



Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? – Part 4
Various Scriptures
GCSP – 02/27/2010

The only thing I said during last week's sermon that was not led by the Holy Spirit, was that I knew what I was going to be preaching on this week. You see, I started down a path last week on the purposes of being Spirit-filled. I only dealt with two purposes, which I believe are the two first, and foremost, purposes: To be witnesses for Jesus Christ, and to be victorious over Satan and his demons and your own fleshly appetites. There are many more purposes that we have evidence of in Scripture so naturally I believed I would be working through those at least this week if not for several weeks.

I was wrong. I told you that I knew what I would be preaching on this week in my own power, and failed to ask the Holy Spirit if that was the direction He had. On Tuesday of this past week it was very strongly impressed upon me that there was some groundwork and foundation that still needed to be laid before we deal the other purposes for being Spirit-filled. It was also impressed upon me that there is no hurry; no reason to jump the gun so to speak. We are going to be studying the Holy Spirit for quite a while; so regardless of how anxious I am or you are, we must be sure to build upon a biblical foundation as we develop our understanding of the Holy Spirit.

So here we are. And here I am back to telling you once again that I have no idea what next week's sermon will be; and I will leave it at that until the Spirit tells me.

Before we get into the sermon tonight, some of you may be questioning in your mind, "How do you hear the Spirit telling you what to preach?"

I can tell you that it is not an audible voice I hear, although I have had a few experiences where it sure seemed like it was audible. But thus far during this series it is more a sense, or feeling, of discomfort when I am heading down the wrong trail and a sense of complete peace and excitement when I am on the right trail. As you know, I am reading a lot of material and listening to all manner of sermons and teachings on this topic, and there are times when I am so fully absorbed in what I am reading and/or listening to that I just know in my heart that I am to follow this path or that path.

So when I tell you that the Holy Spirit directed me in this way or told me to preach this aspect of Him this week, I know that through filling my mind with biblical teaching and preaching on Him and letting Him give me a peace and an excitement when a specific topic moves my soul. I then dive into the Word on that specific topic and He confirms it every step of the way.

Last week I just assumed I would continue with the purposes of being Spirit-filled, but it has been very clear that we will have to wait at least one more week before we continue down that path; maybe more.

The groundwork that needs to be laid tonight is making sure we are well aware that the power available to us from the filling of the Holy Spirit is the same power we see being displayed in the biblical accounts. I want to prove to you from the Bible that nothing has

changed and nothing has happened to limit what the Holy Spirit desires to do through you and me. There are many churches and denominations that teach certain gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased when the last of the Apostles died (John). I will show you their argument for why they believe that and I will show you the biblical argument for why that simply cannot be true.

I think this is vitally important; because if you have any doubts in your mind as to if the power of the Holy Spirit is meant for you, and/or if the power that is meant for you is somewhat inferior in quality and quantity as compared to what we will see in the biblical account, then much of what I expect to be preaching over the next several months will be somewhat senseless and definitely difficult, if not impossible, for you to apply to your life; and if you cannot apply God's Word and the preaching of God's Word to your life then why are you here in the first place?

If you come from a background like I did and have some hang-ups or questions about the Holy Spirit's power for today, you need to clearly see from the Bible why His power is for you today or it will be pointless and fruitless to go any further.

So turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Acts**.

Acts 1:1-8

Let's pray.

The first thing we need to clarify is what being baptized with the Holy Spirit means; or at least to clarify it as much as we can. Is there a difference between the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit? What about being clothed in the Spirit or the outpouring of the Spirit?

So drop down to chapter 2 and let me point out one connection that may help.

Acts 2:1-4

In **Acts 1:5**, Jesus tells the disciples that they will be *baptized* with the Holy Spirit not many days from now; a few days later then, in **Acts 2:4**, the Scripture says they were *filled* with the Holy Spirit.

That's pretty clear. Luke, the author of the Book of **Acts**, makes an undeniable assertion that the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit are one and the same. But there's more.

Acts 2:14-18

Through the filling of the Holy Spirit, Peter now gets up and preaches to the crowd that has amassed and explains what they are witnessing. In doing so Peter quotes the Prophecy of **Joel** and tells them this prophecy is being fulfilled before their eyes; only Joel calls it having the Holy Spirit poured out on them.

So connecting the dots here shows us that being baptized with the Holy Spirit is the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit and also is the same as having the Holy Spirit poured out on you.

But let's take it even a step further by looking at Luke's first volume of **all that Jesus began to do and teach**.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel according to **Luke**.

Luke 24:44-53

The first thing I want you to notice is that these last few verses in the Gospel according to **Luke** is an overlap of the first the several verses in the Book of **Acts**; Luke repeats himself between these two volumes of Scripture that the Holy Spirit wrote through him. We see that by the commands given by Jesus to the disciples and by the event of the Ascension (a one time occurrence).

In both accounts Jesus tells them they will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. In both accounts they are told to stay in Jerusalem until the promise of the Father is given to them; and remember from a previous sermon in **John 14:16-17**, Jesus explains the promise of the Father as being the Holy Spirit. And then we have another different terminology for what would happen when the Holy Spirit came: Again, **Acts 1:5** calls it being baptized with the Holy Spirit, but here in **Luke 24:49** it is called being clothed with power from on high.

I am sure God had a purpose for leading the men who put the canon of Scripture together to do so in the order in which they did, but I challenge you sometime to read the Gospel of **Luke** and then immediately follow it up with reading the Book of **Acts**. Both are written by Luke and they are really a two-volume record of the work and teaching of Jesus Christ.

And if you are wondering about how the work of Jesus Christ figures into the Book of **Acts** since He ascends into heaven **Acts 1:9**, remember the words of John the Baptist when he said in **Matthew 3:11**, "**As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**"

Jesus is the One who performs the baptism or filling or outpouring or clothing of the Holy Spirit in your life. So every time we see anyone being filled with Holy Spirit throughout the Book of **Acts** (and today for that matter) it is the continuance of **all that Jesus began to do and teach**.

Now let's focus in on this power that is promised, and thus be able to determine if this power is of the same quality and quantity as shown to us in Scripture.

Luke 24:49 calls it **power from on high** and **Acts 1:8** calls it **power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you**. Both accounts give us the primary purpose, which we studied last week, of being witnesses for Jesus Christ and being able to proclaim the message of salvation to the world.

The first question I have for you is this: Has the spreading of the gospel message been completed? Has the gospel message been proclaimed to every person on this planet? If you're not sure of that answer, talk to our resident missionaries, Dave & Sue. They will

tell you about the ten or twelve thousand people groups around our globe that have absolutely no gospel witness.

So if the Great Commission, if you will, has not been accomplished in its entirety; and the only way it can be accomplished is through the empowerment that accompanies the filling of the Holy Spirit, why would that power be diminished in any way, shape, or form? Why would the quality or quantity of Holy Spirit power be lessened or eliminated if the primary purpose for the power in the first place has not been accomplished? Has God given up? Did God throw up His hands and say, "What's the use? I guess I'll remove the Holy Spirit's power and see if these humans can accomplish the spreading of the gospel message on their own."

That makes no sense at all; yet this is taught and preached in many churches and denominations across the world.

So let's look at the primary proof text that is used for this position, which I believe to be false.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 Corinthians**.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10

The assertion by those who believe certain aspects of the Holy Spirit's power has been eliminated from use today, is they believe that **the perfect** has already come. Their interpretation of **the perfect** is the completed canon of Scripture. Since the Bible is the perfect and complete Word of God's revelation to mankind, there is no longer any need for prophecy and tongues and supernatural knowledge. The prophecies and the tongues and the knowledge were all just partial until the Word of God in written form was completed. Now these things are completed, so the gifts of the Holy Spirit in that regard are no longer necessary.

How these same folks lump in healing and miracles into this passage is a mystery to me; for even if their assertion is correct concerning this passage, healings and miracles are not mentioned by Paul as being partial things that will also be complete when **the perfect comes**.

But if we simply continue on in this passage we do not have to guess as to what **the perfect** is.

1 Corinthians 13:11-12

The clear connection in this passage is that Paul is comparing **the partial** with being able to **see in a mirror dimly**; he is comparing **the perfect** with seeing **fact to face**. And at the point when Paul sees **face to face** he will **know fully**.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 John**.

1 John 3:2

When will we see Jesus **just as He is**; or **face to face** so to speak? – **when He appears**, or at His Second Coming.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Revelation**.

Revelation 22:3-4

This passage is telling us about the new heaven, the new earth, the New Jerusalem; after the Second Coming. At this point in the expanse of human history do we see our God **face to face**; and that beloved is what Paul means by **the perfect**.

And not that logic really has anything to do with whether or not you believe what God says, but logically it makes all the sense in the world as well; for at what point in time is their absolutely no question that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will no longer be necessary? Of course the answer is when we are in heaven and when we are in the presence of God for all eternity. That's when we will **know fully just as we have been fully known**, not anytime before then.

Beloved, this position of the lessening of the Holy Spirit's power for the church today just doesn't hold any water when you study the Scripture with an open heart and mind. And again, even if this passage in **1 Corinthians** was saying that (and it's not), how did healing and miracles get lumped in with prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, as also being done away with for today's church?

Another argument then is, why don't we see the power of the Holy Spirit manifest in the church today like we see it in Scripture?

To answer that, allow me to repeat a quote from D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, which I have used in the past; which comes from one of his sermons on the gifts of the Holy Spirit as recorded in **Romans 12**.

"But let us look at it this way. You notice the list of gifts the apostle gives us here: '...whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.' Now I think that you will have to agree that whatever you may think of the gift of prophecy, all others are clearly gifts that have continued in the church ever since apostolic times and are in evidence at the present time. I find it almost laughable that people should say that they do not see any evidence of the gifts today. It means, of course, that they are only thinking of speaking in tongues or of prophecy or of miracles. They do not realize that all these others are equally gifts – the apostle does not seem to draw any distinction, but puts them all in the same category. We are entitled, therefore, to argue that if some of these gifts have been in evidence throughout the history of the church and still are, then why not all of them? It is a fair question, and is part of the answer to those who say that the gifts finished with the apostles."

"Another important argument is that if you feel that there is not much evidence of the working of the gifts in the church in these days, then the explanation may be the low state of spirituality of the church. One of the greatest dangers, it always seems to me, is to interpret the Scriptures in the light of our experience, instead of testing our experience by the teaching of Scripture. So often that happens at the present time. People lay down as the norm what they have and what they are familiar with, and they

test everything by that. But we should rather ask: What is the New Testament picture of the church? How do we come out when tested by that standard? And, I repeat, the result may well be that the absence of the manifestation of gifts is due solely to the low state of spirituality in the church. We know that that is true because Scripture itself teaches that. If a church backslides, or falls from the truth, or limits the truth of God, then she will loss her power, and, of course, the history of the church throughout the centuries demonstrates very clearly that this has frequently happened."

*"Let us be very careful, therefore, lest we be found to be '(twisting) the Scriptures' simply in an attempt to bolster up our prejudices, or justify our own low state of spirituality. That is what the apostle means in **1 Thessalonians 5:19** when he says, '**Quench not the Spirit.**' You lay it down to start with that certain things do not happen, cannot happen, or are not meant to happen, and then, of course, you find they do not happen. But your argument has gone in a circle and you have been altogether wrong. That is one of the most common ways of quenching the Spirit."*

When Mr. Lloyd-Jones says, "People lay down as the norm what they have and what they are familiar with, and they test everything by that", I would add that the problem is even more so what people are comfortable with and not just familiar with. Our familiarity is indeed a major problem, as some of us discussed on Wednesday night at Bible study. It is much easier for a new Christian, or a Christian who was not raised with a particular teaching on the Holy Spirit and the gifts, to accept by faith what the Bible says, or to believe what they read instead of reading what they believe, than it is for a long-time Christian to unlearn some things that do not mesh with the accurate teaching of Scripture.

But even when we can get past what we are familiar with we will then sometimes struggle with what we are not comfortable with. It is a very comfortable Christian existence to stick with the things we can quantify and touch and taste and smell and see and hear, and beloved, the Holy Spirit will not be reduced down to something you can touch and taste and smell and see and hear. Our human senses and logic and ideas cannot and will not confine and contain the Holy Spirit.

Christians, including us, love to put God in a box. And the box we put Him in is based on how much of His Word we truly believe. If you only believe a little, you have Him in a little box. If you believe a lot of God's Word, you have Him in a bigger box, but it is still a box nonetheless. And if you say you believe all of God's Word, which we really and truly don't most of the time, you have God in an even bigger box. Regardless of where you fall on this imaginary scale I have illustrated, you confine God and the working of the Holy Spirit according to the size of your box, which is actually the size of your comfort; and any box is infinitely too small to contain God!

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **James**.

James 4:1-10

So what is the source of quarrels and conflicts? Satan obviously has a part according to **verse 7**. Being a friend of the world also has a part according to **verse 4**. Our pride, and thus lack of humility also plays a big part according to **verse 6** and **verse 10**. But when you really boil it all down, **verse 5** probably gives us the most complete answer; it

says, **“Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us’?”**

Beloved, James is telling us in this verse that God’s desire is for the Spirit within us to control us, or to fill us, or to baptize us, or to be poured out over us, or for us to be clothed with His power – whichever terminology you wish to choose. God is telling us we must blow up our boxes and burn them forevermore!

The reason we have quarrels and conflicts is because all of us have a different size box and thus all of us have a different size god. You’re not comfortable with the size of my box and I’m not comfortable with the size of yours, and every one of us are making God jealous because whatever size box we have it is a god of our own choosing and not the God of the Bible! And if we cannot see the God of the Bible for who He is, we will never see the complete truth of the power of the Holy Spirit according to the Bible!

So how big is your box?

Let’s pray.