

Experiencing God: the Holy Spirit (Part One)

--- Hearts alive with the POWER of God!!! ---

Introduction

Extremes

- **Sensationalism** - WILD FIRE - Phenomena junkies, modern day relic hunters looking for gold dust, gems, manna ...etc. Manifestation obsessed, to the extent of moving off scripture into wild experience, sometimes way off scripture. They say that God isn't in a meeting unless there is some kind of a manifestation!
- **Cessationism** - NO FIRE - Total avoidance and suppression of all things to do with the Spirit because of all the excess. Also called conservative evangelicalism, where all kinds of manifestations and gifts are discouraged.

But, we trust God for Holy Fire! There is a way between these two extremes called the radical middle of Scripture, as seen in the life of Jesus!

We need both a good biblical doctrine and experiential relationship with the Holy Spirit - **KNOW & DO**
He is the first-fruits of our inheritance!

Misunderstandings

- We need to separate the Holy Spirit from His manifestations
 - He is not wind, fire, oil and water. These are some of the ways He manifests. He is God!
 - He is not a force or power, He is a person - one of the Trinity - God, very God!!! But He can cause amazing manifestations!
- We shouldn't be able to, but we do, have church without the Holy Spirit.
 - The churches Paul planted and worked with, were full of the 'charismata' or phenomenon of God - wildly so! Much of the teaching we have on the grace gifts or 'charismata', comes from Paul correcting excess in the churches. Today, we more need encouragement to get going and flow with the Spirit.
 - *What the soul is in our body, the Holy Spirit is in the body of Christ, which is the church.* Augustine.
 - *I bet you'd agree that a group of talented, charismatic leaders can draw a crowd. Find the right creative team, musicians, and speakers, and you can grow any church. It doesn't even have to be a Christian church. The fact is that without making a conscious choice to depend on the Holy Spirit, we can do a lot. (Although without the Spirit, we wouldn't actually be drawing our next breath—but I am talking about cognisant and intentional dependence on our part.) My point is that a growing and energetic gathering is not necessarily evidence of the Holy Spirit's work.* Francis Chan *The forgotten God*.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:17 *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. The Corinthians were way over the top! We are far too conservative, and need to wake up! Revelation 3:1-3 1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.'"I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*
- In this area, we are a product of our denominational backgrounds, our conservative culture, our fear and possibly even error! We need to reckon with scriptures in this regard!

The ACTS of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit picks up on what Jesus said about building His church.

Matthew 16:18 *And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

What God began in Acts 2 is unstoppable!

- 120 people prayed for 40 days in obedience to the Lord's command, to wait
- The Holy Spirit came
- 120 ordinary people were transformed into extraordinary world changers, by the Spirit of God

The work of the Spirit in Acts 2 (& 13)

For 3000 people that day, they changed from someone in the crowd to a committed believer!

The work of the Spirit: Consumes

1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The work of the Spirit: Conviction

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

The work of the Spirit: Conversion

38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." 40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." 41 So those who received his word were baptised, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

The work of the Spirit: Community

*42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, **attending the temple** together and **breaking bread in their homes**, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

NOTE: At this point the church was about 3120 strong.

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

NOTE: At this point the church was about 13120 strong, conservatively speaking!

The work of the Spirit: Commissioning

Acts 13:1-4 ¹ Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Barnabas and Saul on Cyprus ⁴ So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Paul and Barnabas are sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, to plant churches in Galatia.

The Holy Spirit is to be experienced

- There is a big difference between knowing the Holy Spirit and experiencing Him. We need both!
- Luke 7:18-23 ¹⁸ The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹ calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ²⁰ And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'" ²¹ In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²² And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have **seen and heard**: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."
- Acts 1:1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to **do and teach**.
- Psalm 34:8 Oh, **taste and see** that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
- Matthew 3:11-12 ¹¹ "I baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire**. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.
- Acts - this is how He was experienced when He came
 - Acts 1:8 But **you will receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.
 - Acts 2:4-13 ⁴ And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues** as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because **each one was hearing them speak in his own language**. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And **how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?** ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians –we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And **all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"** ¹³ But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine".
 - Acts 2:38-39 ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. ³⁹ For the **promise** is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.
 - Acts 4:31 And when they had prayed, **the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness**.

- Acts 8:9-24 9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptised he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 **for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.** 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when **Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands**, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."
- Acts 9:17-19 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And **immediately something like scales fell from his eyes**, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptised; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened.
- Acts 10:44-48 44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 **For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.** Then Peter declared, 47 "Can anyone withhold water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.
- Acts 19:1-7 1 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptised?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And **when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.** 7 There were about twelve men in all.

To summarise: this is how we experienced the Holy Spirit when we are filled

- We receive power to be witnesses
- We speak in tongues as the Spirit gives us the utterance, and praise the mighty name of God in every language under heaven.
- We could be misunderstood to be drunk with wine!
- We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as a promise from the Father
- We are enabled to speak the word of God with boldness
- What we receive when we are prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit is visible to others
- We have scales falling off our eyes so that we can see Jesus (revelation) and go into the world and preach His Gospel (mission).
- We speak in tongues and extol God.
- We speak in tongues and prophesy

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