



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? - Part 15**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP - 05/22/2010**

Let's pray.

For much of my vocational life I have been in sales of one type or another. Some of the companies I have worked for are good at training and others are totally deficient. In addition to the company sponsored training, I have accumulated quite a few books and audio training in the field of sales; again, some good and some not so good.

All of the training I received was good at the theory of sales and the nuts and bolts of what should work, but most stopped there. Rarely would the materials or the training take it to the next level and focus on specific and simple steps that need to be followed to be successful; or it was not emphasized enough that here is what you do to make all of this knowledge now work for you.

I can recall many times being frustrated to no end when I had the knowledge to sell but still did not have the practice under my belt to become proficient. On rare occasions I had a sales leader who almost literally took me by the hand and walked me through step-by-step. Then it finally made sense to me; theory was now practical.

One of the most difficult tasks any preacher or teacher of God's Word has is to make practical application for the principles that are taught. The primary focus when preparing a lesson or a sermon is to know the text through and through, and to communicate the truth of that text in a meaningful way. Unfortunately, the excitement of unfolding the truth of God's Word can be so great at times that we forget to make the necessary connections to your life on a practical level.

Most, become proficient at teaching the "what" and the "why" meaning we can tell you what Scripture is teaching and why you should be responding to it, but we fall off when it comes to telling or showing you "how" to make the transition from theory to practice. Whether we assume that it should be obvious or we simply forget this vital step, I'm not sure. But it is indeed a vital step. Sometimes I believe we think we are including application but our communication is lacking and it doesn't come across that way to the audience.

Hopefully, this topic of the baptism with the Holy Spirit will reach the practical aspect this evening. Two weeks ago I posed five questions concerning the baptism with or filling of the Holy Spirit. We answered two of them two weeks ago and another two of them last week. This brings us to the final one, which is the "how" or the turning theory into practice. Let's do a quick review first.

1. What is the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

It is a distinct event when the combination of you being open and prepared meets the Holy Spirit's activity in your life for His purposes. It is separate from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that all genuine believers receive at salvation.

2. What are the results of baptism with the Holy Spirit?

According to every incident described in Scripture, the results are power for the purpose of testimony and/or service. The baptism with or filling of the Holy Spirit is never for your own edification but always for others. Even if you experience the gift of tongues in a private prayer language, the results of those prayers will be manifest in the lives of others, whether for salvation (testimony) or for edification (service).

The power you will receive is the key because it will be the Holy Spirit's power that flows through every spiritual gift you ever operate in. It will be a power to do and accomplish what you could not do or accomplish on your own. Talent, education, and natural abilities are not needed when the Holy Spirit's power is being manifest through you. He may use your talents, education, and natural abilities, but they are definitely not required.

### 3. Who needs to be baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Anyone who is called to tell others about Jesus; and that includes every believer from the moment the Lord saves them. There are no exceptions, no excuses, and no qualifications other than being a genuine believer. So if you are a genuine believer, you need the baptism with the Holy Spirit, plain and simple. Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ needs to be baptized with the Holy Spirit in an ongoing manner if he or she is going to be obedient to the Lord's calling to testimony and service.

There is a lot more discussion on this in last week's sermon, so pick up a CD if you missed it.

### 4. Who can be baptized with the Holy Spirit?

In **Acts 2:38-39** it is abundantly clear that this gift is for everyone who comes to Christ in repentance. Most ignore or reject the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but it is a gift that is available to them nonetheless.

So that is the "what" and the "why" so let's now make that vital connection to the "how."

### 5. How do you obtain the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

If this is my spiritual birthright, if this is the only way I will truly be in line with God's plans and purposes for my life, and if this is needed to be obedient to God's Word, how do I get there? How do I obtain the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

Before we answer that, let me pose a few more questions; and these are not rhetorical questions, I want you to respond.

- Are the commands of Scripture optional for genuine Christians to follow through with if they desire fellowship with God and growth in their Spiritual lives?

We can choose to disobey but God's commands are not optional for the genuine believer who desires to grow spiritually.

- Are there any commands of Scripture that God does not also empower you to be able to accomplish; meaning, will God command something and then leave you on your own to accomplish it in your own power?

God always enables and empowers you to accomplish what He calls you to do. This is the entire reason and purpose of the Spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit endows us with individually as He desires. And this is why the variety of gifts is as vast as God is and why no single gift could possibly be the litmus test as to whether or not you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit; every Spiritual gift is confirmation of that.

- If God's Word says you will receive a specific result if you do a specific thing, does that mean you might receive that result, or you will probably receive that result, or does it mean you will receive that result?

In the Word of God there is a very plain path laid down consisting of a few simple steps that any believer can take, and it is absolutely certain that anyone who follows this path will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Turn with me in your Bibles once again to the Book of **Acts**.

### **Acts 2:38**

We will look at several other verses to expand upon the simplicity of this statement made by Peter, but everything you need is right in front of you. If you are like me, you have always viewed this verse as only talking about salvation, but Scripture is clear that water baptism is not necessary for salvation; case in point, the thief on the cross. When he asked Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom, Jesus didn't say, "I would love to my friend but we have no way of getting you baptized before you die." No, Jesus said, "**Today you shall be with Me in Paradise**" (**Luke 23:39-43**).

We also saw last week that this passage, along with **verse 39**, very plainly refers to baptism with the Holy Spirit and not just salvation and the initial indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I won't go through that study again tonight but last week's sermon makes that clear if you missed it or need to review.

So let's take this verse apart and work through step-by-step.

### **Step 1 – Repent: A Change of Mind Concerning Jesus Christ**

Peter begins with, "**Repent.**" What is repentance? Many people wrongly associate confession with repentance, thinking they are the same thing. An over-simplified way to understand the difference between confession and repentance would be this: confession is similar to saying your sorry, repentance is making amends and changing your ways so the infraction doesn't happen again.

With that in mind, repentance is a distinct and certain change of mind with a corresponding change of behavior. In the context of our passage in the Book of **Acts**, we must ask, what change of mind is Peter speaking of?

Peter is referring to a change of mind concerning God and concerning sin, but he is primarily referring to a change of mind concerning Jesus.

### **Acts 2:36-37**

Through the power of the Holy Spirit (Peter's own baptism with the Spirit as recorded in **Acts 2:1-4**) Peter preached boldly (testimony) and effectively the "what" and the "why."

And this was proclaimed so clearly that the people begged him for the “how.” **“What shall we do?” They were pierced to the heart;** the conviction of their sins, their wrong ideas about God and their wrong ideas about Jesus overwhelmed them with guilt and desperation.

How horrified would you be after realizing that because of your actions and/or indifference, that the Son of God was tortured and killed? He was in your presence and walking among you and you missed it; can you imagine the shock and that sick feeling in your stomach? Then can you imagine the guilt and the desperation they felt?

So when Peter calls them to repent, the first sense of the word is for them to change their mind concerning Jesus Christ; to realize that He is both the Messiah and the Lord and Master of their lives. And what is implied here and affirmed throughout Scripture is that this change of mind must be completely by faith. **Romans 3:20** says, **“By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight.”** We must rest entirely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, not upon any works that we have done.

It’s as simple as this: Are you a two-letter Christian or a four-letter Christian? Two-letter Christians base their Christianity on DO, D-O. They are wrapped up in works and what they do to in essence earn their salvation. Four-letter Christians base their Christianity on DONE, D-O-N-E; trusting completely on what Jesus did on the cross not on any works we can do. If we base even the smallest piece of our salvation on our own works, we are proclaiming that what Jesus did was insufficient.

If you want to study this concept out a little more on your own, start with **Galatians 3**.

So the very first step toward obtaining the baptism with the Holy Spirit is to repent by changing your mind about Jesus Christ and resting entirely and absolutely on what He already did on the cross, and not on anything you have done.

#### **Step 2 – Repent: A Change of Mind Concerning Sin**

The vast majority of Christians have not renounced sin; we have never changed our minds concerning sin. Yes, we may have renounced certain sins or even most sins, but we have kept our pet sins tucked away and hidden from view (or so we think). If you truly desire the baptism with the Holy Spirit a choice must be made. The Holy Spirit will not baptize you or fill you while you are hanging on to unholy sin.

Hold your place in **Acts** and turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **2 Corinthians**.

#### **2 Corinthians 6:14-18**

This is the gist of what most Christians are missing when it comes to receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit; they are attempting to be **“unequally yoked”** as the KJV puts it. Only we are trying to yoke, or bind together, the Holy Spirit with our pet sins, and that is simply impossible and completely out of the question.

There is no fellowship with the Holy Spirit and sin; absolutely none! “But it’s just a small sin” many will say, trying to justify their sin. Beloved, there is no such thing as a small sin. There may indeed be sins about small things but that does not make it a small sin. Every sin is an act of rebellion against God and every sin will block the promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit; another reason that we must seek this on a continual basis rather than relying on yesterday’s filling for today’s ministry.

Your “pet” sin may be a Toy Poodle in your eyes, but it is a rampaging Grizzly Bear in God’s eyes. So let that image sink into your mind the next time you justify or excuse your “small” sin; what kind of damage would a Grizzly inflict as compared to a Toy Poodle?

The question may come up as to how to identify your pet sins; because you may feel you have become so comfortable with them that you have long since become desensitized to them.

My response would initially be, you know what they are, because the Holy Spirit brings them to mind more often than you want to admit. But if you are genuinely concerned that there may be some lingering sin that you have either forgotten or do not recognize as sin, there is a way to find them out.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the **Psalms**.

### **Psalm 19:7-14**

The example here is to desire God’s Word more than anything. The picture painted in this passage is that if you had the choice between a dump truck full of pure gold and the Word of God, and you could only have one of them, you would choose the Word of God. As you thirst and hunger for and immerse yourself in the Word of God, it says you will be warned, you will receive reward, you will be able to discern your errors and discover your hidden faults, you will be kept back from presumptuous sins, sin will not be able to rule over you, and the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart will be acceptable in the sight of God.

And you will thus have the change of mind concerning sin that is in line with receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

### **Step 3 – Open Confession Before the World**

Back now in **Acts 2:38**, Peter adds, “**...and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...**”

I am not going to get into the whole theology of water baptism other than the fact that the Biblical record is clear that water baptism is via immersion and not pouring or sprinkling, and what the act of water baptism represents. And what water baptism represents is the key to our discussion this evening.

Water baptism during the time of Peter in the New Testament was considered to be beneath a Jew. It was a humiliating act reserved only for the Gentiles who desired to convert to Judaism; somewhat similar to the humiliating pranks a fraternity imposes upon their pledges. So for a Jew to submit to water baptism was a major deal; and remember, this initial sermon of Peter’s was preached to an exclusively Jewish audience.

For a Jew to be publicly baptized in water would have required a genuine conversion, and being baptized was then making an open confession to the world that he was renouncing sin and proclaiming Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Water baptism is an undeniable picture of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and those who submit to this baptism are publicly declaring their obedience and allegiance to Him; there was a cost.

The Scripture is clear that water baptism is the very first step of obedience to Christ after salvation, which implies the next step toward receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

#### Step 4 – Obedience

Turn over with me in your Bibles a few pages to **chapter 5**.

#### **Acts 5:32**

This is not a half-hearted or occasional kind of obedience this is an unconditional surrender of your will to God. This is not the kind of obedience that says, “I know I need to make some changes in my life and I will eventually” this is the understanding that delayed obedience is not obedience at all; this is laying yourself on the altar and telling God to do with you as He pleases. This is the “**Here am I, send me**” kind of obedience.

Complete surrender is extremely difficult for most of because most of us are control freaks to one extent or another and complete surrender means giving up any and all control you wish to hang onto; but this is what genuine obedience is.

#### Step 5 – Thirst

We have already touched on this when we looked at **Psalm 19** so let me just add a little more support to the concept from the Gospel of **John** and from the Prophecy of **Isaiah**.

#### **John 7:37-39**

Most of us do not truly understand real thirst. The sense in which Jesus speaks of thirst is that of needing a drink of water or you will die. Going back to **Psalm 19**, its grabbing hold of God’s Word and leaving the dump truck full of gold behind.

#### **Isaiah 44:3**

Notice how he contrasts and compares pouring water onto the dry and cracked soil with pouring out His Holy Spirit on His people. That’s the picture we need to have concerning thirsting for the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

#### Step 6 – Ask

We looked at this several sermons ago so let’s just quickly review.

#### **Luke 11:13**

I really hope that I do not need to elaborate on this because it is really as simple as it appears; ask God for it. Pray to receive the gift, the baptism, the filling of the Holy Spirit.

#### Step 7 – Believe

The last phrase in **Acts 2:38** says, “**...and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”

Turn with me in your Bibles to two final passages this evening; one in the Gospel of **Mark** and the other in the Book of **1 John**.

#### **Mark 11:24**

Simply expect that God has already given you what you have asked for. This is the pinnacle of our faith; believing that we have already received what we have asked for. God’s Word is definite and clear that we will not realize in our own experience anything before we believe it to be.

**1 John 5:14-15**

Again, the same principle: Our faith is that we already know we have what we have asked for, not that we will eventually receive what we have asked for.

**Joel 3:10** says, “**Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’**” And the sense of that verse is not just speaking words to try and convince yourself but of genuine belief that you are indeed strong. I can’t make this point any clearer than it already is in your Bible. And believing you have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit is no different than anything else you pray for in genuine faith.

So to sum it all up, to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

- Repent; have a change of mind concerning Jesus Christ (Lordship)
- Repent; have a change of mind concerning your sin
- Openly confess your renouncement of sin and allegiance to Jesus through water baptism
- Obedience; complete surrender to God’s will
- Thirst; desire God and His Word above all else
- Ask; pray to God for the baptism with the Holy Spirit
- Believe; have the kind of faith that says you already have what you asked for

Let’s pray.