



Week 33 -The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. He is no less God than the Father or the Son.

While on earth, Jesus assured His followers that they would not be abandoned, but that God Himself would come to them:

“But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are you going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” John 16:5-7

“Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” Acts 1:4-5

Although we can’t see Jesus in the flesh, we have God with us all the time in the Holy Spirit who lives in us! The Holy Spirit is the Promise of God sent by the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit – for All Believers

All believers, when they repent and follow Jesus, immediately receive the Holy Spirit. In the first message that Peter preached, on the inauguration of the Christian church (Acts 2:38-39), he urged all to repent, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter made clear that the Holy Spirit is for all who are called to Christ, not just a select few. It is the Holy Spirit living in us who enables us to be worshippers:

“... no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3).

It is the Holy Spirit that makes our work fruitful.

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:11-13)

Thus, the Holy Spirit is in every believer and works through the church at large. In addition to receiving the Spirit, we can be baptized or filled by the Spirit. This baptism in the Spirit is as old as the church, was purposed and effected by God, and is advantageous for all believers.

Filled with the Holy Spirit

All believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. This one-time event happens at the moment of salvation by the working of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). However, the empowering or infilling of the Spirit (which is sometimes referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, receiving the Spirit, or release of the Spirit) typically occurs after the salvation experience.

The apostles asserted the need for new believers to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

“Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-17)

Sadly, many churches today overlook this part of the Christian faith and fail to pray for new believers to receive all the blessings the Holy Spirit may wish to give them. But countless people all over the world throughout the ages have risen in faith and said, “God, I want all You have for me so I can love You and serve You more...Fill me with the Holy Spirit.”

In Luke 11:13, Jesus gave his followers a generous promise: “If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?” If we ask, we too can receive!

Consider Peter’s example. He waited in the Upper Room with the other disciples for the Holy Spirit to clothe them with power. That Pentecost, this Peter who had tearfully denied Christ three times emerges from the Upper Room with power and boldness, preaches to a crowd, even confronts them as the crucifiers of the Christ, and 3,000 got saved!

The biblical accounts of the early church show the believers continuing to have this experience:

- **Acts 2:38-39:** The Jerusalem church was filled with the Spirit after salvation.
- **Acts 8:5-17:** The Samaritans were filled with the Spirit after salvation.
- **Acts 10:44-48:** The Gentiles of Caesarea received the Holy Spirit in power during salvation.
- **Acts 11:16-18:** Paul elaborates on the Gentiles being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

- **Acts 19:1-6:** The founding of the Ephesus church was by the power of the Spirit.

Church history, even today, reveals multitudes who experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit along with spiritual gifts. The notion that spiritual gifts ceased cannot be supported scripturally, historically or experientially. God's will is to fill! And this filling of the Holy Spirit is to be a continuous experience. One filling per lifetime is never enough.

Review:

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. Is the infilling with the Holy Spirit available to all believers?
3. Name two benefits of being "Spirit-filled."