards Christ. It is something we do. After I was prayed for to be baptized in the Spirit, I was no more converted than I had been before. Baptism in the Spirit, however, is something *Christ* does (he is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit).”

**Not a realization**

“When people are baptized in the Spirit, they do realize the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in a new way. All of a sudden, whole areas of Christian truth are opened up to them...Such a realization of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a result of being baptized in the Spirit, but it is not the same thing...The fact that being baptized in the Holy Spirit is different from having a deeper realization of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is important when we come to the point of wanting to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. We cannot begin the life in the Spirit solely by realizing more who the Holy Spirit is. Realization on our part cannot produce a change in our relationship with him...We are only baptized in the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit begins to work in us in a new way.”

**Not a greater devotion to the Holy Spirit**

“What was said above is also true about the difference between being baptized in the Holy Spirit and being devoted to the Holy Spirit. Usually we are given a greater devotion to the Holy Spirit *as a result of* being baptized in the Holy Spirit, but the two are not the same thing...Being baptized in the Spirit comes when the Holy Spirit begins to do new things in us. And it does not come about through trying to be more devoted to the Holy Spirit, but by receiving the Spirit.”

**Not a sign of spiritual maturity or holiness**

“Being baptized in the Spirit is not a sign of spiritual maturity or holiness. Rather, it gives a person a relationship with the Holy Spirit which will allow him to grow in holiness more quickly and easily than he could do by himself...Spiritual growth takes time. Any process of maturing

takes time. Relationships need to grow. Changes in our pattern of living have to develop. If we are going to have a deep relationship with God, and if we are going to be able to live a life that is like the one Christ taught us about, we have to expect it to take time.”

“The work of the Spirit is given to us to make spiritual growth much easier, and it does...The Spirit of God [produces] a much deeper holiness in [us]...being baptized in the Spirit is not at all the same thing as spiritual perfection. A person who has been baptized in the Spirit still needs to go through a process of spiritual maturing...Being baptized in the Spirit only introduces a person to a new relationship with the Holy Spirit.”

“Spiritual maturity comes to us through a process of effort and dedication. We cannot have it without putting in time in faithful service of God, no matter how much we pray for it. The gift of the Spirit, on the other hand, comes to us through asking in faith. No amount of dedicated service can earn it. But we can have it once we realize he is offering it and ask for it... [This] also means that the years we have spent in serving the Lord before we have been baptized in the Spirit are not worthless.”

### **What about the gift of tongues?**

*“Prayer in tongues is a fruit of confident surrender to the Holy Spirit and brings with it new forms of prayer.”* (**Call to Holiness: Reflections on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal**, Bishop Paul Josef Cordes)

- Prayer in the spirit: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit is at prayer but my mind is unproductive.” (1Cor 14:14)
- By praying in tongues the person’s spirit is uplifted: “Whoever speaks in a tongue builds himself up...” (1Cor 14:4)

*“Such prayer, not being on the conceptual level of the intellect, is humble and simple. This is experienced when one no longer knows how to pray...Prayer in tongues is one of the ways in which the Holy Spirit aids in overcoming human limitations in prayer.”* *ibid.* Cordes

- “The Spirit too helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be expressed in speech” (Rom 8:26)

### **Helpful quotes from the early church fathers:**

*“See how he himself provides you with a way of singing. Do not search for words, as if you could find a lyric which would give God pleasure. Sing to him “with songs of joy.” This is singing well to God, just singing with songs of joy.*

*But how is this done? You must first understand that words cannot express the things that are sung by the heart. Take the case of people singing while harvesting in the fields or in the vineyards or when any other strenuous work is in progress. Although they begin by giving expression to their happiness in sung words, yet shortly there is a change. As if so happy that words can no longer express what they feel, they discard the restricting syllables. They burst out into a simple sound of joy, of jubilation. Such a cry of joy is a sound signifying that the heart is bringing to birth what it cannot utter in words.*

*Now, who is more worthy of such a cry of jubilation than God himself, whom all words fail to describe? If words will not serve, and yet you must not remain silent, what else can you do but*

*cry out for joy? Your heart must rejoice beyond words, soaring into an immensity of gladness, unrestrained by syllabic bonds. Sing to him with songs of joy.”* (Sing to God with Songs of Joy - Augustine of Hippo, Ps. 32, sermon 1,7-8: CCL 38, 253-254)

*“The best known Father of his time in the East, John Chrysostom, the bishop of Constantinople, encouraged his people to sing without words. He says: ‘It is permitted to sing psalms without words, so long as the mind resounds within. For we do not sing for men, but for God who can hear our hearts and penetrate into the secrets of our soul.’”* (Music in Ancient Israel, Alfred Sendry, p201)

**(more from Steve Clark, Baptized in the Spirit)**

“Normally when a person is baptized in the Spirit he has a definite experience. Commonly this experience is connected with the gift of tongues. We saw above that when the Holy Spirit came upon people in the Acts of the Apostles, his coming was something which they could experience. But more than this, their experience was not something hidden inside themselves. It was obvious to others as well. Onlookers could see that they were experiencing the Holy Spirit. It was manifest.

“What could people see when the early Christians were baptized in the Spirit, then? They could see that as the Holy Spirit came upon these Christians, they began to pray inspired prayers of praise, sometimes in words they did not understand, sometimes in their own language. The first manifestation of the presence of the Spirit in them was an inspired prayer of praise. They were lifted up in the Spirit to praise the Lord because they were having a direct experience of his presence and his glory for the first time...That is why the gift of tongues is so important. It is a new gift of prayer, a gift of praise...It allows us to yield to the Holy Spirit and respond to the presence of the Spirit in a way which we could not before. It is therefore a kind of gateway to the full life of the Spirit.

“A person has been baptized in the Spirit when he can experience the Spirit living in him and working through him...But even if he did not experience much of anything when he was prayed with..., but later notices changes and finds himself living the life of the Spirit as a result of being prayed with, we can tell he was baptized in the Spirit.”

## Talk 4: Receiving the New Life

- I. Our relationship with Jesus is the basis of our new life
  - A. We need to agree to be his disciples in an adult sort of way – fully knowing our situation and fully understanding how to enter into a mature personal commitment to him to be his disciple.
  - B. Faith in Jesus has to be turned into a committed relationship with a living person who can come into our lives in a new way as adults.
    - John 14:23 “...If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our *home* with him.” This is personal relationship language!
    - Revelation 3:19-20 “I stand at the door (of our heart or life) and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.”
  - C. We can talk about this kind of relationship as the decision to ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life.
    - I Peter 3:15 “...in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord.”
    - Philippians 3:7-10 St. Paul verbalizes this way of life as he experienced it: “...I count everything as loss because of the surpassing **worth of knowing *Christ Jesus my Lord.***”
- II. In order to receive the new life God is offering us, we must turn away from those things that block our relationship with God and accept Jesus as our Lord
  - A. We need a change of direction, a reorientation of our lives
    1. Away from those things that block our relationship with God and give Satan a hold on us
    2. Towards God and obedience
      - Only when we follow Him can He lead us to a new life
      - God does not want the obedience of a slave (who obeys out of fear of punishment) or of an employee (who obeys for financial reward); He desires the obedience of a son who obeys out of love and respect for his father
    3. We must accept Jesus as our Lord (see Circle Diagram)
    4. The word “repentance” refers to this change in direction

B. Repentance involves:

1. Honesty: The admission that there are things in our lives that are wrong and need changing.
2. Humility: The willingness to change and the awareness that we need God's help.
3. Renunciation: Turning away from wrongdoing and deciding not to do it again.
4. Forgiveness: Asking (and receiving) God's forgiveness for what we have done wrong.

C. We must turn away from all that is opposed to God's way of life for us. For example, we must turn away from non-Christian religions, spiritualism, witchcraft, occultism, sexual intercourse outside of marriage, adultery, homosexual acts, murder, robbery, shoplifting, cheating (business deals, taxes, on exams), lying, slander, drunkenness (not drinking), getting "stoned" on drugs, etc.

III. In order to receive the new life God is offering us, we must ask Him for it in faith, expecting to receive it because God wants us to have it and He promised He would give it to us

A. Faith is relying on what God has said (Matthew 14:22-33)

1. We know that everything God says is true because He knows everything and does not lie
  - Our Christian lives are based on facts; we put our faith in the facts and our feelings will eventually follow
  - We deal with doubt by looking at the facts
2. When we see the fact that God promised us something, we can expect that it will happen to us
  - We need more than doctrinal belief alone; we need to claim the promises of God

B. We can expect God to baptize us in the Spirit:

1. Because He told us that He wants it for us (Luke 11:9-13), and because He loves us and wants us to be united with Him through the Holy Spirit
2. We can be baptized in the Holy Spirit because of what Jesus did for us, not because we can earn it or deserve it

IV. Next week (or session) you will be able to pray with others to be baptized in the Spirit. When you do, you will be baptized in the Spirit as God has promised

A. During the prayer session we can ask for the full life God offers us by:

- Calling upon the Father in prayer and claiming Christ's promise to give us the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13)
- At the same time, members of the community will lay hands on you and pray for you, asking the Father to fully release the Spirit in you

B. What we can expect to happen:

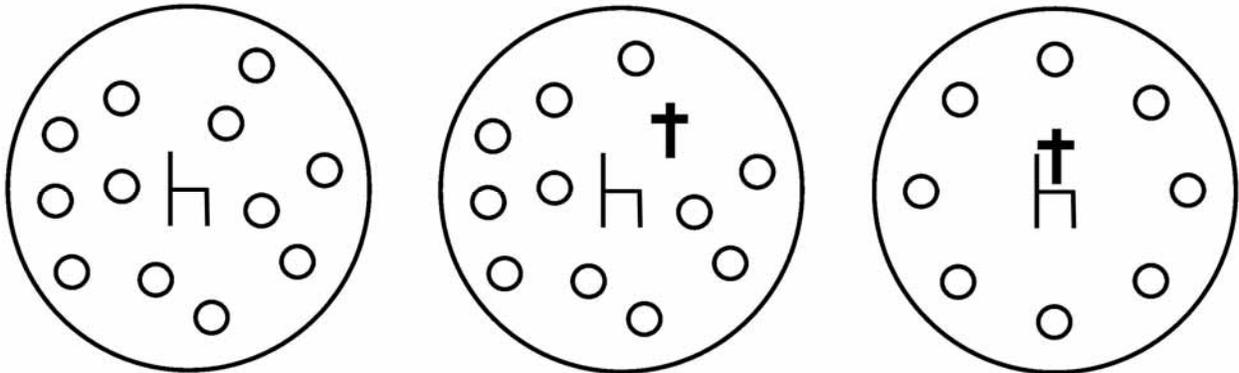
1. What happened at the first Pentecost: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:4)
  - Something happened: They were filled with the Holy Spirit
  - All were filled with the Spirit, not just some
  - They themselves did something: they began to praise God and speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance
  - This pattern of praise, tongues, and prophetic utterances was the repeated experience in other recorded instances when the power of the Holy Spirit came into people in the book of Acts (Acts 8:14-17, 9:17-19, 10:44-48, 19:1-7)
2. We can expect God to touch us personally with the power of His Spirit
3. Individual experience varies. Commonly people experience the presence of God in a new way, have a sense of peace and joy, speak in tongues, and prophecy

C. Obstacles to receiving God's gifts include:

1. Feelings of unworthiness
2. Fear of making a fool of oneself
3. Fear of having our personalities taken over
4. Doubt, temptation by Satan to not believe or to reject God's gifts
5. Pride
6. Thinking that we do not need God's gifts
7. Fear of what other people may think

## Handout for Talk 4 The Circle Diagram

Accepting Christ into your life is more than just believing that Jesus is God and that he died for us. It means more than just doing good works and following his (moral) teaching. It means entering into a personal relationship with Christ in which we receive his love and give our life to him.



Each circle represents a person's life. The center of the circles represents the center of the life—the driver's seat, the point from which the life is controlled, around which the life centers. Whoever or whatever is seated in the center is the person or thing that controls the person's life. In most people's lives it is the self or ego that is the center. Sometimes it is another person, or drugs, or even some cause. There are many interests in each life—school, family, work, art, music, etc. (the other circles.) Christ may be one of the interests in this man's life (the cross inside the circle), or he may be entirely outside of the life as is the case with someone who's never heard of him or seriously considered him. A person like this does not experience God's presence and love. He experiences a lack of goal and power, a lack of real peace and joy. If he considers himself a Christian, he finds his Christianity empty and meaningless.

To accept Jesus Christ into your life means to allow him to take the center. It involves surrendering your life to him. When we do this, we can come to know him personally. *"But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God."* (John 1:12)

Handout for Talk 4  
**Spiritual Gifts in the New Testament**

**Charisma/charismata: generally denotes an abiding empowerment for a specific place of service in the body (e.g. member of evangelism team)**

Romans 1:11: I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong - that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

Romans 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

prophesying			
encouraging			
(giving aid)			
showing mercy			

1 Corinthians 1:7 You do not lack any spiritual gift

1 Corinthians 7:7 Each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift (singleness), another has that (marriage)

1 Corinthians 12:4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

word of wisdom			
gifts of healing			
discernment of spirits			

1 Corinthians 12:28	apostles			
	workers of miracles			
	gifts of administration			

1 Corinthians 12:31 Eagerly desire the greater gifts

2 Corinthians 1:11 Many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many

1 Timothy 4:14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

2 Timothy 1:6 Fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

speaking serving  
**pneuma/pneumatika: Generally denotes an empowering for service in a specific situation (e.g. sharing the gospel with a co-worker)**

Romans 1:11 That I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong

1 Corinthians 12:1 Now about spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially... prophecy.

prophecy knowledge speaking in tongues word of instruction revelation

1 Corinthians 14:12 Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts ... excel in gifts that build up the church.

speaking in tongues interpretation of tongues pray with the Spirit  
pray with the mind sing with the Spirit sing with the mind

1 Corinthians 14:32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets

**doma: gift; used to emphasize more the concrete character of the gift than its beneficent nature**

Matthew 7:11 How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Ephesians 4:8 When he (Jesus) ascended in high... and gave gifts to men... to prepare God's people for works of service, that the body of Christ may be built up

apostles prophets evangelists  
pastors teachers

These lists are not an exhaustive list of spiritual gifts. For example, there is no explicit reference to gifts for children's ministries, youth ministry, worship, music ministry, etc.

We are all exhorted to eagerly desire the empowerment of the Spirit (pneumatika) in our lives and service (1 Corinthians 14:1). We are especially encouraged to seek those pneumatika which are most useful in serving and building up the body.

However, God determines our abiding gifting (charismata) for our place of service (1 Corinthians 12:11). Though we may differ in our charismata and place of service, we are all valuable and necessary contributors to the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Our gifting differs by degree and scope. As in the parable of the talents, what matters to God is our faithfulness in using the gifts He has given us (Matthew 25:14-30).

## Talk 5: Life in the Spirit Prayer Session

### I. Introductory Explanation

- A. We are here to claim Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13)
- B. Explanation of the prayer session
  - Prayer of commitment (or recommitment) to Jesus Christ
  - General prayer of deliverance (rebuke the devil, claim Christ's authority)
  - How we will pray with each person to be baptized in the Holy Spirit
- C. The Lord is the One Who baptizes in the Holy Spirit
  - We will lay hands on you and pray with you
  - You should ask the Lord to give you what He has promised, and expect Him to fulfil His promise!
- D. Different things will happen to different people
  - Don't seek a particular kind of experience
  - Just turn to the Lord and receive a new life in the Spirit (and whatever experience the Lord has for you)

### II. How to yield to the gift of tongues

- A. The gift of tongues is for everyone who is baptized in the Spirit
- B. Everyone should want the gift of tongues, because it is a gift of God
- C. Do not expect the Holy Spirit to force you to speak in tongues; you need to yield to tongues through faith.
- D. "They spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4)
  - We speak, the Holy Spirit forms the speech into tongues
  - Example of Holy Spirit inspiring us to write a letter
- E. After you ask to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and for the gift of tongues, yield to it
  - Begin by speaking out (easier to steer a car that is moving)
  - Don't worry about what it sounds like, don't give in to doubt
  - Trust that the Holy Spirit is forming our speech as He promises
  - Don't focus on the sounds; focus on worshipping Jesus

### III. Prayer of commitment (or recommitment) to Christ

Do you renounce Satan and all wrongdoing?

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?

Do you believe that Jesus died to free us from our sins, and that He rose from the dead to bring us new life?

Will you follow Jesus as your Lord?

Lord, Jesus Christ, I want to belong to you. I want to be freed from the dominion of darkness and the rule of Satan, and I want to enter into your kingdom and be part of your people.

I turn away from all wrongdoing, and from this day forward I will avoid everything that leads me into wrongdoing. I ask you to forgive me for all the sins that I have committed.

I offer my life to you and promise to obey you as my Lord.

I ask you to baptize me in the Holy Spirit and to give me the gift of tongues so that I might worship You in a new way.

#### IV. Prayer to be baptized in the Holy Spirit

We will pray for each person individually. Please continue in a spirit of worship and prayer until everyone has been prayed with

#### V. Closing Exhortation

##### A. Different people have different experiences

- What we may or may not have felt is not important
- Look for the fruit of baptism in the Spirit (e.g. new desire to pray, read Scripture)
- If you didn't speak in tongues tonight, don't worry about it. Expect to receive (yield to) the gift soon
- In your prayer this coming week, give plenty of time to praise and thanksgiving (aloud if possible). Often people open up to the gift of tongues while praying at home (or in a prayer meeting)

##### B. Be aware that Satan will tempt you to doubt

- Our faith is not in what we experienced, but in Christ's promise to give the fullness of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts to all who believe and ask

##### C. Do not expect that all your problems will go away at once, though many will

- The Holy Spirit will make a big change in your life
- Some changes will take place over time – as we learn how to grow in the Lord, grow as disciples, grow in the life in the Holy Spirit

##### D. Be faithful to a regular time of prayer and to regular participation in the meetings of your local community or outreach

## Talk 6: Christian Growth 1

- I. In order to grow in the life in the Spirit, we need to make use of the Lord's means of growth.
  - A. Our Goal is a life in the Spirit; being baptized in the Spirit is only the beginning of that life (analogy of a wedding)
  - B. Not everyone who is baptized in the Spirit goes on to live a life in the Spirit (Luke 8:4-15)
  - C. The basic means of growth that the Lord has provided for us are prayer, scripture & study, community, and service. We will discuss three spokes of the growth wheel in this talk and community next week (session).



- II. We should spend time with the Lord in personal prayer every day.
  - A. Our commitment to Christ is a decision to grow in a personal relationship with Him.
    - 1. Personal relationships can't grow without two people spending time together.
    - 2. The Lord will speak directly to our needs in personal prayer in a way that He won't in other contexts.

B. We need to make a commitment to daily personal prayer.

1. Recognize that we need discipline and perseverance.
2. Some practical help:
  - Decide on a definite time each day
  - Find a place where you will not be interrupted or inhibited (Matthew 6:6)

C. Our prayer may include:

1. **A**doration
2. **C**onfession
3. **T**hanksgiving
4. **S**upplication

III. We should be reading the Bible on a daily basis

A. Reading the Word of God helps us to know the Lord better (see Psalm 119)

1. It tells us what God is like.
2. It is the source of our faith (Romans 10:17).
3. It instructs us in how we should live.

B. We can benefit from Christian books and audio talks (e.g. testimonies of other Christians, scriptural studies, etc.)

1. We can benefit from the experiences and studies of other Christians.
2. This cannot become a substitute for reading the Bible.

IV. The Christian life is one of service: caring for and meeting the needs of others.

A. Serving others is a part of loving - part of the character of Christ (Philippians 2:5-7)

B. One main form of service is telling others about the new life we have found.

1. Every one of us is called to be a witness to the new life God has given us (Acts 1:8)
  - A witness only testifies to what he has seen or heard
  - We are all called to testify to what we have “seen and heard” (1 John 1:1-3)
2. With our family and close friends we should begin by showing them the kind of life that they can experience as love.
3. As they seem open, we should then share with them about the Lord, and about what He has done in our live.

## Talk 7: Christian Community



- I. In order to follow the Lord we need to be a part of a Christian community (of some sort).
  - A. We need to come together regularly with other Christians in order to grow in our new life.
    1. Support and encouragement
    2. Teaching and counsel
    3. Spiritual gifts (including the charismatic gifts)
  - B. Christian community is not an optional extra; it is essential to living a full Christian life.
    1. Because we are Christians, we are related to one another in a new way - as brothers and sisters.
      - Mark 3:35
    2. Our new relationships with one another are to be characterized by love and unity.
      - Galatians 5:13
      - Psalm 133:1

- John 13:34-35
- John 17:20-21

2. The first Christians understood and lived out their new relationship with one another

- Acts 2:41-47
- Acts 4:32-35

C. Modern day church/parish life is normally not enough

1. Local church life provides us important support for our Christian lives (e.g. communal worship, Scripture, teaching, sacraments).
2. Modern church life does not normally provide us opportunities to exercise or grow in charismatic worship and spiritual gifts
3. Modern church life does not normally foster the kind of committed personal relationships that we see in the early church community
4. The vast majority of priests, pastors, and ministers do not have the time to work with and form members of their churches to become mature disciples
5. If we are to live the new life God has for us, most of us will need a Christian community (of some sort) in addition to our local church. We need a place where we can:
  - Worship expressively
  - Exercise the charismatic gifts
  - Pray and sing in tongues
  - Hear prophecy
  - Give and receive words of wisdom, knowledge, and discernment
  - Regularly pray for healing, receive prayer for healing
  - Be instructed in learning how to grow into mature adult disciples
5. Christian community is not in opposition to our local churches. It is an addition to our local church life.
  - The Lord does not want us to leave our church, but to become better members of it.#
  - The Lord wants us to use the gifts, training and teaching we receive in community to serve in, renew, and strengthen our churches#

II. Three definitions of Christian Community

A. Christian Community is “right relationships of brotherly/sisterly love”

1. We live our lives together - not residentially, but in a common way. We seek to love and care for each other in daily, practical ways, much like an extended family. We make a significant investment in our relationships as brothers and sisters.

2. We support each other in our God-given commitments (e.g. family, work, church, Christian service/mission).
3. We pursue unity of all Christians, the unity for which our Savior prayed as He went to the cross for our salvation (John 17). While we are not in a position to resolve inter-church disagreements, we can love one another and share our Christian lives together “face to face” as a witness to the unity we already have in Christ.

B. Christian Community is “body life”

1. 1 Corinthians 12:12-16 We want to be together, to hear the Lord together and to work together in a common mission to evangelize all people and to strengthen and renew the whole church.
2. Ephesians 4:25 We strive to live and learn what it means to be “members one of another.” We seek to weave our lives together in such a way that we are interdependent (vs. dependent or independent), much like the members of the human body.

C. Christian Community is “a real life experience of the Kingdom of God, the government of Jesus.” Isaiah 9:6 “to us a child is born...the government will be on his shoulders.”

1. We strive to live under Jesus’ Lordship (another word for government) in our personal and corporate life. This is an area where we have considerable ecumenical agreement: daily prayer and scripture, service, morality, relationships, speech, marriage, family life, raising children, generosity, etc.
2. Matthew 6:33 The pursuit of righteousness and dedication to God’s standards is very challenging in the modern world so we need each other for support, encouragement and accountability.
3. Jesus called his government (kingdom) the “pearl of great price” (Matthew 13:45). Because we have a Covenant commitment we are committed to each other no matter the cost. This Covenant is not necessarily permanent but it is significant and requires considerable time and relational energy.

IV. The next step (explanation of how to become a part of the local community or outreach)

What follows are several articles on being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Two from a Roman Catholic view, one from a Reformed Protestant view, one from and Evangelical protestant view, and one from an orthodox Christian view. These articles are especially helpful for the third and fourth sessions of the Life in the Spirit Seminar.

## **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** by Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFMcap. A Roman Catholic View

*Fr. Cantalamessa is the preacher to the Papal Household. For the last 26 years he has preached for Pope John Paul II on Fridays during Advent and Lent. He leads numerous formation sessions and retreats throughout the world. Fr. Cantalamessa is a prophetic voice speaking to many people throughout the world. He has a deep passion for Christian unity.*

### **SUMMARY**

*The Baptism in the Spirit is not a sacrament, but it is related to several sacraments. The Baptism in the Spirit makes real and in a way renews Christian initiation. At the beginning of the Church, Baptism was administered to adults who converted from paganism and who, made on the occasion of Baptism, an act of faith and a free and mature choice. Today it is substituted instead by intermediary parents or godparents. In this situation, rarely, or never, does the baptized person ever reach the stage of proclaiming in the Holy Spirit "Jesus is Lord". And until one reaches this point, everything else in the Christian life remains out of focus and immature. Miracles no longer happen and we experience what Jesus did in Nazareth: "Jesus could not perform many miracles because of their lack of faith" (Mt. 13.58). The Baptism in the Spirit effectiveness in reactivating baptism consists in this: finally man contributes his part - namely, he makes a choice of faith, prepared in repentance that allows the work of God to set itself free and to emanate all its strength. It is as if the plug is pulled and the light is switched on. The gift of God is finally "untied" and the Spirit is allowed to flow like a fragrance in the Christian life.*

---

Before talking about the Baptism in the Spirit, it is important to try and understand what the Renewal in the Spirit is all about. After the Second Vatican Council, many things in the Church's life were renewed - the liturgy, pastoral care, canon law code, the constitutions of the religious orders and their dress. Although all these things are important, they are only external things and woe to us if we stop there and think the task is finished, because it is not structures but souls that are important to God. "It is in men's souls that the Church is beautiful," writes St. Ambrose, and therefore it is in men's souls that she must make herself beautiful.

### **God Is Author and Power**

The Renewal is a renewal in which God, not man, is the principle author. "I, not you," says God, "make all things new" (Rev 21:5); "My Spirit - and He alone - may renew the face of the earth" (see Psalm 104:30). From the religious point of view, we tend to view things from a ptolemaic perspective: at the foundation there are our efforts - organization, efficiency, reforms, goodwill - with the earth here as the center which God comes to strengthen and crown, by His grace and our effort.

We must - at this point the Word of God cries out - "give the power back to God" (Psalm 68:35) because "the power belongs to God" (Psalm 62:12). For too long we have usurped this power of His from God, by managing it as if it were ours, as if it was up to us to "govern" the power of God. We have to totally change our perspective. That is, to acknowledge simply that without the Holy Spirit, we cannot do anything, not even say, "Jesus is Lord!" (1 Cor 12:3).

### **Baptism in the Spirit and the Sacrament of Baptism**

The Baptism in the Spirit is not a sacrament, but it is related to a sacrament, to several sacraments in fact - to the sacraments of Christian initiation. The Baptism in the Spirit makes real and in a way renews Christian initiation. The primary relationship is with the Sacrament of Baptism. In fact, this experience is called the Baptism in the Spirit by English-speaking people.

We believe that the Baptism in the Spirit makes real and revitalizes our baptism. To understand how a sacrament which was received so many years ago, usually immediately after our birth could suddenly come back to life and emanate so much energy, as often happens through the Baptism in the Spirit, it is important to look at our understanding of sacramental theology.

Catholic theology recognizes the concept of a valid but tied sacrament. A sacrament is called tied if the fruit that should accompany it remains bound because of certain blocks that prevent its effectiveness. An extreme example of this is the Sacrament of Matrimony or Holy Orders received in the state of mortal sin. In such circumstances these sacraments cannot grant any grace to people until the obstacle of sin is removed through penance. Once this happens the sacrament is said to live again thanks to the indelible character and irrevocability of the gift of God: God remains faithful even if we are unfaithful because He cannot deny Himself (see Timothy 2:13).

In the case of baptism what is it that causes the fruit of the sacrament to stay tied? The sacraments are not magical rituals that act mechanically, without the person's knowledge or disregarding any response on his part. Their effectiveness is the fruit of a synergy or cooperation between divine omnipotence - in reality the grace of Christ or the Holy Spirit and human freedom, because as St. Augustine said, "The one who created you without your cooperation, will not save without your cooperation."

The opus operatum of baptism, namely, God's part or grace, has several aspects - forgiveness of sins, the gift of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity (these, however, only as a seed), divine sonship - all of which are operated through the effective action of the Holy Spirit. But what does the opus operantis in baptism - namely, man's part, consist of? It consists of faith! Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). At the side of baptism, therefore, there is another element: the faith of man. "To all who received Him He gave the power to become children of God: to those who believe in His name" (John 1:13).

Baptism is like a divine seal put on the faith of man: having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and having believed in it, you have received (of course, in baptism) the seal of the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 1:13)

### **Baptism and Confirmation of Faith**

At the beginning of the Church, Baptism was such a powerful event and so rich in grace that there was no need normally of a new effusion of the Spirit like we have today. Baptism was ministered to adults who converted from paganism and who, properly instructed, were in the position to make, on the occasion of baptism, an act of faith and a free and mature choice. It is sufficient to read the mistagogic catechesis on baptism attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem to become aware of the depth of faith to which those waiting for baptism were led. In substance, they arrived at baptism through a true and real conversion, and thus for them baptism was a real washing, a personal renewal, and a rebirth in the Holy Spirit.

The favorable circumstances that allowed baptism, at the origins of the Church, to operate with so much power was that the grace of God and man's response met at the same time, and there was a perfect synchronization

### **Infant Baptism in Non-Christian Environment**

But now this synchronization has been broken, as we are baptized as infants, and little by little this aspect of the free and personal act of faith no longer happens. It was substituted instead by a decision by intermediary parents or godparents. When a child grew up in a totally Christian environment, this faith still could flourish even though at a slower rate. Now, however, this is no longer the case and our spiritual environment is even worse than the one at the time of the Middle Ages. Not that there is no normal Christian life, but this is now the exception rather than the rule.

In this situation, rarely, or never, does the baptized person ever reach the stage of proclaiming in the Holy Spirit, "Jesus is Lord." And until one reaches this point, everything else in the Christian life remains out of focus and immature. Miracles no longer happen, and we experience what Jesus did in Nazareth: "Jesus could not perform many miracles because of their lack of faith." (Mt 13. 58)

### **God's Will**

Here, then, is what I feel is the significance of the Baptism in the Spirit. It is God's answer to this malfunctioning that has grown up in the Christian life in the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is an accepted fact that over the last few years there has been some concern on the part of the Church, among the bishops, that the Christian sacraments, especially baptism, are being administered to people who will not make any use of them in life. As a result, it has even been suggested that baptism should not be administered unless there are some minimum guarantees that it will be cultivated and valued by the child in question. For one should not throw pearls to dogs, as Jesus said, and baptism is a pearl, because it is the fruit of the blood of Christ.

But it seems that God was concerned about this situation even before the Church was, and raised up here and there in the Church movements aimed at renewing Christian initiation in adults. The Charismatic Renewal is one of these movements and in it the principle grace is, without doubt, linked to the Baptism of the Spirit and to what comes before it.

### **Release and Confirmation of Faith**

Its effectiveness in reactivating baptism consists in this: finally man contributes his part - namely, he makes a choice of faith, prepared in repentance that allows the work of God to set itself free and to emanate all its strength. It is as if the plug is pulled and the light is switched on. The gift of God is finally "untied" and the Spirit is allowed to flow like a fragrance in the Christian life.

In addition to the renewal of the grace of baptism, the Baptism in the Spirit is also a confirmation of one's own baptism, a deliberate "yes" to it, to its fruit and its commitments, and as such it is also similar to Confirmation too. Confirmation being the sacrament that develops, confirms, and brings to completion the work of baptism. From it, too, comes that desire for greater involvement in the apostolic and missionary dimension of the Church that is usually noted in those who receive the Baptism in the Spirit. They feel more inclined to cooperate with the building up of the Church, to put themselves at her service in various ministries both clerical and lay, to witness for Christ -to do all those things that recall the happening of Pentecost and which are actuated in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Baptism of the Spirit is not the only occasion known within the Church for this reviving of the sacraments of initiation. There is, for example, the renewal of the baptismal promises in the Easter vigil, and there are the spiritual exercises, and the religious professions, sometimes called a "second baptism." and at the sacrament level there is Confirmation.

It is also not difficult to discover in the lives of the saints, the presence of a spontaneous effusion, especially on the occasion of their conversion. The difference with the Baptism in the Spirit, however, is that it is open to all the people of God, small and great, and not only to those privileged ones who do the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises or make a religious profession.

### **The Will of God in History**

Where does this extraordinary force that we experienced when we were Baptized in the Spirit come from? What we are talking about is not just some theory, but something that we ourselves have experienced and therefore can say with John, "What we have heard, what we have seen with our own eyes, what our

hands have touched, this we also announce to you, so that you too be in communion with us." (see I John 1:1-11). The explanation of this force is in the will of God - because God was pleased to renew the Church today by this means - and this is enough.

There are certainly some biblical precedents, like the one told in Acts 8:14-17, when Peter and John, having heard that Samaria welcomed the Word of God, went there, prayed for them, and laid hands on them so that they could receive the Holy Spirit. But these biblical precedents, are not sufficient to explain the vastness and depth of the contemporary manifestation of the effusion of the Spirit.

The explanation therefore is in God's plan. We could say, by paraphrasing a famous saying of the Apostle Paul: Because Christians, with all their organization, were not able to transmit the power of the Spirit, God was pleased to renew the believers through the foolishness of the Baptism in the Spirit. In fact theologians look for an explanation and responsible people for moderation, but simple souls touch with their hands the power of Christ in the Baptism of the Spirit" (1Cor 12:1-24)

We men, and in particular we men of the Church, tend to limit God in His freedom: we tend to insist that He follows a compulsory pattern (the so called channels of grace) and we forget that God is a torrent that breaks loose and creates its own path and that the Spirit blows where and how he wants (notwithstanding the role of the teaching of the Church to discern what actually comes from the Spirit and what does not come from Him). What does the Baptism of the Spirit consist of and how does it work? In the Baptism of the Spirit there is a secret, mysterious move of God that is His way of becoming present, in a way that is different for each one because only He knows us in our inner part and how to act upon our unique personality. There is also the external community part which is the same for everyone and consists mainly of three things: brotherly love, laying on of hands, and prayer. These are non-sacramental but simply ecclesiastic elements.

### **Holy Spirit Proceeding from the Father and the Son**

Where does the grace we experience in the Baptism of the Spirit come from? From those around us? No! From the person who receives it? No! It comes from God! We can only say that such grace is related to baptism, because God acts always with coherence and faithfulness and He does not do and undo. He honors the commitments and institutions of Christ. One thing is certain - that it is not the brothers who impart the Holy Spirit, but they do invoke the Holy Spirit on the person. The Spirit cannot be given by any man, not even the Pope or a bishop, because no man possesses by himself the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus may give the Holy Spirit; all the others do not possess the Holy Spirit, but rather are possessed by Him. As to the manner of this grace, we may speak of a new coming of the Holy Spirit, of a new mission by the Father through Jesus Christ, or a new anointing corresponding to a new degree of grace.

---

"Come, Holy Spirit, come and renew the face of the earth! Come with your seven gifts! Come, Spirit of Life, Spirit of Communion and Love! The Church and the world need you. Come, Holy Spirit, and make ever more fruitful the charisms you have bestowed on us. Give new strength and missionary zeal to these sons and daughters of yours who have gathered here. Open their hearts; renew their Christian commitment to the world. Make them courageous messengers of the Gospel, witnesses to the risen Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of man. Strengthen their love and their fidelity to the Church."

**Quote from Pope John Paul II May 30 1998**

## **Have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit Ceased?**

By Jerry Munk

An Orthodox Christian View

In the New Testament, we see many overt manifestations of the Holy Spirit: speaking in unlearned languages (languages known and unknown to mankind), prophetic utterance, supernatural healings, visions and dreams, working of miracles, and several others. This is not generally our experience today. In fact, the very gifts which once served as the catalyst for establishing and extending the Church of Jesus Christ, would today be rejected in all but a very few of our Orthodox parishes. Why?

### **An Innovation?**

I suspect the majority of Orthodox Christians have not given much thought to the place of spiritual gifts in the life of the Church. We tend to be a traditional lot and pretty much accept the idea that the way we do things now is the way they have always been done. Since little place is given to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it is easy to assume that this has always been the case, and therefore the charismata (spiritual gifts) must be some Protestant innovation. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Indeed, the record of the early Church tells us that charismatic ministry was the norm for the first several hundred years. It worked hand in hand with and often overlapped the hierarchical ministries of the Church (see *Charismatic Gifts in the Early Church* by Ronald A. Kydd, Hendricks Publishing Co.). Rather than being a recent innovation, there is a great deal of evidence that the charismatic renewal we see today is, in fact, a restoration of early church, and therefore Orthodox, practice.

### **Cessation Theology**

On the other hand, there are a number of Orthodox Christians (Protestant and Catholic as well) whose opposition to charismatic manifestations goes much deeper. They hold a developed theology that says the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased, or were severely curtailed, with the close of the Apostolic age.

Several passages, at first reading, seem to support this idea of cessation. Also, until the Pentecostal awakening early in this century, spiritual gifts seemed almost extinct, and this argues in favor of cessation. But, as we examine the evidence closely, and bring to the discussion some additional information, a strong argument emerges that it was and always has been God's intent for His children to exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit which so typified the New Testament believers.

### **Orthodox Position**

Before we pursue this discussion, however, it would be good to address a point of major concern for Orthodox Christians: "What is the position of the Orthodox Church in all of this?"

That question lacks a definite answer. There are some writings by respected authors that lean one way, but just as many writings by authors equally respected that lean the other. A few bishops have condemned the Charismatic Renewal, several have endorsed it, but most have been silent.

This question, although it is an important one, has never been addressed by anything close to Ecumenical Council of Bishops. As a result, people hold a variety of understandings on this issue, but no one can claim to have the Orthodox position.

### **Three Passages**

There are three main passages used to support the cessation theory, one from Scripture, and two from Church Fathers: Augustine and Chrysostom.

"...For we know in part and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away." (I Corinthians 13: 8-10)

“The sign (speaking in tongues) was given and then passed away. We no longer expect that those on whom the hand is laid...will speak in tongues.” (St. Augustine)

“This whole passage (ref. to I Corinthians 12: 1-2) is very obscure, for they (the spiritual gifts) used to occur regularly but not anymore...” (St. John Chrysostom)

Primary weight should, of course, be given to the passage from Holy Scripture. We will examine the first.

### **I Corinthians 13: 8-10**

There are three main points in the I Corinthians passage; (1) Spiritual gifts are partial; (2) something perfect is coming; (3) when it comes the partial will cease.

The first point, that our Spiritual gifts are partial or imperfect, is quite clear and direct. This fact can be seen in the record of the New Testament Church (in the Corinthian believers), in the early Church (the Montanists), and even in our own day among many charismatics. There is little question about its meaning and is accepted at faced value.

The second point, however, generates a question for the reader which is not directly answered in this passage or in the surrounding material. Just what is this perfect thing?

How you answer this question will determine how you interpret the passage. Because there is no general agreement on the answer, there is also a lack of agreement about what the passage means. In fact, this one passage is used both to argue that the gifts have ceased and that they have continued.

In my reading I have encountered four different explanations of what this perfect thing might be: the establishment of the Church, the New Testament revelation, an eschatological reference indicating the return of Jesus Christ or the close of the age, and personal maturity in a Christian.

### **Several Understandings**

Some say that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to the Apostles for the work of establishing the Church (although the Bible records several non-apostles as ministering in the gifts of the Holy Spirit). They argue that as the Apostles died, the gifts died with them. Others cite the acceptance of Christianity by the Emperor Constantine as the watershed bringing to as close the time of charismatic gifts.

Others, however, would say that spiritual gifts, especially word gifts, ceased when the written Word of God was completed, but even here people point to two different dates: the Revelation received by John near the close of the first century AD, or the establishment of the New Testament Cannon several hundred years later.

Still others stipulate that Paul was referring in this passage to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In this case, the perfect thing would represent the realized Kingdom of God. The surrounding verses support this interpretation: “What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror; then we see shall see face to face.” (I Corinthians 13: 12) Proponents of this view argue that spiritual gifts will not be needed in Heaven since we will then know Jesus face to face, but until then they continue.

St. John Chrysostom, on the other hand, sees this passage as a teaching on spiritual maturity (the word translated “perfect” can also be translated “mature”). Again, there is support for this interpretation in surrounding passages. The following verse, for example, says, “When I was a child, my speech, feeling and thinking were those of a child; now that I am a man, I have no more use for childish ways.”

Before we leave this passage, we must also examine the third point: that something partial or imperfect will cease. Even here, there are two possible options; the spiritual gifts themselves will cease, or the

imperfection of the spiritual gifts will cease, i.e. an individual's gifts will be made pure. Either understanding could be acceptable depending on how one understands the preceding point.

### **Clarity Needed**

What have we determined by this discussion of the first Corinthians passage? Essentially this, that the passage is not clear. It could mean that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased many years ago, that they will be perfected as we mature, or they will continue until Jesus comes again.

If we look to the rest of Scripture to clear up the confusion, we come up empty handed. No other passage says that spiritual gifts should cease or will cease. We have several different lists of spiritual gifts, pages of instruction about their place and use, even a lengthy correction for misuse of God's gifts, but nowhere else is there any indication that such gifts will cease. If Paul, or any of the other writers of the New Testament, had understood that spiritual gifts would come to an end, they never came out and said so. Rather, one gets an impression that they felt charismata constituted an important aspect of Christianity, one that would be essential to the Body of Christ into the foreseeable future. Surely, if Paul intended to communicate cessation, he would have done so much more clearly.

### **The Fathers**

Let us now turn to the quotations of Sts. Chrysostom and Augustine. While both comment that spiritual gifts are not a common or expected phenomenon, they do not develop a theology which excludes them. In fact, John Chrysostom acknowledges that the situation is confusing, and in his commentary on Romans longs for the days when "the Spirit controlled all things."

The passage from St. Augustine (cited above) is used by many to say that the spiritual gifts have ceased. But, later in his life (City of God, book XXII) he says: "Even today miracles are being wrought in the name of Christ." It may be that he changed his opinion; it may be he did not. With this further evidence, however, it would be hard to argue that St. Augustine maintained the idea that all of the spiritual gifts had ceased by his time. Clearly he believed that the spiritual gift of healing, at least, continued.

Actually, all that we can safely determine from these quotations is that spiritual gifts, especially the gift of tongues and prophecy, were not common during the time or in the vicinity of the authors.

### **Ongoing Gifts**

Of course, one of the greatest arguments against cessation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is the fact that the gifts did not cease. To be sure, spiritual gifts became the exception rather than the norm, but even so, from time to time, throughout the history of the Church up to this present day, the Holy Spirit has worked powerfully giving His gifts for the edification of the Church.

Justin Martyr, writing in the middle of the second century, testifies "we see among us today men and women who possess the gifts of the Spirit of God." St. Gregory of Nyssa, who lived in the fourth century, also speaks of contemporaries who possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "I know the deeds of our fellowmen who walk in the Spirit and give evidences of the power of healing...and have great power against the demons." As late as the fourteenth century, Nicholas Kabasilas speaks of charismatic ministries, "Even in our day...some possess such charismata and they have predicted the future, expelled demons, and healed diseases with prayer alone."

### **Expectant Seeking**

Indeed, if the gifts of the Holy Spirit passed away with the Apostles, to what are these Saints testifying?

The truth is that the faithful have ministered in the gifts of the Holy Spirit in every age. At times there have been many charismatics and at other times few, but the simple fact of their presence and their

acceptance by respected Fathers of the Church stands as evidence that such gifting should be expected, sought and approved in our day.

### **Life and Virtue**

In his commentary on first Corinthians, John Chrysostom teaches, “the present church is like a woman who has fallen from her former prosperous days and in many respects retains only the symbols of that ancient prosperity... and I say this not in respect of the gifts, for it would not be notable if it were this only, but also in respect to life and virtue.”

In times past, the faithful had great expectation of what the Holy Spirit would do when He entered a consecrated believer. Healing, prophecies, the expulsion of demons, and spiritual prayer, if not the norm, was a very present possibility. At the very least, a life changed to glorify Jesus Christ was expected.

Today, we are less comfortable with supernatural manifestations. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, so many think, belong to another time, to the Saints to the monasteries – a nice safe distance from any impact on “my” life.

Is the Church richer because of this rejection? Does it present a more powerful witness to the reality of Jesus Christ? The real issue, as John Chrysostom points out is not whether the gifts of the Spirit are exercised, but rather, is the Holy Spirit free to work in and through the lives of the faithful as He wills. Perhaps, by closing ourselves to the gifts of the Spirit, we have also limited His work of producing the fruit of life and virtue.

First published in Theosis Newsletter. Used by permission.

**Jesus is Lord**  
**Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, OFMcap**  
A Roman Catholic View

*Fr. Cantalamessa is the preacher to the Papal Household. For the last 26 years he has preached for Pope John Paul II on Fridays during Advent and Lent. He leads numerous formation sessions and retreats throughout the world. Fr. Cantalamessa is a prophetic voice speaking to many people throughout the world. He has a deep passion for Christian unity.*

In 1975, while I was a professor of Ancient Christianity at the Catholic University of Milan, I began hearing about a new move in the church, a new spirit, a new way of praying. In the beginning I was very "anti." I told the lady who described this activity to me: "You should never go again to that particular retreat house." I was surprised to see that these people, whom you already realize were part of the charismatic renewal, were not offended by my criticism. They loved me and even asked me to give them teachings.

I once gave a university course about the charismatic and prophetic movements in the early church just to try to understand what was going on now. Some manifestations were exactly like those which had occurred in the first Christian communities, in Corinth, for instance. But, as you may imagine, I was unprepared to accept other things, like speaking in tongues.

In 1977, a lady from Milan received four all-inclusive tickets to go to America to attend a conference in Kansas City. This was to be a large interdenominational gathering of 40,000 people, half Catholics and half other Christian denominations. I was given one of these tickets because I was coming to the States to start learning English. I thought to myself: "After all, in a week I shall be over all this annoyance."

In Kansas City, there was one thing which particularly impressed me and I must share it with you. At one moment during the conference someone began to speak prophetic words. Prophetic words are authoritative messages spoken in the name of God: "You bishops, mourn and weep because the body of my Son is broken. You priests, mourn and weep because the body of my Son is broken. You lay people, mourn and weep because the body of my Son is broken." One after another, almost all the 40,000 people fell to their knees. This huge crowd in Kansas City was crying out as one in repentance. And above the stadium a huge sign proclaimed: "Jesus is Lord."

I was looking at all this as an outsider but I couldn't help being moved. I said to myself: "This is a prophecy for the future of the church. One day the church shall be reunited in one single visible body. This is how it will happen; through all of us repenting, praying and weeping together, under the Lordship of Christ." But as you can imagine, I was still very critical and said to myself: "This is very beautiful. No doubt this comes from the Lord, but I cannot accept it." I was unprepared to understand the expressions of other Christian denominations, especially Pentecostals.

**Choose Jesus as Lord of your life**

One of the hymns sung on this occasion said: "Lift high the banner of love; Jericho must fall." It's the story of Jericho falling before the sound of the trumpets. When the crowd sang the refrain, "Jericho must fall," my fellow Italians (there were five of us) nudged me and said: "Listen carefully, because Jericho is you."

And Jericho did fall. It was a spectacular fall that began in Kansas City, Missouri, and ended in Convent Station, New Jersey. There was a prayer meeting to be held in New Jersey and someone invited me to attend. A priest said: "Stay with us this week." I remember thinking to myself: "This, after all, is not a house of perdition or prostitution. It is a house of prayer, and staying there won't do me any harm." I decided: "Lord, I will stay. I will give you another chance to speak to me."

After this decision everything went smoothly, even though I resisted with all my strength. You must realize that I did my best. There was a moment during the prayer meeting when we were in the chapel praying,

and I remember saying to myself: "I am a son of St. Francis of Assisi. I have a beautiful spirituality. What am I looking for among these lay brothers?" At that moment a lady opened her Bible and started reading. It was the passage where John the Baptist said to the Pharisees: "Don't say in your hearts, We are sons of Abraham, we are sons of Abraham."

I assure you, this is the way the Holy Spirit builds when he is present in a gathering. He speaks in a simple but very, very strong way. So I stood up (speaking Italian because I did not know any English then) and everybody seemed to understand my Italian. I said: "Lord, I don't want to say any longer that I am a son of St. Francis of Assisi. I ask you to make me a true son of St. Francis of Assisi. Baptize me with your Holy Spirit." Then they prayed over me. I recall somebody saying: "Choose Jesus as Lord of your life."

### **The Cross of Jesus Christ**

Why am I mentioning my experience? Because if we are to receive the Holy Spirit in this new, dramatic way scripture says that we must be baptized. But if we have already been baptized, there is need of a new baptism or a renewal of our baptism. For me, baptism in the Spirit was precisely this—a chance the Lord gave me to ratify and renew my baptism.

For most of us, baptism is a bound sacrament. That means that while we have received baptism in the church, the church gave it in the hope that at some point in our adult life we would confirm our "I believe" in a personal, free act of faith. Until there is this act of faith in the life of a Christian, baptism remains a bound sacrament. Baptism allows us to receive Holy Communion but it also reveals why there are so many inactive Christians, passive and lacking any power. Jesus promised power to his believers, power enough to cast out demons and convict the world. Why, then, are we so powerless?

Coming back to my experience, my perception was that I was simply renewing my baptism, choosing Jesus as my Lord, and renewing my ordination—my religious profession. There was a moment when somebody said: "Choose Jesus as your Lord." At that very instant I lifted up my eyes and saw the crucifix. It was as if Jesus was waiting to tell me a very important thing. "Careful, Raniero." Of course there was no audible speaking by Jesus. Nothing visible—only a deeper communication.

This is the way God communicates something without verbal expression, without visible images. He speaks directly to the heart. He was speaking to my heart. "Be careful. This Jesus you are choosing as your Lord is not an easy Jesus. Not a rosewater Jesus. This is the crucified Jesus." This was when all my doubts fell away. If I was still wondering if the charismatic renewal was something superficial and emotional—just a lifting of our arms to impress each other, I was convinced at that moment that this renewal goes straight to the heart of the gospel, which is the cross of Jesus Christ!

### **A Love for the Word of God**

Nothing spectacular happened during this moment of my baptism in the Spirit. Nothing. But there was prophecy. Somebody said: "You will experience a new joy in proclaiming my word." At that time I was more a professor than a preacher. For a while, this remained for me a kind of question mark. Now, after seventeen or eighteen years, I can tell you that this prophecy has come true. I have experienced a new joy in proclaiming the word of God.

On the plane from Newark to Washington I had one of my first experiences as I found that in just praying my breviary the scriptures came alive. The psalms were not just words I knew by heart; no, they came alive. I was astonished. I read: "One generation proclaims to the other the greatness of the Lord." And a whole world opened in front of me. I remembered what is written in the New Testament: "Then at that moment Jesus opened their minds so that they were able to understand the scriptures."

This is what the Holy Spirit does. One of the first actions of the Holy Spirit is to open our minds to understand scripture, to see how true it is and that it is the word of God-the passionate word of a father to his children, for use in very personal situations. The love of scripture which results from receiving the Holy Spirit is unbelievable. I know people who cannot separate themselves from the Bible.

When I came to Washington, I realized that I had a new desire for prayer. Something was attracting me to the chapel, and prayer opened to me the world of the Trinity. The Father spoke to me about the Son; the Son spoke to me about the Father; the Father and the Son about the Holy Spirit. I discovered the law of love which is the law of the Trinity.

Do you know what the law of love is? The law of love consists of not speaking of oneself, but speaking always of the other person. This is why the Father reveals the Son. The Son doesn't speak very much about himself; he speaks about the Father. When the Holy Spirit comes, what does he say? He doesn't start revealing his name; he doesn't proclaim ruah, ruah (r~cah is the Hebrew name for the Holy Spirit). When the Spirit comes, he says: "Abba, Abba." This is the law. Imagine if this law of love were to be applied in a family. Imagine a father speaking to his children always of the good of their mother, and the mother always telling them of the goodness of their father. Oh, this would change many, many things.

### **Leave Everything and Come**

A few months after my return to Italy, something happened which visibly and practically changed my life. One day as I was praying in my cell in the friary, I prayed for the first time in a manner vaguely like speaking in tongues; not exactly the same, but somewhat similar. For a moment there was a very deep-down communication-nothing verbal or visible-but I sensed that Jesus was passing in front of me. It was the same Jesus who came back from the Jordan after his baptism in the Spirit and he was saying to me: "If you want to help me in proclaiming the kingdom of God, leave everything and come. 'I understood that he meant that I was to leave my teaching position. At that time I was head of a department at a huge university. I felt an instant of panic. This university had established this chair especially for me. But I understood that Jesus was inviting me-a man who has many things to do and is always in a hurry. I was afraid that I would not be ready to answer "yes." At the end of this hour of prayer, however, by the grace of God, I found in my heart a full 'yes, Lord, I can.'" The Lord called me to leave my professorship and become an itinerant preacher of the gospel. Because I am a religious man with a vow of obedience, I went to my superior general and told him: "Father, I think the Lord is asking me to do something completely different." He said (as any good bishop or pastor would), "Let us wait one year more." So I went on teaching for one year. At the end of this time I went to my superior general in Rome. We both prayed and then he said: 'yes, it is the will of God. They will say that you and I are both mad, but in ten years maybe they will change their opinion."

On the very day when the superior general gave me permission to start a new life, the breviary contained this beautiful passage from the prophet Haggai, in which God sends Haggai to encourage the people. The people stopped rebuilding their own houses and started rebuilding the temple of God. God was pleased and sent prophets to encourage them. Haggai said: "Now take courage you Joshua, son of Jehozadak; take courage Zerubbabel: take courage, you people of the land and work, because I am with you, says the Lord" (Haggai 2:3-5).

After reading this in the breviary, I went to St. Peter's Square to ask St. Peter for a new gift of faith for my new ministry. It was a rainy October day, and St. Peter's Square was completely empty. Something compelled me to look at the window of the Pope-you know, where the window of the Pope is in the Square. It was as if the word of God were crying through me: "Take courage, John Paul II; take courage, you cardinals and bishops of the Catholic Church; and work, because I am with you, says the Lord." So far so good. Except that three months later I was appointed preacher to the Pope!

Take Courage. I am with You. Preacher to the Pope! Maybe it would be worth while to say a little about what this means. Many Catholics don't know that every Friday during Lent and Advent the Holy Father

takes time to listen to a sermon, a meditation given by a priest of the Catholic Church, which, for the last sixteen years, has been me. He never misses a sermon. Once when he was traveling around Central America, he missed two Fridays. When he returned he came straight to me, apologizing for having missed two sermons. It's really he who gives the sermons to me through his humility, his example.

The first time I was in front of this very unusual audience I couldn't help telling what had happened to me in St. Peter's Square, just below the Pope's window. So again I quoted Haggai the prophet-not just as a quotation but as a living prophecy. I heard him say to this audience: "Take courage, John Paul II; take courage, you cardinals and bishops, you people of the land, and work, because I am with you, says the Lord." And I could see in the eyes of my listeners the word of God becoming an active reality at that very moment.

Very often when the Lord sends me around the world to proclaim the word of God, I repeat this prophecy of Haggai. Now I have the pleasure, the joy, of proclaiming it for you: "Take courage, you bishops of this country; take courage, you priests; take courage, you lay people, and walk, because I am with you, says the Lord."

This series first appeared in ***The Word Among Us, A Daily Approach to Prayer & Scripture***, and is used with permission.

# How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit

By John Piper

A Reformed Protestant View

Acts 2:32–42,

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens; but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet.’ Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” And he testified with many other words and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

The two questions I want to try to answer today are: 1) *What does it mean* to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? and: 2) *How* do we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? Our focus will be on the book of Acts and on Luke’s intention as he wrote it.

## 1. What Is Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit?

One of the most widely used books in contemporary charismatic renewal is *The Holy Spirit and You* by Dennis and Rita Bennet, an Episcopal priest and his wife. On pages 64–65 the question is posed, “What if I don’t speak in tongues? Can I receive the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues?” Answer: “It comes with the package!” Speaking in tongues is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but it is what happens when and as you are baptized in the Spirit and it becomes an important resource to help you continue, as Paul says, to . . . “keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). You *don’t* have to speak in tongues in order to be saved. You *don’t* have to speak in tongues in order to have the Holy Spirit in you. You *don’t* have to speak in tongues to have times of feeling filled with the Holy Spirit, but if you want the free and full outpouring that is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you must expect it to happen as in Scripture. . . . If you want to understand the New Testament you need the same experience that all its writers had.

On page 20 they sum up the classical two-stage Pentecostal teaching:

The first experience of the Christian life, salvation, is the *incoming* of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, to give us new life, God’s life, eternal life. The second experience, is the *receiving*, or making welcome of the Holy Spirit, so that Jesus can cause Him to pour out this new life from our spirits, to baptize our souls and bodies and then our world around, with his refreshing and renewing power. (see p. 275)

They call this “the scriptural pattern of the ‘doctrine of baptisms.’”

## Tongues and Baptism in the Spirit in Acts

I have two things to say about this, one negative and one positive. I’ll take the negative first so I can end with the positive. The negative thing is that I think the Bennets are probably wrong in making tongues a necessary part of the baptism in the Spirit.

Let’s walk with them through the book of Acts to see where they get their evidence. It begins in Acts 1:5 where Jesus says to his disciples, “John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Then in verse 8 he says, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses.” The fulfillment of these two promises came on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2:2–4 says, “And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributed and resting on each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

The next time tongues is mentioned in Acts is when Peter went to preach at Cornelius’s house in Acts 10:44–46.

“While Peter was still saying this the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God.”

The only other place tongues is referred to in Acts is 19:6. Paul finds in Ephesus some disciples of John the Baptist who had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul explains to them that John pointed people forward to Jesus, and so verse 5 says, “On hearing this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” There is one other instance in chapter 8 where the apostles go to Samaria and lay their hands on some believers so that they can receive the

Holy Spirit. Tongues is not mentioned, but since the language is the same as at Cornelius's house ("fallen" 8:16; "fell" 10:44), it's likely the Samaritans spoke in tongues, too.

Pentecostals argue that since baptism in the Spirit happened these four times with speaking in tongues, we should regard this as normative. First, the word of the gospel is received by faith. Christ comes into your life by the Spirit. Then, you are baptized in water. And, generally, following water-baptism at some later point, you pray for the baptism in the Spirit and are overwhelmed with a new fullness and freedom and power accompanied by speaking in tongues.

### **Tongues Not Necessary to Being Baptized in the Spirit**

There are five reasons why I am not as confident as the Pentecostals are that speaking in tongues is a *necessary* part of being baptized in the Spirit.

1. It is *not taught* anywhere in the New Testament. It seems risky to me to say, since it happened this way four times it must happen this way all the time.
2. What Jesus *does teach* in Acts 1:5 and 8 is that the experience of baptism in the Spirit will bring *power* to witness into the Christian life. In the terminology of Acts we could say, what a powerless Christian needs is a baptism in the Holy Spirit. And that's a lot of us!
3. Acts records at least nine other conversion stories, but never again mentions a two-step sequence with tongues (8:36; 9:17–19; 13:12, 48; 14:1; 16:14; 17:4, 34). This shows how difficult it is to establish a norm from the way things happened back then.
4. It could be that there were special circumstances in Jerusalem, Samaria, Cornelius's house, and Ephesus that made speaking in tongues especially helpful in communicating the truth that the Holy Spirit was creating a new unified body of Jew and Samaritan and Gentile.
5. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:30 that "not all speak in tongues" and the words he uses are for general tongues speaking, not merely for a special "gift of tongues" used in church. He seems to have in view the person who feels ostracized without tongues and says (v. 16), "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body." Paul responds, "Not everybody speaks in tongues!"

For these five reasons I cannot say with the Pentecostals that no Christian has been baptized in the Holy Spirit unless he has spoken in tongues. It seems to me that Luke leaves wide open the possibility that the Holy Spirit might fall upon a person with revolutionizing power over sin and power for witnessing and power in worship and yet *not* with tongues. To say this person is not the beneficiary of Jesus's promise to baptize us in the Holy Spirit goes beyond Scripture. "You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit . . . and you shall receive power" (Acts 1:5, 8). That is the biblical sign. (Whether or not a Christian should seek to speak in tongues is another issue that we are working on in the evening. See 1 Corinthians 14:5, 18, 39.)

### **Stressing the Experience of Baptism in the Spirit**

Now the positive thing I want to say about the moderate Pentecostal teaching (represented by the Bennets) is that it is right to stress the *experiential reality* of receiving the Spirit. When you read the New Testament honestly, you can't help but get the impression of a big difference from a lot of contemporary Christian experience. For them the Holy Spirit was a fact of *experience*. For many Christians today it is a fact of *doctrine*.

Surely the Charismatic renewal has something to teach us here. In sacramental churches the gift of the Holy Spirit is virtually equated with the event of water baptism. In Protestant evangelicalism it is equated with a subconscious work of God in regeneration which you only know you have because the Bible says you do if you believe. It is easy to imagine a spiritual counselor saying to a new convert today, "Don't expect to notice any difference. Just believe you have received the Spirit." But that is far from what we see in the New Testament. The Pentecostals are right to stress the *experience* of being baptized in the Spirit.

### **Four Reasons Why It Is Right to Do So**

Here are four reasons from Acts.

#### **1. Terminology**

The very term "*baptized* in the Holy Spirit" (1:5; 11:16) implies an immersion in the life of the Spirit. "John immersed in water; you will be immersed in the Spirit." If the Spirit overwhelms you like a baptism, you can't imagine him merely sneaking in quietly while you are asleep and taking up inconspicuous residence. That may be the way it starts (Paul may have this early movement in mind in 1 Corinthians 12:13), but if it ends there, Jesus and Luke would not call it a baptism in the Spirit.

#### **2. Power, Boldness, and Confidence**

Jesus says in Acts 1:5 and 8 that baptism in the Spirit means, "You shall receive *power* . . . and you shall be my witnesses." This is an experience of boldness and confidence and victory over sin. A Christian without power is a Christian who needs a baptism in the Holy Spirit. I am aware that in 1 Corinthians 12:13 Paul says that baptism in the Spirit is an act of God by which we become a part of the body of Christ at conversion, so that in his terminology all genuine converts have been baptized in the Spirit.

But we have done wrong in limiting Paul's understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to this initial, subconscious divine act in conversion and then forcing all of Luke's theology in Acts into that little mold. There is no reason to think that even for Paul the baptism in the Holy Spirit was limited to the initial moment of conversion. And for sure in the book of Acts the baptism in the Holy Spirit is more than a subconscious divine act of regeneration — it is a conscious experience of *power* (Acts 1:8).

### **3. The Testimony of Acts**

In fact the third reason I think so is that, when you take your concordance and look up every text in Acts where the Holy Spirit works in believers, it is *never* subconscious. In Acts the Holy Spirit is not a silent influence but an experienced power. Believers *experienced* the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They didn't just believe it happened because an apostle said so.

### **4. The Consequence of Faith**

The fourth reason we should stress the *experience* of baptism in the Holy Spirit is that in Acts the apostles *teach* that it is a *consequence of faith* not a subconscious cause of faith. As a convinced Calvinist I believe with all my heart that the grace of God precedes and enables saving faith. We do not initiate our salvation by believing. God initiates it by enabling us to believe (Ephesians 2:8–9; 2 Timothy 2:25; John 1:13).

But this regenerating work of God's Spirit is *not* the limit of what Peter means by baptism in the Spirit. In Acts 11:15–17 Peter reports how the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius just as on the disciples at Pentecost. "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized in water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us, *when we believed* in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should withstand God?"

Notice that the gift of the Spirit, or baptism in the Spirit, is preceded by faith. The NASB correctly says in verse 17 that God gave the Holy Spirit *after* they believed. So the baptism of the Spirit (v. 16) or the receiving of the gift of the Spirit (v. 17) cannot be the same as the work of God before faith which enables faith (which Luke speaks of in 2:39; 5:31; 16:14; 11:18; 15:10; 14:27). The baptism in the Spirit is an experience of the Spirit given after faith to faith.

### **Receiving the Spirit Is a Life-Changing Experience**

This is why Paul can say in Acts 19:2 when he meets the confused disciples of John the Baptist, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" What would a contemporary Protestant evangelical say in response to that question? I think we would say something like, "I thought we automatically received the Holy Spirit when we believed. I don't understand how you can even ask the question." How could Paul ask that question? He could ask it, I think, because receiving the Holy Spirit is a *real experience*. There are marks of it in your life. And the best way to test the faith of these so-called disciples is to ask them about their experience of the Spirit.

This is no different than what Paul said in Romans 8:14, "All who are *led by the Spirit* are the sons of God" (see 2 Corinthians 13:5 and 1 John 3:24; 4:12–13). I sometimes fear that we have so redefined conversion in terms of human decisions and have so removed any necessity of the experience of God's Spirit, that many people think they are saved when in fact they only have Christian ideas in their head not spiritual power in their heart.

So you see, the real issue the Charismatics raise for us is not the issue of tongues. In itself that is relatively unimportant. The really valuable contribution of the Charismatic renewal is their relentless emphasis on the *truth* that receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is a *real, life-changing experience*. Christianity is not merely an array of glorious ideas. It is not merely the performance of rituals and sacraments. It is the life-changing experience of the Holy Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ the Lord of the universe.

### **Two Things That Characterize This Experience**

We could talk for hours about what that experience is. In fact, most of my messages are just that — descriptions of the experience of the Spirit of God in the life of the believer. But I'll mention two things from the book of Acts — things that mark the experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit or of receiving the gift of the Spirit.

#### **1. A Heart of Praise**

One is a *heart of praise*. In Acts 10:46 the disciples knew the Holy Spirit had fallen because "they heard them speaking in tongues and *extolling (or magnifying) God*." Speaking in tongues is one particular way of releasing the heart of praise. It may be present or may not. But one thing is sure: The heart in which the Holy Spirit has been poured out will stop magnifying self and start magnifying God. Heartfelt praise and worship is the mark of a real experience of the Holy Spirit.

#### **2. Obedience**

The other mark I'll mention is *obedience*. In Acts 5:29 Peter and the apostles say to the Sadducees who had arrested them, "We must obey God rather than men." Then in verse 32 he says, "We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God gave to those who are obeying him." ("Gave" is past tense; "obey" is present, ongoing tense.)

It is inevitable that when the object of your heart's worship changes, your obedience changes. When Jesus baptizes you in the Holy Spirit, and infuses you with a new sense of the glory of God, you have a new desire and a new power (1:8) to obey. Whether or not you speak in tongues, these two things will be your experience if you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit — a new desire to magnify God in worship and a powerful disposition to obey God in everyday life.

### **How to Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit.**

I close by pointing you to Peter's instructions for how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38–41.

### **The Word of God Must Be Heard**

*First*, the Word of God must be heard. Peter has preached that in God's plan Jesus was crucified, raised, and exalted as Lord over all the universe and that forgiveness of sin and spiritual renewal can be had from him. The Word has been heard.

### **The Sovereign God Must Call Men and Women**

*Second*, the sovereign God must call men and women to himself, or they will never come. Verse 39 says, "The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, *everyone to whom the Lord our God calls to him*." No one comes to faith in Christ unless the Father draws him (John 6:44, 65). The preached Word is heard with conviction and power only when the effectual call of God lays hold on the hearers.

### **We Must Receive the Word**

*Third*, we must "receive the word." Verse 41: "*So those who received his word were baptized*." Receiving the Word means that it becomes part of you so that you trust the Christ it presents. You trust his provision for your forgiveness. You trust his path for your life. You trust his power to help you obey. And you trust his promises for your future. And that radical commitment to Christ always involves repentance — a turning away from your own self-wrought provisions and paths and powers and promises. And when you really turn to Christ for new paths and new power, you open yourself to the Holy Spirit, because it is by his Spirit that Christ guides and empowers.

### **We Must Express Faith Through Water Baptism**

*Finally*, we must give an open expression of faith in the act of water baptism in obedience to Jesus Christ. Baptism was the universal experience of all Christians in the New Testament. There were no unbaptized Christians after Pentecost. Christ had commanded it (Matthew 28:18–20) and the church practiced it. So we do today.

Therefore, I invite you to experience the greatest thing in the world: Repent, trust Christ, open yourself to the power of his Spirit, be baptized in his name, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

John Piper is founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is author of **more than 50 books**.

# The Baptism of the Holy Spirit as a Second Experience

By Don Basham

An Evangelical Protestant View

One common objection among Christians concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit stems from the difficulty of seeing it as a second, separate experience following conversion or rebirth. "I thought I received the Holy Spirit when I became a Christian", is the way the objection is frequently voiced. Since it is a spiritual law that we receive from God in terms of our asking (Matt. 7:7-8) it must be obvious that if people don't know there is an empowering of God beyond conversion, they won't ask for it. Therefore, the initial task in helping people to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to make it clear to them from the word of God that there is such an experience, and that those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior (John 3:16) may also encounter him as the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16).

Now, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life at the point of conversion: Of course the Holy Spirit is operative in conversion since Paul says "No one can say Jesus Christ is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." (1Cor. 12:3). The Holy Spirit is present in conversion to introduce the unbeliever to Jesus Christ as Savior.

But we are not talking about the introductory ministry of the Holy Spirit to the unbeliever—we're speaking of the subsequent empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit for the believers. We are speaking of that experience that Jesus promised when he told his disciples (who already knew him as Savior) "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

The scriptures draw a very clear distinction between the two experiences, especially in the book of Acts. Are you aware that the book of Acts is the only book in the entire Bible which contains the record of the life and activities of the first Christians? The only narrative we have of life in the early church? The Gospels are stories of the life of Jesus—the epistles are teaching letters, dealing with problems and difficulties in the Christian life, interpreting and explaining the provisions and promises of God to members of the Body of Christ. But only the book of Acts records the actual life and experience of the church of the New Testament age. And when we, examine the book of Acts, we find five passages which describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in what we've come to call the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Here's the list of those five passages with a brief description of each incident:

## ACTS 2:1-21

The Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 gathered in the upper room and they all began to speak in other tongues.

## ACTS 8:4-17

The Samaritan revival under the preaching of Philip. Miracles and signs and wonders accompany Philip's preaching. Peter and John come down from Jerusalem to minister the baptism in the Holy Spirit to the new converts "for as yet he had fallen on none of them."

## ACTS 9: 1-11

The conversion and subsequent healing and baptism in the Holy Spirit of Saul who became Paul. Converted on the road to Damascus, he is healed of his blindness and filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias comes and prays for him.

## ACTS 10:34-46

Peter preaches to the household of Cornelius. The people receive forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus, are converted, and immediately the Holy Spirit falls, and they begin to speak in tongues and magnify God.

## ACTS 10:34-46

Paul finds twelve disciples at Ephesus who know Jesus as Savior but have not received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. He prays for them and they receive and begin to speak in tongues and prophesy.

From an examination of all five accounts we see the same truth emerging—that conversion is one experience and the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a second, subsequent experience. Now let us examine each of the passages of scripture more in detail.

## ACTS 2:1-21 PENTECOST

Events prior to the day of Pentecost clearly reveal that the one hundred and twenty in the upper room were all believers in Jesus Christ. They were followers of His, they had witnessed His crucifixion and resurrection, they knew He had died for their sins and that he was their Risen Savior. They had heard Him commission them to go into all the world and preach the gospel and had seen Him ascend into heaven.

But, knowing Jesus was their Lord and Savior was not enough – at least, not in the mind of the Lord Himself. For He had told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

I must admit that for some years I preached and taught concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit as if it were a kind of optional or elective course in the school of the Christian life. But no more. I see now it is not an elective, but a required course. Required, not for salvation, but for truly victorious Christian living. I see now that all the centuries the church of Jesus Christ has been trying to proclaim the gospel without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, she has been doing it in direct disobedience to the clear command of Jesus who, after He had commissioned his disciples to go and "teach all nations" (Matt. 28:18), nevertheless said, "wait" or "tarry." (Luke 24:19) "Don't try to go teach and preach until you have been properly empowered." That's what Jesus was saying.

And that is just what happened on the day of Pentecost—those 120 believers in the upper room were empowered, supernaturally, by the Holy Spirit. The miraculous evidence of their empowering was the manifestation of speaking tongues. And further evidence of the effectiveness of that empowering was that old cowardly Peter, who had denied Jesus three times on the night of the crucifixion and had led the disciples into hiding for fear of Jews after the resurrection, was so transformed that he stood to his feet and preached an anointed message which led to the conversion of three thousand people.

#### Acts 8:4-17 PHILIP'S REVIVAL IN SAMARIA

The second of the five accounts of the Holy Spirit baptism is found in the eighth chapter of Acts. Philip, one of the first deacons ordained in the church, goes to a Samaritan city, and as he begins to preach the gospel, a great revival breaks out. Miracles accompany the preaching of the word of God. It is a revival in which "signs and wonders" put the divine stamp of authority and approval on the gospel message. People turn from paganism to Jesus Christ—from sin to salvation, from darkness to light. The new converts are baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, thus becoming full-fledged members of the church, the body of Christ. They are Christian.

Yet strangely, when the word gets back to the apostles at Jerusalem about the Samaritan revival, we find them responding, not in terms of what is happening in Samaria but in terms of what isn't happening. In the thinking of the apostles there is a vital, missing element in the miracle-working revival Philip has underway. And they are so concerned about that missing element that they send Peter and John down to the Samaritan city to take care of the omission.

What is it that's missing? The baptism in the Holy Spirit! Peter and John come down to the revival for one reason and one reason only—to lay hands on and pray for the new converts that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for as the scripture says, "The Holy Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:16-17)

So again we see quite clearly from scripture that the Holy Spirit operating in conversion is an altogether different, and prior, manifestation from the Holy Spirit's operation in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It is generally understood that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an empowering experience which introduces the Christian into the supernatural realm of the Christian life. I believe the scriptural account of the Samaritan revival bears this out. There were supernatural signs and miracles in the Samaritan revival, but obviously, they were taking place because of the anointing on Philip's ministry, since Philip was a man "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:3-5). It was the concern of the apostles that these new converts, who had met Jesus as Lord and Savior, should also experience Jesus as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, and so move into the same miraculous dimension of power which operated so vitally through Philip's ministry.

#### Acts 9:1-19 PAUL'S CONVERSION, HEALING AND BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The story in Acts 9 reveals how Saul, who be-came Paul, was converted on the road to Damascus when he was struck down by a blinding light from heaven, right in the midst of his campaign to persecute Christians. Jesus spoke from the midst of the light, saying, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" And Saul answered, "Who are you, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, who you are persecuting." So Paul met Jesus on the road to Damascus in a most dramatic way. But while he was soundly converted in that experience, he was still not equipped with power for ministry. There-fore, God picked an obscure disciple named Ananias to come and pray for Paul, not only that his sight might be restored, but that he might "be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17)

#### Acts 10:1-46 THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS CONVERTED AND BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts, chapter ten, contains the story of Peter being called to preach the gospel at the House of Cornelius. As Peter preaches the good news, those hearing are converted and are immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit with the confirming evidence of speaking in tongues. This account of the baptism in the Holy Spirit differs from the others in

the book of Acts in one major particular. The time span between accepting Jesus as Savior and subsequently receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit is greatly telescoped from a matter of weeks or days or hours to a matter of minutes.

On the day of Pentecost, it was ten days from the time Jesus promised the baptism in the Holy Spirit to his disciples until they received it. In Acts chapter eight, it was also a matter of days from the time the new converts in Samaria were converted under Philip's preaching until Peter and John arrived to administer the baptism in the Holy Spirit. And in Acts, chapter nine, Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus took place three days before God sent Ananias to pray for him to receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

According to Acts ten, Peter is preaching a Spirit-inspired sermon to the household of Cornelius, telling them about Jesus Christ. And when he reaches the point in his sermon where he proclaims forgiveness of sins for all who believe in Jesus (and the heart of the gospel is that Jesus Christ died to save sinners), the folk in Cornelius' home believe the message of salvation. Immediately, things begin to happen. Everyone who believes Peter's words is immediately baptized in the Holy Spirit. Even before Peter can conclude his sermon, "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word." (Acts 10:44)

#### Acts 19:1-8 PAUL MINISTERS THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT TO 12 DISCIPLES IN EPHESUS

The final story of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts relates how Paul discovers a small band of disciples of Jesus in Ephesus. Noticing something missing from their Christian experience, he asks, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2) By the very question he asks, Paul illustrates the truth we are stressing in this chapter - namely that conversion is one experience and baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate, subsequent experience. We could restate Paul's question in a slightly different way and not strain its meaning at all. Paul was asking the Ephesian disciples, "Have you received the baptism in the Holy Spirit since you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior?"

And when Paul discovers that not only have they not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, neither have they had Christian baptism in water, he takes care of both omissions. He baptizes them in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, then lays hands on them and prays for them to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The twelve men receive the baptism and begin praising God in tongues and prophesying.

Let us make this one final point concerning the two experiences. Everyone needs to see that conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit are not only separate experiences—they are given for separate and distinct purposes. Conversion is that experience of Jesus Christ by which the non-Christian becomes a Christian, while the baptism in the Holy Spirit is that experience for the Christian to make him a powerful Christian. It is as simple as that.

(Excerpt from *Ministering the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by Don Basham (Monroeville, PA: Whitaker Books, 1971.)