



# 1

## **I WAS EXHAUSTED.**

Like many pastors and laymen, I was weary from doing well.

Overload had tripped my spiritual circuit-breaker.

I had a shelf full of success books. Had read them all. Had put most of the principles into practice. By resorting to a lot of what I would later call might and power stuff I had, at a still young age, done rather well for myself.

But I was empty.

Running on fumes.

On the outside glib and self-assured.

Maybe even arrogant.

On the inside desperate and lonely.

I felt disconnected. How could it have come to this? I had asked God to give me a pastor's heart. And he did. What had gone wrong? How could a lifeway which held so much promise produce so much pain?

With all the enthusiasm of an iron stag I pushed myself up several flights of stairs. There were rows of empty seats in the upper balcony. Picking one at the top, I settled down.

Not much going on up here, I told myself. Might even get a nap. This was one of those annual must attend meetings. At least, when I got back home, I could say I was there.

The speaker was pretty good. But my distress was sufficiently deep that I found it hard to concentrate until he began a story about Sir Joshua Reynolds, the famous sculptor. It seems Sir Reynolds had been asked to critique a recently completed piece of sculpture and undertook the task with characteristic care.

He circled the piece several times making comments like:

Your composition is good, and the theme is important.

Later he added,

Your craftsmanship is outstanding.

Then he paused, as though puzzled, and finally with a snap of his fingers said:

But it needs *THAT*!

When the preacher spoke those words, accompanied by *THAT* finger snapping gesture, God got my attention. Bells went off in my spirit. Light flashed in my soul. In that way I know to be his speaking to me, God said:

John, *THAT* is missing in your life.

An absence of *THAT* is what's holding my people back!

And what was *THAT*? I knew immediately. A spiritual disconnect had occurred. I was missing *THAT* spiritual power for which no amount of flesh activity can compensate. Earlier in my life I had connected with God as Father. Later in my spiritual journey, I had connected with God as Son. Now I needed to connect with God as Holy Spirit.

I decided I'd better do something about *THAT*.

## 2

### **DID IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

Not at first.

I continued

my downward

spiral for

two more weeks.

Then I crashed. Despite my public might and power prowess, I was forced to face my personal fragility. It was a stark moment. Bleak and biting. As I was to learn, it was also seminal.

For months I had been going through a painful kaleidoscope of negative experiences. I hate to admit it, but, if I'm going to be helpful to you, I must be honest.

*Somewhere along the line I allowed a seed of bitterness to take root.*

Hebrews 12:15 warns that when we do that, we open ourselves to all kinds of trouble: emotional, relational, professional and spiritual. That's what happened to me.

My attitude was terrible.

My demeanor, at times, left a lot to be desired.

Important relationships were frayed.

My marriage was strained to the breaking point.

To quote my untutored but street-wise father,  
The devil had me in his sifter,  
but God had me by the coattails.  
God was good, but I was a mess.

To make a long story short, God used a soft-spoken prayer warrior with the gift of discernment to deliver me from satanic oppression. My healing was so complete, I can't tell you today what it feels like to be bitter!

Some serious confession, repentance, forgiveness and fence-mending were required on my part.

But, thank God, before the evening was over  
the Holy Spirit came in fullness.  
I have never felt so clean!  
Best of all, both the Father and the Son had never been so dear.

As a born again evangelical I had no theology for what had happened. Most folks like me were wary of things Pentecostal. Maybe you still are. Was there a Biblical basis for what God was doing in my life? There had to be or it was a sham.

Quietly, consciously and deliberately I asked the Counselor,  
the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said, will teach you all things (Jn.14:26)  
to enlighten me about himself and the role he was meant to play in my life.

What I learned was that I had to become truly trinitarian.

I had to give the third person of the trinity the prerogatives of Deity.

# 3

## **THE TRIUNITY OF GOD IS A MYSTERY.**

While the essence of mystery is that it cannot be told, God's triunity is disclosed in a triad of God's self-revelations.

The creation is God's revelation in space.

The bible is God's revelation in language.

The incarnation is God's revelation in person.

These three speak in unison to the fact of God's triunity.

The mystery of God being three in one, or one in three, is a puzzlement but it is not past believing. A simple graphic may be helpful.



Starting at the hub and moving outward, notice how, in nature or being, God is one in three. God is Father. God is Son. God is Holy Spirit.

Shifting to the rim you see how, in function or operation, God is three in one. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet all three are God. There is distinction, but not separation.\*

My predicament lay in the fact that I was unfamiliar with one third of this triunity. The Holy Spirit was, so to speak, out of focus for me.



The word of God through the prophet Zechariah is as accurate today as it was over 2000 years ago:

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts”  
(Zech. 4:6b).

Sadly, there are many born again believers for whom, *THAT*—the Holy Spirit—is missing.

They are “might and power” people, just as I was.

In my case, thank God, there was also a void which ached for *Something More*.

\*For a fuller study of God’s triunity and his immeasurable meaning to you secure a copy of J. Sidlow Baxter’s scholarly work *The God You Should Know* published by Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, Mi 49501.

## 4

### **A GENTLE MENTAL EXERCISE.**

The events recorded in the first two chapters of Acts may be well known to you but, just to be safe, let's review them quickly.

Dr. Luke connects this book,

which he is just beginning,

with “the former treatise”—the gospel of Luke—he had previously finished (Acts 1:1-4).

He quotes Jesus as telling his disciples:

“...before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5),  
and that—first half of verse 8—they will

“...receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

This is followed by a reiteration of the great commission (Acts 1:8b),

after which Jesus ascends into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

The disciples return to the upper room where earlier they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit  
and were born again (Jn. 20:22; Acts 1:12-23).



They spend ten days releasing more and more of themselves to the indwelling Spirit's control (Acts 1:14-26).

As a result, when the day of Pentecost arrives, they are ready to play a part in the Great Events which occur that day (Acts 2: 1-41).

In Acts 3:1-10 there is recorded the wonderful healing of "a man lame from birth" as Peter and John begin ministering in the power of the Spirit.

The narrative continues in verse 11 and we learn the people were "astounded." They are deeply moved when, in verse 14, Peter admonishes them for having been part of the group which "denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of Life..." (Acts 3:14-16).

Then, in verse 17, Peter speaks a wonderful word of Grace to this troubled people: "...I know *you acted in ignorance* (italics mine), as did also your rulers. But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled."

And then this powerful word in Acts 3:19:

"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

## 5

### **REPENTANCE: A TURNING FROM AND A TURNING TO.**

It's an old word: "Repent." So old, perhaps, you may not be acquainted with it. Put simply:

It means a turning.

First of all, a turning *from*.

I won't try to define what that means for you.

What you need to turn *from* is between you and God.

You know what you need to turn *from*.

You know the priorities,

goals,

attitudes,

and actions

which are badly out of focus.

What you need to turn *from* is between you and God.

But repentance is not only a turning *from*, it is also a turning *to*.

And there's no question about *that* aspect of your repentance.

There may be some question about what you need to turn *from*,  
but whom you must turn *to* is clear. There's no doubt about that.  
You turn to Jesus!

A friend shared a deep concern for her spouse. He had a drinking problem. After a lengthy period of sobriety, he started drinking again. She said,  
“The problem is, he never replaced alcohol with anything.”

The mystery of Godliness,  
the mystery of power,  
the mystery of victory  
over whatever it is you need to turn *from* is no mystery at all. The solution is simple. It lies in  
Whom you turn *to*.

And, wonder of wonders, the closer you get to Jesus the weaker will be  
the backward,  
downward tug  
of whatever you choose to turn *from*!

## 6

### **AN INVITATION.**

The apostle Peter calls for

“times of refreshing from the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Times of deep, personal, soul-searching.

Times during which you reconnect with the Holy Spirit.

Times when—maybe for the first time in your whole Christian experience—you give the Holy Spirit a chance to gain access to

the control center of your life

where things happen and change occurs.

It’s an open invitation. Will you give some thought to accepting it?

### **THE MENU WILL FEATURE FRUIT.**

*The conclusive evidence of your being filled with the Holy Spirit  
is not the presence of one of the Spirit’s gifts, such as tongues,  
it is the production of the Spirit’s fruit in your life.*

Jesus said, “You shall know them by their *fruit*” (Mt. 7:20).

Consider the possibility that a young couple of identical skin pigmentation marry. Some time later, the young bride gives birth to a baby of a different color. Clearly they have a problem. The evidence is inescapable. She's been unfaithful to her bridegroom. She's been whoring with some other man and has born his seed.

You are part of the bride of Christ (Rev. 19:7). He is your heavenly bridegroom.

When your life does not bear the fruit of *his* Spirit,  
when your life gives evidence of some *other* kind of fruit,  
the evidence is clear.

You've been unfaithful to your bridegroom.

You've been guilty of spiritual adultery.

You've been disloyal to Jesus.

There is only one remedy. It's so old, it may be new to you. But, it's the only remedy there is.

“Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sin may be blotted out,  
that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

Will you consider the remedy?

# 7

## **LET’S BEGIN AT THE BEGINNING.**

There’s a good deal to be said for the suggestion that every 2 or 3 years all those who claim to be Christian should forget what they “know” about the Holy Spirit and look at him again as if for the first time.

Many believers have a superficial knowledge of the third person of the Trinity. You may be one of them. While such casual familiarity with the Holy Spirit does not necessarily breed contempt, it has, in thousands of Christians, produced confusion, if not indifference.

You appear to be ready to give the Spirit an opportunity to touch you in a fresh way. If that’s going to happen, you must do what I did.

Get acquainted with the person of the Holy Spirit *Himself*.

## **NOT THE GIFTS, BUT THE GIVER.**

You may be fascinated with the gifts of the Spirit. And you should be. They are wonderful gifts. The Holy Spirit gives them to equip you for ministry.

However, right now

*your primary concern should not be the gifts, but the Giver himself.*

The bottom line evidence that you know the Giver—that you are directed and empowered by the Spirit himself—is not the possession of a particular gift (tongues, for example), but the production of a special kind of fruit:

“The fruit of the Spirit (which) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Gal. 5:22-23).

This will begin to happen as you get squared away with what scripture says about the Holy Spirit’s ministry to you, personally.

There are seven words which describe seven different facets  
of the Spirit’s ministry to you as a Christian.

These are highlighted in seven verses of scripture.

Each *verse* employs a different word to describe a different aspect of the Spirit’s ministry.

Each *word* has its own weight and meaning.

*A combination* of these seven words  
reveals the mind-blowing benefits available *to* you  
through the person and work of the Holy Spirit *in* you.

## 8

### **THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The first of these seven verses is Acts 10:45—

“And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the **gift** (key word) of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.”

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he instructed his disciples to wait for

“the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4).

He had challenged them to

“go into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mk. 16:15).

He knew they could not fulfill this Great Commission on their own.

So Jesus promised them

God would endue them with special power for the special task to which they had been called (Acts 1:8).

Sure enough,

“when the day of Pentecost had come...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4).



Then—to their amazement—as they began fulfilling their ministry to the world, they learned:

The **gift** of the Holy Spirit was not limited to Jewish Christians!

As they moved about and talked with Gentile Christians,  
they discovered the **gift** of the Holy Spirit  
had also been given to them (Acts 10:45; 11:17).

Thus was revealed a wonderful reality—

You don't need to be a special kind of Christian  
to enjoy the **gift** of the Holy Spirit.

## 9

### **POSSESSING YOUR INHERITANCE.**

Like any **gift**, the Holy Spirit has to be *acknowledged* (key word) and *appropriated* (key word) to be fully enjoyed.

There is a difference, you see, between an inheritance and a possession.

The promised land was God's **gift** to the children of Israel. It was their inheritance.

Their possession was that *part* of their inheritance  
they actually *appropriated*.

To their regret and loss they never did claim all God had promised!

In exactly the same way, God has given all believers the **gift** of the Holy Spirit. He is part of the salvation package.

"Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit does not belong to him"  
(Rom. 8:9b).

But you must *acknowledge* and *appropriate* the **gift** of the Holy Spirit if, from a *functional* point of view, the Spirit is to be your possession.

Just because God has given the **gift** of the Holy Spirit to all believers, it does not follow that all believers are enjoying the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Obviously they are not.

What God has given, you must *acknowledge* and *appropriate*. Your inheritance does not become your possession until you claim it as your own.

That doesn't mean you must beg or plead for the **gift** of the Holy Spirit. To beg for something is to attempt to gain of favor. Or to attempt to acquire that which is not your own.

When you claim something, you merely take possession of a resource which is already yours.

If, for example, you have \$500 in the bank and receive a bill in the mail for \$50, you don't go to your banker and, with hat in hand, beg him or her to give you \$50.

You simply write a check for that amount and claim the resource which is already yours.

The same is true with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

You don't need to beg for him,  
or work for him,  
or tarry for him

as if to overcome a reluctance on God's part to release this **gift** to you.

No! All you need to do is claim the resource God has already given you.

The Spirit *is* yours existentially. He will *become* yours experientially when, by faith you *acknowledge* the **gift** of the Holy Spirit and, by a deliberate act of the will, *appropriate* him as your own.

In that moment your inheritance will become your possession.

# 10

## HOW TO APPROPRIATE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If you are uncertain as to whether or not you have possessed your full inheritance, pray this prayer—*aloud*—so your ears will hear what your mouth is saying:

Lord, I don't know whether or not I've ever done this.

If I haven't, I do it now.

By faith I *acknowledge* the gift of the Holy Spirit,  
and by deliberate choice I *appropriate* him as my own.

I chose to possess my full inheritance in Christ.

Take control of my life.

Cause me to naturally and spontaneously  
bear the fruit of the Spirit for the benefit of others.

Thank you for doing this.

In Jesus' name, amen.

I've found it useful to record meaningful decisions so later, when the enemy calls one of them into question, I have a "twelve stones" memory tool with which to resist him (Jos. 4:1-7).

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

From the pen of George Croly comes one of the most powerful prayers ever written. I “discovered” it when I began using our hymn book as a prayer book. It is one of my favorites. I pray it often. Sometimes several times a day.

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;  
Wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;  
Stoop to my weakness, mighty as you are,  
And help me love you as I ought to love.

I ask no dream, no prophet ecstasies,  
No sudden rending of this veil of clay,  
No angel visitant, no opening skies;  
Just take the dimness of my soul away.

Teach me to feel that you are always nigh;  
Teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,  
To check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;  
Teach me the patience of unanswered prayer.

Teach me to love you as your angels love,  
One holy passion filling all my frame;  
The baptism of the heaven-descending dove;  
My heart an altar, and your love the flame.

In Jesus name, amen.

# 11

## WHAT HAPPENED JUST NOW?

This is a holy moment.

Maybe you'll want to put this book down

and take some time to reflect on

your inner thoughts and feelings.

Then, try to put them into words. Use the space below, if you wish.

When I prayed a similar prayer I had expected there to be “fireworks.” John Wesley told of seeing a shaft of light. Others spoke of receiving the gift of tongues. Nothing like that happened.

At first I was disappointed at how calm I was. Then a quiet sense of wonder came over me.

It had been so *simple*!

A question flashed through my mind. How could I be sure something *did* happen? It had to be harder than just *asking*!

Another question posed itself. How did I know I was saved? That was easy. God had said,

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13).

I had done that as a boy of nine. As I reflected on my conversion, I realized there had been no “fireworks” on that occasion either. I had simply taken God at his word and that was that! In a moment of childlike faith, I ceased to be a creature of time and became a citizen of eternity.

With similar certainty I chuckled at how simple it was to appropriate the gift of the Holy Spirit which had been lying dormant, waiting to be released.

Years later—I’m really *s l o w* on the up-take—it hit me.

*My chuckle had been joy. Part of the Spirit’s fruit!*

That delightful insight evoked a kind of holy hilarity and awed by the wonder of it all, this time I laughed out loud!

How can you be sure you got what you asked for a moment ago? There’s a promise you can take to the bank.

“If you, being evil,  
know how to give good gifts to your children,  
how much more will the heavenly Father  
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him” (Lk. 11:13).

The Bible is God’s written word, isn’t it? He means exactly what he says, doesn’t he?

God said he will “give the Holy Spirit *to those who ask him!*”

You did that didn’t you? Therefore, you can know you have the **gift** of the Holy Spirit  
*because God said so.*

# 12

## THE SEAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Now that you have *acknowledged* and *appropriated* the gift of the Holy Spirit, take a look at the second facet of the Spirit's ministry to you. It's revealed in the second of these seven verses.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God in whom you are **sealed**  
(key word) for the day of redemption” (Eph. 4:30).

There are two purposes of a **seal**. One is to identify the object sealed. It's significant that reference to this particular work of the Holy Spirit is found in the book of Ephesians.

William Barkley, a remarkably gifted expositor points out,

Ephesus was a sea port and a center for the lumber industry.

Merchants from all over the world came to Ephesus to purchase

lumber. They couldn't cart it home in a suitcase. It had to

be transported over land and/or water to its final destination.

So, when they completed a purchase they put their **seal** on it.

As Barkley explains,

It was a mark of identification which indicated to all that, from



the point of purchase until it arrived at its final destination, this particular load of lumber was the possession of a particular person. When it arrived at its destination the owner redeemed it by presenting a bill of sale indicating he had bought and paid for it.

I'm told the lumber industry still follows this procedure. The analogy is clear. You have been bought for a price:

The precious blood of Jesus (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 1:5b).

But when you became God's child—his possession—he didn't take you immediately to be with him in heaven. Rather, he allowed you to remain here on earth to fulfill a ministry to the world.

*God's game plan is not only to get you into heaven,  
but to also get himself into you—on earth!*

So the Holy Spirit **seals** you.

He puts God's stamp of identification upon you.

Throughout your life-long journey,  
from the moment of your conversion  
until you reach your home in heaven,  
the Holy Spirit identifies you as  
the possession of a particular person.

You belong to Jesus who purchased you with His blood!

# 13

## THE MATTER OF TEMPTATION.

Temptation is not unique to you. It's common to all people.

Jesus was tempted and gained victory over it. So can you.

Here's how. Confront satan with the **seal** of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's **seal** is God's way of saying to the adversary:

“Hands off, satan! This person belongs to Me.

You have no authority here.”

The other day I was talking to a young fellow and noticed he had a small medallion around his neck. It read:

*“Property of Jesus Christ.”*

What a wonderful way to deal with temptation. Just remind the adversary—*and yourself*—that the Holy Spirit, your special gift from God, has **sealed** you. He has identified you as God's property and that

“God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (1 Cor. 10:13b).

This raises a principle dealt with more fully in my book *Marriage At It's Best*. As a born again Christian you have been **sealed** by the Holy Spirit so nothing can come to you without God's knowledge and consent.

God does not ordain everything he allows, but he is committed to use everything he allows to fulfill what he ordains (Rom. 8:28-30).

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God wants you to experience his highest so you may become your best.

To do this, he filters everything—*everything!*—the world, the flesh and the devil hurl at you through his love for you.

In this way, temptations become his permissive will for you.

Why?

Temptations expose areas where you still need to grow.

# 14

## **A MARK OF SECURITY.**

A second purpose of a **seal** is to secure, or assure, that which is sealed.

Once you have been born again you become God's child forever.

*Your spiritual growth curve may be in question from time to time,  
but never your new birth.\**

There is nothing you can do to alter the physical DNA which establishes a physical relationship between you and your parents as a result of your natural birth. Similarly, there is nothing you can do alter the spiritual DNA which establishes a spiritual relationship between you and your Heavenly Father as a result of your spiritual birth.

When you came to God through Christ the door to heaven was opened.

The door to hell was closed. Forever!

There wasn't anything good enough you could do to get your salvation.

There isn't anything good enough you can do to keep your salvation.

There isn't anything bad enough you can do to lose your salvation.

Your salvation was, is and always will be, a gift of God's grace.

It was while you were at your worst that he loved you and reached out to save you.

“But God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that  
*while we were yet sinners* (italics mine), Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8).

You are saved by grace through faith *plus nothing*.

While you are not saved *by* good works (Eph. 2:8, 9), you are saved *for* good works

“*which God prepared beforehand*, (imagine that!)  
that (you) should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10).

*This means you have a destiny!*

There are blessings in time and rewards in eternity which will flow to you  
when you walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

This does not mean you can go into the world and relax,  
but that you can go into the world relaxed!

The Holy Spirit—God’s special gift to you—**seals** you.

He identifies you  
and, at the same time,  
he secures you  
until you reach your final destination.

Then, your blessed Lord will step forward to claim you by presenting a bill of sale, signed in the crimson of his cross, indicating he has paid for you and identifies you as his own.

Is that great or what!

\* Jn. 3:16-18, 36; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:1-9, 20-21; 8:31-39; 11:29; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 8:12; 10:16-17

# 15

## THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

There is a third verse to which I would direct your attention:

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit **dwells** in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16).

The key word is **dwells** and identifies the Holy Spirit as **an indwelling presence**.

During his last days on earth, Jesus talked a great deal about the Holy Spirit. One of the things he said to his disciples is recorded in Jn. 14:17—

“The Spirit **dwells** (present tense) *with* you and will be (future tense) *in* you” (italics mine).

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WITH AND IN.

He was speaking of an important change which was about to occur in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. That change is described in two little words: “*with*” and “*in*”.

The Spirit is (in the now) *with* you and shall (in the future) be *in* you.

It was J. Sidlow Baxter who first challenge me with that thought. Sid said something like this:

Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was *with* people.

After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was *in* people

Before Pentecost, people had the Holy Spirit.

After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had people.

### OLD VS NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

The difference between *with* and *in* is important. It distinguishes between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In the Old Testament era, the Holy Spirit came upon people—was *with* them—to empower them for special work.

Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt.

Joshua to bring them into the promised land.

Samuel to turn them back to God.

Jeremiah to prophesy and stand against a wicked King.

The Holy Spirit came *upon* these people, and many others, to empower them for some special service. But, he did not **dwell** in them.

That's important because it is *this* which distinguishes you from them.

The very special blessing which is yours as a Christian is that

—since the day of Pentecost—

the Holy Spirit not only comes on you during a time of special need  
to provide you with special power to meet that special need,  
he also **dwells** in you every moment of every day.

# 16

## **THE PURPOSE OF HIS PRESENCE.**

There's an interesting verse in the gospel of John.

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (Jn. 16:7).

For years this text troubled me. After all the earlier manifestations of himself recorded in the Old Testament, God finally gave the world his clearest self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ.

Whatever the Father is like, he is not less than the Son.

He is not less loving.

He is not less compassionate.

He is not less wise.

He is not less kind.

How, then, could it be to anyone's advantage that Jesus would return to heaven? Why didn't he hang around for a couple of millennia, giving the world this motion picture in living color of what God is really like?



As I thought it through under the guidance of the Counselor, it occurred to me that when Jesus submitted to the incarnation, he imposed upon himself the limitations of humanity.

The same limitations with which you and I struggle.  
Not the least of these being  
the limitations of time and space.  
Jesus, like you and me, could only be in one place at a time.

Do you remember the story of Lazarus who became desperately ill?

Jesus was off on a preaching expedition.  
He received word from Mary and Martha  
that Lazarus, their brother, was close to death.  
Would Jesus come quickly?

Well, as you may remember, Jesus was unable to leave his place of responsibility.

By the time he arrived at the home of Lazarus a few days later  
his friend was dead!

Mary and Martha both make a cogent comment:

“Lord, if you had been here, (our) brother would not have died”  
(Jn. 11:21, 32).

In that sentence, they focused on both the ecstasy and agony of the incarnation.

The ecstasy lay in Christ’s power to heal.  
The agony lay in the fact that he could not  
be in two places at the same time.

So you see, it *was* to our advantage that Jesus should leave earth and send the Holy Spirit in his place.

Unlike the Son, the Spirit is not resident in *a* body.  
He dwells in *everybody* who receives Jesus (1 Cor. 6:19).

Unlike Jesus, who could only be in one place at a time,  
the Holy Spirit can be, *and is*,  
equally everywhere at *all* times with *all* believers!

When that truth hit me, it was with a sense of awe and wonder. I remember saying,  
Why of course, Jesus, you were right. It *is* to our advantage  
that you “go away” so the Holy Spirit could come in your place.  
God became *clearest* in you, Jesus. He becomes *nearest*  
through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Wow!

I spent a couple of weeks digesting *that* truth.

# 17

## **THE RESULTS OF HIS PRESENCE.**

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

By indwelling you, the Holy Spirit is able to be to you  
what Jesus would be if he were here himself.

A little girl awoke one night and found herself in the dark. She was frightened and began to cry.  
Her mother sought to comfort her child by saying,

“Now, darling, you’ll be all right because Jesus is here.”

To which the little girl murmured,

“I know he’s here mommy, but I need someone with skin on.”

That’s a feeling we all share at times, isn’t it?

When Julie, our daughter, was little she would, on occasion, wake up in the middle of the night and tip-toe into our bedroom. I would feel a gentle tapping on my arm and awaken to see her standing beside our bed.

“Daddy, I’m frightened. I’ve had a bad dream.”

I'd throw back the covers.

“C'mon, Dolly, climb in bed with us.”

I'd hold her and quietly tell her everything was going to be all right.

In a matter of moments she'd be back in dreamland. When she was soundly asleep, I'd carry her back to her own little bed, and tuck her in where she'd finish out the night.

Then I'd climb back into our big bed and often would find myself saying,

“Oh, heavenly Father, how I wish I could snuggle up to you sometimes. I have my own set of fears, Father. My own anxieties and struggles. If only I could feel the presence of ‘someone with skin on’.”

Invariably, when I prayed like that, the loving Father would remind me:

“You have something better than that, son,  
you have my very own presence in you.”

# 18

## A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS

Have there ever been moments when you wanted to have a little talk with Jesus? Times when you wanted to say:

“Jesus, please sit down and let me settle at your feet. Here’s how I feel, Jesus. Here’s how I struggle and hurt. Tell me what I need to hear. Give me a word of help and hope for this moment.”

Have you wanted to do that? Well, you can. You can!

Part of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to bring to your remembrance everything Jesus said. He can tap that marvelous subconscious reservoir of memories and truths you have accumulated from as far back as when you were a child in Sunday School.

He can bring to mind exactly what you need, exactly when you need it.

You may not remember the scripture reference.

You may not have the words exactly right.

But the *truth* will be there!

That’s why it’s so very important to never stop growing in the Lord.

To never stop learning about the Lord.

To never stop storing up scripture in your memory bank

so the Holy Spirit has something to bring to your remembrance in your moments of need.

If possible, he wants to help you access *everything* Jesus would say about a given

problem,

need,

trial,

or temptation in your life.

But even He can't bring back what isn't there!

# 19

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOU.

It's comforting to know the good Lord is *with* you (Jos. 1:9; Psm. 23). But the mind-blowing, soul-empowering revelation is

the Holy Spirit is *in* you!

Why is that so exciting? Think about this!

The *same* Holy Spirit who impregnated Mary to produce the *person* of Christ through her, entered into you—impregnated you—when you were “born from above” (Jn. 3:3) to re-produce the *character* of Christ in you.

The implications of what you've just read are phenomenal. All the space/time limitations of the Incarnation are demolished.

God, (who) was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19a), is now *equally, everywhere, at all times, in all believers* for the very same purpose!

“All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled (you) to himself and gave (you) the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:18).

*The Holy Spirit is to you what Jesus would be  
if he were here himself,  
so you can be to your little world what Jesus would be  
if he, himself, were where you are!*

When that fact is emotionally received as well as intellectually believed there is rest (Phil. 4:6-7).

Deep soul rest.

The kind of rest God himself enjoys (Gen. 2:3; Heb. 4:9,10).

As a result of having been born again, you have “peace *with* God through (your) Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1) Now, as a result of having *acknowledged* and *appropriated* the gift of the Holy Spirit, you can also enjoy “the peace *of* God which passes all understanding” (Phil. 4:6-7).

The exhausting struggle—and inevitable failure—to “be like Jesus” in the energy of your flesh is abandoned forever. Gone, too, are the feelings of

chronic weariness,  
painful regret and  
sub-Christian guilt  
which accompany such futility.

Instead, your growing intimacy with the Holy Spirit leads you to pray this powerful prayer:

*“Spirit of God, be Jesus to me today!”*



## 20

### THE EARNEST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Believe it or not, there's more. Look at the fourth verse:

“The Holy Spirit is the **earnest** (key word) of (your) inheritance” (Eph. 1:14).

What on earth is an **earnest**? According to Mr. Webster, an **earnest** is

“a token of what is to come.”

It is a pledge or an assurance that the best is yet to be.

The best biblical illustration I can think of at the moment is

the story of the 12 spies whom Moses sent to search out the land.

When they returned, they came bearing great clusters of grapes from the vineyards of Eshcol.

Those grapes were an **earnest** of what awaited the children of Israel in the promised land.

They were a token,

a sample,

a foretaste of what awaited them.

In like manner, the Holy Spirit is

“the **earnest** of (your) inheritance.”

He is a foretaste of that glory which awaits you in heaven.

He is the assurance that the best is yet to be.

A father and his little girl stood with sorrowing hearts at the graveside of one who had been both wife and mother. When the funeral service was over and the many kind friends had gone, the grief-stricken father took his little darling to their home.

It had been a trying day for the child and she found it difficult to go to sleep that night. Every once in a while she would doze off for a moment, then wake with a start and cry out:

“Daddy, it’s so dark! You’re here, aren’t you?”

The father—from his bed beside the little girl’s bed—would reach out through the darkness,

take her tiny hand in his,

give it a squeeze and say:

“Yes, darling, daddy is here. Now go to sleep.”

Finally, through sheer exhaustion, the child drifted off to dreamland. It was then that this heart-broken *husband* slipped out of bed,

dropped to his knees

and carried his little girl’s

whimpering cry up to God:

“Oh, Father, it’s so dark! You’re here, aren’t you?”

As he knelt there his troubled heart received these comforting words:

“Lo, I am with you always...” (Mt. 28:20b).

“I am the resurrection and the life; (she) who believes in me, though (she) be dead, yet shall (she) live” (Jn. 11:25).

You may have loved ones over yonder. Many times you may have asked questions about the future. Often you may have been in harmony with the poet who cried:

“Oh tell me, secret heart  
Oh tell me, hope and faith,  
Is there no resting-place  
From sorrow, sin and death?  
Is there no happy spot  
Where mortals may be blest,  
Where grief may find a bond,  
And weariness a rest?  
Faith, hope and love—best boons to mortals given—  
wave their bright wings and whisper,  
Yes, in heaven!”

No matter how wonderful, or glorious, or satisfying your experience of Christ is in this life, the Holy Spirit is a constant reminder that this is just a sampling of the joy which awaits you in the presence of your Lord.

Until that glad and happy morn when you meet your Savior face to face,

“the Holy Spirit is the **earnest**—  
the pledge,  
the promise,  
the prospect—  
of your inheritance.” Praise the Lord!



## 21

### **OVER A YEAR HAD PASSED SINCE MY HEALING.**

My decision to cease being a “might and power” high achiever and  
become a “by my Spirit, says the Lord” servant leader was bearing fruit.

The word was out. Old First Church had a new pastor.

Not another one. A new one!

People could see a difference. What would prove to be a five year revival had begun.

The historic church I was privileged to pastor was nearly ninety. If God was to give this lovely old lady a spiritual facelift, wisdom dictated that I move slowly. High intensity “spiritual aerobics” could be injurious.

One day, as I was praying for guidance, the thought came: God waited 2000 years between  
his covenant with Adam (Gen. 3:15)  
and his covenant with Abram (Gen. 12:1-4).

He then waited another 2000 years before

his new covenant in Christ (Heb. 8:6-13)

and almost 2000 years more before

his current, worldwide outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

I needed to take *time* out of the equation. “*I decided*” (as if it were up to me!) to give God 10 or 15 years to renew our church.

He didn’t take that long.

The revival began almost immediately. My decision to  
let God do things his way on his time table  
took the pressure off.  
I was no longer a “might and power” guy  
with a neurotic need to make things happen.  
This was a “by my Spirit, says the Lord” ministry  
and it was wonderful.

There was keen interest in the gifts of the Spirit. I was led, instead, to teach on the fruit of the Spirit. This proved to be “wisdom from above” (James 3:17). It was safe. It allowed us to move with caution into deeper spiritual waters. After all, who doesn’t want to be more loving!

After weeks of dealing with the Spirit’s fruit (Gal. 5:22,23),  
not as a “dead works” thing (Heb. 9:14b),  
but as the natural, inevitable, effortless result of a Spirit-filled life,  
I invited our people to act on what they had been learning.

Over half of the standing room only congregation came forward that Sunday to publicly *acknowledge* and *appropriate* the gift of the Holy Spirit. After prayers of confession and repentance I asked them to *kneel* as a physical expression of their willingness to put themselves *under* his control.

The altar area and aisles were filled with hundreds of born again people who, for the first time in their lives, *acknowledged* and *appropriated* the gift of Holy Spirit in fullness. Awesome!

## 22

### THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The fifth verse of scripture speaks of the **Baptism** of the Holy Spirit.

“For John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be **baptized** (key word) with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5).

For nearly a hundred years, beginning with the Pentecostal movement in 1906, this particular part of the Holy Spirit’s work has been divisive.

Traditional Evangelical teaching limits this baptism to the following explanation.

“For by one Spirit we were all **baptized** into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13a).

Classical Pentecostal teaching is that, in addition to this baptism by the Spirit into the Church, there is a second baptism of believers *by Christ* with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5) and this “second blessing” is validated by speaking in tongues.

The depth of this division is illustrated by something which happened to me shortly after my decision to become a born again, Spirit-filled, growing Christian.

I had received several letters, phone calls and been involved in a number of personal chats, all of

which finally came down to this:

“Dr. John, we understand you've been baptized with the Holy Spirit and received the gift of tongues. Is that true?”

One day a man called long distance and asked me to speak to The Full Gospel Men’s Fellowship.

"We understand you've been baptized with the Holy Spirit and received the gift of tongues," he said. "We want you to speak to us."

I admired this group. Many of our men attended with my blessing and I would have enjoyed spending an evening with them. But as we conversed and I shared in some detail the nature of what God had been doing in my life, he apparently was not satisfied and withdrew the invitation.

"But," he concluded as he hung up the telephone, "if you ever *do* speak in tongues, let us know!"

That didn’t disturb me, at least not much. I understood the language and theology of Classical Pentecostalism. I honored the experience of those who testified of “getting baptized in the Holy Spirit” accompanied by the gift of tongues.

That they questioned the validity of my experience in the Holy Spirit did not trouble me because I knew it was real!

I was hopeful a careful study of scripture would circumvent potential division and free our members to enjoy this fifth facet of the Spirit’s blessing. Here’s some of what we learned.



## 23

### A REALITY FOR ALL BELIEVERS.

“For by one Spirit we were all **baptized** into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13).

The word *we* is exclusive and inclusive—simultaneously! As J. Sidlow Baxter points out:

*We* excludes every pre-Christian.

The Holy Spirit is not God’s gift to the world.

He is God’s peculiar gift to the Church.

It is *we*, Christian believers, to whom this gift has been given.

The word *we* is also, at the same time, *inclusive*.

*We* includes not just a few believers but all believers.

All born again Christians share the same

inheritance as Peter, Paul, James and John.

*We* are co-inheritors together with Christ of all the Father has given him.

The Bible is clear. God never intended the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit to be a source of division

—some Christians have it and other Christians don’t—

rather, he instituted it as *the initial mark of our unity in Christ!*

This means *you* have a part in the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit.

“...the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable” (Rom. 11:29).

To employ a term from my childhood, God is not an Indian-giver.

He is a covenant making and covenant keeping God.

He does not renege on his promises.

God is not the Supreme Adolescent who has to be

kowtowed to,

battered up and

patted on the back

to keep him sensitive to your needs.

He is the sovereign God whose gifts are irrevocable.

He never plays

“Heavy, heavy hangs over your head. If you don’t behave, I’ll cut  
you out of my will.”

**Never. Never. Never.**

The **baptism** of the Holy Spirit is part of an irrevocable trust agreement between the Heavenly Father and his children.

If you have him, you have it!

## 24

### **FUTURE TENSE—PAST TENSE.**

In each of the four gospels and in the first chapter of the book of Acts, the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit is always spoken of prophetically.

“He *shall* (future tense) baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 3:11).

“He *shall* (future tense) baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mk. 1:8).

“He *shall* (future tense) baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Lk. 3:16).

“He *shall* (future tense) baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 1:26).

“But you *shall* (future tense) be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5)

The language throughout, as you can see, is prophetic.

After the first chapter of the book of Acts, there is never any prophetic reference to the **baptism** of the Spirit. Instead, the language is historic. 1 Cor. 12:13 says,

“For by one Spirit *were* (past tense) we all **baptized** into one Body.”

What you have is one prophecy—that of John the Baptist— repeated five times, once in each of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts pointing forward to the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit,

and one verse thereafter (1 Cor. 12:13a)

pointing backward to the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit.

Where do the prophetic and historic meet? At Pentecost (Acts 2). It was then that the Holy Spirit indwelt all who believed in Jesus that day and also **baptized** them into the body of Christ.

There is a sixth reference in Acts 11:16 where Peter explains how he *remembered* (past tense) the words of Jesus who said,

“you *shall* (future tense) be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Peter used this prophecy to defend his rather un-Jewish action of ministering to the household of Cornelius, a Gentile.

Acts 11:16 makes it plain that, since the day of Pentecost, all who believe in Jesus share in the Spirit’s **baptism** *at the moment of their conversion*.

Someone put it this way: Just as a brick layer takes an individual brick,

spreads it with mortar

and puts it in place so

—while it remains an individual brick, it *also* becomes part of a wall—

so, too,

the Holy Spirit **baptizes** you *at your new birth* into the body of Christ.

While you retain your individuality,

you also become a part of the family of God

and begin to share in

all the benefits God has prepared for his children,

one of which is the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit.

## 25

### **BAPTISM : A WORD WITH A DOUBLE MEANING.**

One meaning is literal and describes a real object being placed in a real element.

Here, baptism as an *event* occurs.

The second meaning is symbolic and describes the outer confirmation of an inner transformation which is given when someone is baptized.

Here, baptism as *evidence* occurs.

Both of these meanings are true of all biblical baptisms.

In John's baptism (Mt. 3:1-6), the prophet literally immersed people in water as an *event*. He called them to repentance. If they responded affirmatively, he baptized them.

At the same time baptism as an *event* occurred, baptism as *evidence* also took place. The disciples of John the Baptist were publicly identified with, and committed to, the cause of righteousness.

This double meaning was also present in the baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:13-17). He was immersed in water and baptism as an *event* occurred. In addition, immediately upon his being publically

aligned with righteousness, baptism as *evidence* took place.

“And behold, the heavens were opened and he saw  
the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him;  
and lo, a voice from heaven, saying,  
‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Mt. 3:16,17).

In Believer’s Baptism a real person is baptized in real water. It is a literal happening. Baptism as an *event* occurs.

*At the same time*, baptism as *evidence* also takes place. There is a public witness to the fact that, through the *event* of baptism, this person is providing *evidence* of being identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus so that he or she

“might walk (*more evidence*) in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

It is a literal happening (an *event*), with a symbolic function (*evidence*).

Similarly with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Real people—newborn Christians—are baptized by the Spirit into a real entity, the Church (1 Cor. 12:13a). It is a literal happening and Spirit Baptism as an *event* occurs.

But the baptism of the Holy Spirit has a second and symbolic function. When believers choose to be filled with the Holy Spirit what I call *the baptizing quality*—the tangible, measurable, outward *evidence*—of being *Spirit-filled* is there for all to see. The *fruit* of the Spirit appears!

This means the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not *just* a (singular) once and for all-time *event*. It *also* consists of the many (multiple) re-occurring occasions when *evidence* automatically manifests itself in the form of the Spirit’s *fruit* (Gal. 5:22, 23).

## 26

### THERE'S SOMETHING MORE.

In other words, there is a level of intimacy with the Holy Spirit which goes far beyond the Spirit's initial ministry to all believers.

It is so all-encompassing, some say it *feels*—on the emotional level—*like* a **baptism** and, as a result, there are those who call it the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit. Others refer to it as a “second blessing”.

I believe there's a better word.

A more biblical word.

A less confusing word.

It's the word “*fullness*.”

But it's not the *word* which concerns me right now.

I long for you to understand and experience the

*reality* of intimacy with the Holy Spirit in *fullness*!

From the stand point of strict biblical exegesis it is correct to say

—as Evangelicals always have—

the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit is that blessing which God bestowed upon *all* who believed in Christ on the day of Pentecost and in which

*you, as a contemporary Christian, are privileged to share  
at the moment of your conversion.*

The **baptism** of the Holy Spirit may mean more than that.

Based on their personal experience some of my friends insist it does mean more.

I don't question their experience. I honor it.

Clearly, however,

while the **baptism** of the Holy Spirit *may* mean more than the Bible reveals  
it certainly does not mean less!

The Bible reveals the **baptism** of the Spirit to be something which happens to *all* believers.

It happened to *all* the disciples in the upper room when they were born again (Jn. 20:22).

It happened to *all* who were born again on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

It happened to *you* when you were born again.

Two questions present themselves.

Is there a "second blessing"?

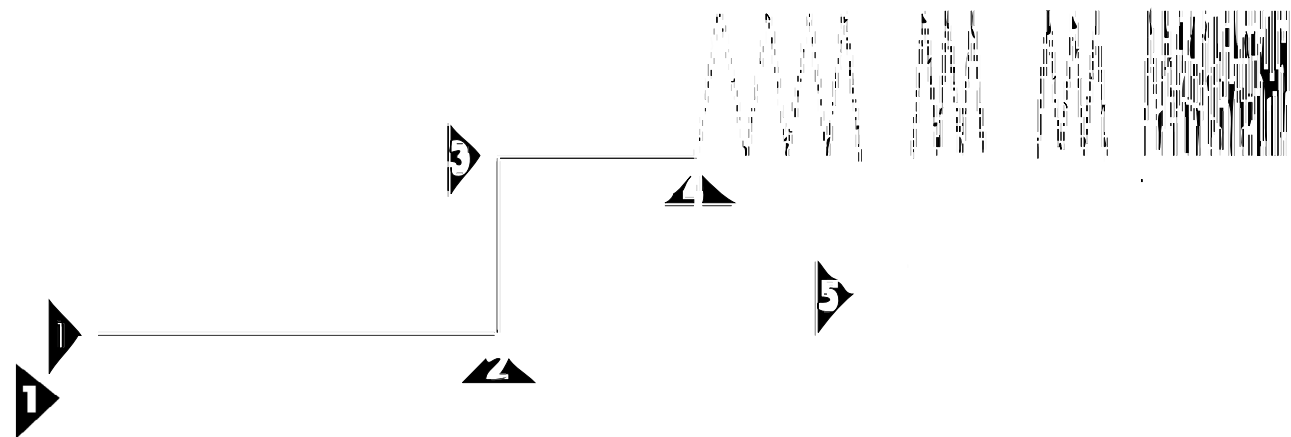
And, if so, how do I enter into it?



## 27

### A POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

The concept of a “second blessing”—or a baptism in, by or with the Holy Spirit separate from conversion—is rooted, at least in part, in the experience of the disciples at Pentecost.



The disciples began to follow Christ (Mt. 5:18-22). While they were becoming enlightened souls—learners, so to speak—they remained spiritually

“dead in (their) trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).

After the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus appeared to them in the upper room, breathed on them and said,

“Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 20:22).

When a flow of energy moving at one level passes through a transformer, what electronics calls

a step-function occurs. The flow of energy is raised to a higher level.

The disciples who had been spiritually dead were transformed.

At that moment an *event* or step-function occurred.

They were, simultaneously, born again, given everlasting life,  
received the gift of the Holy Spirit and baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ  
(Eph. 2:4-7; Jn. 3:3, 16-18; 1 Cor. 12:13b).

**3** During the next ten days old animosities and sins (Mt. 20:20-24; 26:74) were dealt with as these *newborns* put more and more of themselves under the control of the Holy Spirit.

**4** When there are sudden, transient surges of power, what electronics calls spike-functions occur. At Pentecost, *evidence* or spike-functions indicated they were now “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1-13).

The Holy Spirit who had transformed them

from one level of life to another (*event* or step-function),

began to express himself

in sudden, transient surges of supernatural power (*evidence* or spike functions).

Acts 2:4 doesn't call what occurred on Pentecost “the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit” but that's exactly what it was. There was outward, tangible *evidence* of their being “filled with the Holy Spirit.” They were bold, unified, joyful. The *miracle of tongues* overcame the confusion of tongues at Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). Between them, they spoke 15 known languages they had not learned and, as a result, everyone present heard the Gospel in his or her own tongue. Wow!

**5** Their humanity continued to exert itself (dotted lines Acts 9:26; 10:17; 11:2). But, praise the Lord, as they grew in grace, their “walk in the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16) became *routine*.

They enjoyed Normal Christianity!

## 28

### **THE DISCIPLES EXPERIENCE IS NARRATIVE, NOT NORMATIVE.**

Because of this essential historical flow

the experience of the disciples is not normative for us.

What happened to them *sequentially* could not have happened in any other way.

Before they could be born-again and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit

(*event* or step-function),

Jesus had to die for their sins and be raised again for their justification (Rom. 4:25).

Before they could be filled with the Holy Spirit

(*evidence* or spike-function),

the day of Pentecost had to happen. The Holy Spirit had to come in *fullness*.

Hence, for *the disciples*

the *event* or step-function

had to be separated from

the *evidence* or spike-functions

by a span of time.

For the rest of us, as we shall see, no such span of time is *required*.

Sadly, for many contemporary believers, Spirit Baptism as *event* and Spirit Baptism as *evidence* do occur as separate experiences, because they have not been taught Normal Christianity. I was one of them. Maybe you are, too.

Maybe *you* have *not* been told

you can receive eternal life and *simultaneously*  
experience a Spirit-filled life (Acts 2:38-39, 41-47).

If so, you *may* need a “second blessing.” I did! For me, personally, that also meant

a third,

a fifth,

a fifteenth

and an umpteenth blessing!

In his classic work *The Spirit-filled Life* John MacNeil explains:

"A primary concern among first century Christians was that *just as soon as a person was converted* (italics mine), he or she be filled with the Holy Spirit."

To them it was incredible,

even inconceivable,

that new Christians should be given

the false and inevitably frustrating notion

they could live the Christian life on their own.

A lot of contemporary Christians are like the man who went to a fortune teller.

“You’re going to be sick and miserable until you’re forty,” he was told.

“What happens then?” he asked.

“By then you’ll be used to it.”

## 29

### THE WAY IT USUALLY IS.

- 1** Like the disciples, we are all are born into this world “dead in trespasses and sin” (Eph. 2:1).
- 2** If we are fortunate, we hear the Good News about salvation in Jesus Christ (Jn. 3:16). We decide to receive Jesus as our Savior. We are transformed. Spirit Baptism as an *event* (step function) occurs and we become part of the Body of Christ (Eph. 2:5; 1 Cor. 12:13a).
- 3** Unfortunately we do not hear the rest of the Good News, that  
as part of the salvation package we are also given the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
We are not realize we have the right to “drink of one Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13b) and thereby be empowered to live differently. A kind of uninformed, involuntary *spiritual disconnect* occurs.

This disconnect is not *actual*, it is *functional*. For all *practical* purposes,

“we are still in the flesh” (dotted lines; 1 Cor. 3:3a).

As a result, there’s not much difference between us and the pre-Christians around us.

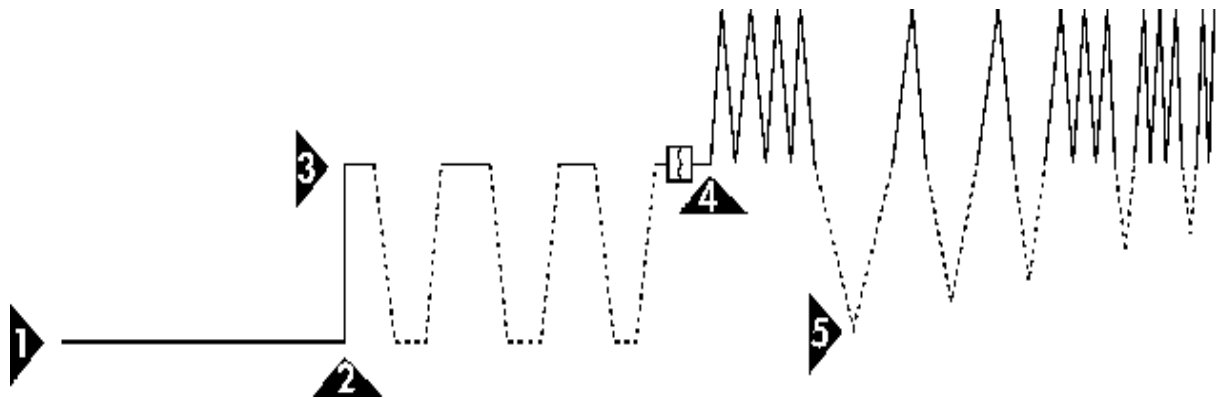
Conceptually, we are only remotely aware the possibility of a Spirit-filled life even exists. So—  
we struggle on in the energy of our flesh believing, apparently, that our

up                      on                      roller  
and down      and off                      coaster

experience is Normal Christianity. It is not. It may be average, but it is not normal!

*It does not measure up to the Biblical ideal.*

Hopefully, perhaps through a wee book like this, we discover the possibility and importance of Connecting with the Holy Spirit. We decide to do so.



Spirit baptism as *evidence* or spike-functions occur. The fruit of the Spirit provides  
4 outward, tangible, measurable *evidence* that we are, in fact, “filled with the Spirit.”

5 We may continue to stumble from time to time, symbolized by the dotted lines. But we don’t fall as far or stay down as long because (and this is absolutely key)

*we no longer suffer from an uninformed, involuntary spiritual disconnect!*

Now we know what to do about it.

We allow the Holy Spirit to alert us when we have carnaled out (Rom. 8:26,27).

We learn (key word) to put our self back under his control more quickly.

His *fruit* reappears.

How do you like them “*apples*?”

# 30

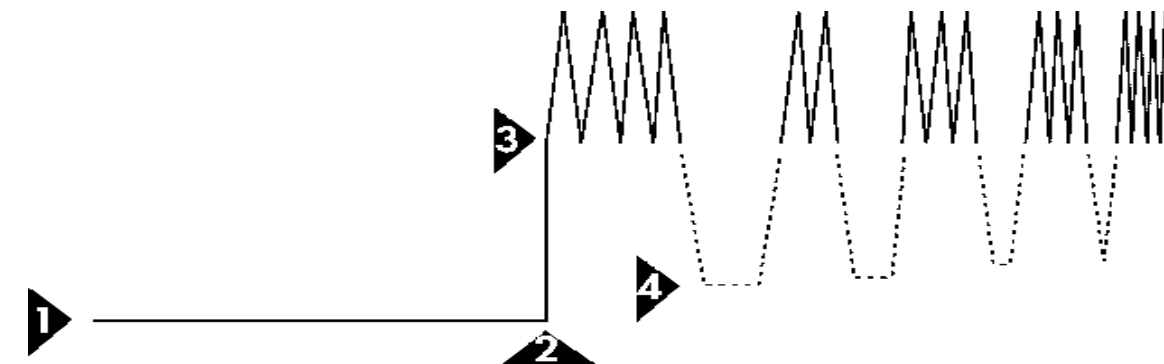
## THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.

If the experience of the disciples is not normative, but narrative

—shaped as it was by an inescapable historical flow—

what *is* normative?

*The experience of the 3000 who were converted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47).*



**1** They began that day the way they had from the date of their natural birth: spiritually dead.

They were confronted by authentic Christians (Acts 2:14-18).

They heard Peter proclaim Normal Christianity (Acts 2:38-39).

They learned they could be saved and, *at the same time*, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

**2**

They believed the message, made a positive response to it, and were made alive in Christ.

Spirit Baptism as an *event* or step function occurred.

They became part of the Body of Christ.

They were given access to the Spirit.

They began to “drink of (appropriate) the Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13b).

- 3 Immediately, Spirit Baptism as *evidence* or spike-functions took place. The fruit of the Spirit naturally and spontaneously appeared. (Compare Gal. 5:22,23 and Acts 2:37-47).

Spirit baptism as an *event* and Spirit baptism as *evidence* occurred *simultaneously!*

- 4 Each time of fullness in the Spirit, *evidence* or spike-function reinforced their desire to “walk in the Spirit.” They still had to deal with their flesh (dotted lines; Gal. 5:17). There were times of carnality. But these became fewer and less severe as they chose to be continually under his control.

There was no “the end” for them and there must be no “the end” for us.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was, and is, a process without end. It is a

moment by moment,

step by step,

life-long process

of choosing between

attempting to function in the frailty of our flesh and walking in the power of the Spirit.

The right choice is tangibly and objectively confirmed,

*not* by the presence of a gift of the Spirit, but by our production of the Spirit’s *fruit*.

Rather than “the end”—a more accurate way of describing a Spirit-filled life is—

“to be continued.”



# 31

## **THE EPHESUS TWELVE ALSO MODELS NORMAL CHRISTIANITY.**

There's a fascinating story of twelve seekers in the city of Ephesus  
who, after a few false starts, finally got it right (Acts 18:24-19:7) .

At first glance, they *appear* (key word) to be Christians. However, a closer look shows that while  
they were disciples (Acts 19:1b) and believers (Acts 19:2a),  
they were actually disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19:3) and  
their belief system—at least as it related to Jesus—was inadequate.

Like the original twelve—*before* they were born again (Jn. 20:22)—the Ephesus Twelve were  
pre-Christians. They were enlightened souls. They were not yet quickened spirits.

They had been enlightened by Apollos—

“an eloquent man well versed in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24b)

who taught them “accurately (about) Jesus”(Acts 18:25).

However, his teaching was incomplete because Priscilla and Aquila, two mature Christians,

“took (Apollos) and expounded to him the way of God

*more accurately*” (Acts 18:26).

Unfortunately, no one taught the Ephesus Twelve “more accurately” until Paul arrived.

Paul was the first to tell them Jesus was “the one”

*about* whom John the Baptist had prophesied (Jn.1:14-30) and  
*in* whom John had told them to believe (Acts 19:4b).

Paul also was the first to tell them about the Holy Spirit.

“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked.

The Ephesians replied,

“We have never even heard there *is* a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2).

Upon hearing the truth about Jesus *and* the Holy Spirit they responded positively (Acts 19:5).

They were no longer *just* enlightened souls. *Now* they were quickened spirits.

Water baptism provided external evidence of an internal (new birth) experience.

Paul laid hands on them and

the Holy Spirit who was now *in* them, “came *on* them” (19:6a).

Like the Pentecost 3000, the Ephesus Twelve suggests that despite any so-called false starts

—*when you are “more accurately” informed about Jesus and the Holy Spirit—*

the ideal would be for you to

*simultaneously*

respond positively to the Gospel,

be born again,

acknowledge and appropriate the gift of the Holy Spirit,

be filled with the Spirit,

bear the fruit of the Spirit and

begin using the Spirit’s gifts.

*That’s Normal Christianity!*

## 32

### THE SAMARITAN'S "SECOND BLESSING."

Unlike the Ephesians (Acts 18:24-19:7)

the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-8, 14-17) *were* born again  
prior to their being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Philip had preached the gospel in Samaria with incredible results.

Many of the locals "gave heed," were saved  
and baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When Peter and John arrive in Samaria to investigate, they learn that while the Samaritan Christians had been baptized, they had not yet *appropriated* the Holy Spirit in *fullness* (vs 16).

Why the delay? Why was it fitting for this particular group of Christians to receive a "second blessing"?

*Because they were Samaritans!*

In those days Jews had no dealing with Samaritans (Jn. 4:9).

The hostility between them had gone on for centuries.

As the Church began to grow, there was the very real danger that

---

*Jewish* Christians

would continue to think of

*Samaritan* Christians

as second class Christians.

Part of the Gospel is that in Christ old differences and divisions are dissolved (Eph. 2:13-14).

Peter had preached that ideal on the day of Pentecost when he referred to

“all that are far off” (Acts 2:39).

But, like a lot of us preachers, Peter found it hard practice what he preached!

He had to *learn* to live out the ideals he proclaimed.

God did not permit this delay in the *Samaritan* Christians being filled with the Holy Spirit

to suggest there *must* be a “second blessing” or

that *you* must tarry until the fullness comes.

*The Samaritan’s “second blessing” was actually for the benefit of Peter and John!*

Having personally witness their *Samaritan* cousins being filled with the Holy Spirit,

Peter and John, two *Jewish* leaders could, and did, bear witness to

the genuineness of *Samaritan* conversions and

the legitimacy of *Samaritan* members of the body of Christ (Acts 8:14-17; 11:18).

Indeed, “God’s delays are children of his love.”

## 33

### THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The sixth of the seven blessings of the Holy Spirit is his **anointing**.

“And if you and we belong to Christ, guaranteed as his and  
**anointed** (key word), it is God’s doing ” (2 Cor. 1:21 NEB).

### TASKS TO DO AND POWER TO DO THEM.

This is a reference to the Old Testament practice of **anointing**

the priests,

or prophets,

or kings for service.

This **anointing** was the official sign they had been given the authority and resources needed to fulfill their responsibility.

Here again is a wonderful and encouraging truth.

God not only gives you a responsibility for ministry to the body and in the world.

He also **anoints** you and gives you resources to serve effectively.

You have tasks to do and the authority with which to do them!

This is not something to which you must look forward. This is not something which will take

---

place someday. This is strength for today. This is a done deal. How blessed you are!

God has given you a **gift**.

He has provided an inheritance which you simply have to acknowledge and appropriate to enjoy.

God has **sealed** you.

He has identified and secured you as his own special and peculiar possession forever.

God now **dwells** in you.

His Spirit entered you at your new birth to re-create the character of Christ in you.

God has given you an **earnest**.

He has presented you with a foretaste, a sampling of what it will be like in Glory.

God has given you a **baptism**.

He has made available to you all the privileges which go with being part of the Body of Christ.

God has given you an **anointing**.

You are assured you shall always be equal to the task he sets before you.

Only one thing is required to get all this working together for you—right now!

## 34

### THE FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The seventh verse is “Be **filled** (key word) with the Holy Spirit” (Eph. 5:18).

I want you to notice something very interesting.

This is the only—*the only*—exhortation connected with the work of the Holy Spirit.

Everything else has been done by God.

This is the one thing *you* must do.

This is *your* part of the bargain.

*You* must be **filled** with the Holy Spirit.

### THE BIBLICAL MEANING OF BEING FILLED.

In scripture, people were filled with many things. To list a few, they were

“filled with wrath” (Lk. 4:28),

“filled with fear” (Lk. 5:26),

“filled with madness” (Lk. 6:11),

“filled with satan” (Acts 5:3).

In each case, people were under the *control* (key word) of wrath, fear, madness or satan. They also gave out ward evidence of *being controlled* by the spirit to which they had given control.

Biblically speaking, to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit means  
to be *controlled* (key word) by the Spirit.

I confess that for many years I didn’t understand that. Then one day I came across a paragraph penned by William Graham Scroggie. Dr. Scroggie preceded J. Sidlow Baxter as pastor of the great Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland.

I was privileged to visit with Dr. Scroggie when my wife my wife, Lucille and I held a week-long crusade there years ago. He was in his eighties at the time, but sharp as a tack. After talking with him, I  
bought everything he had written.

In one of his pamphlets I found this gem along with some other thoughts I’ve shared with you.

To be filled with the Spirit means to  
let the Spirit possess and control you.

It means you let him take your mind  
and think through it.

It means you let him take your heart  
and feel through it.

It means you let him take your conscience  
and judge through it.

It means you let him take your tongue  
and speak through it.

It means you let him take your will  
and act through it.

It means you let him take your total personality  
and use it as he may please.

To “be **filled** with the Holy Spirit” means letting go and letting God *be* God in your life.



# 35

## YOU WILL NEED MANY FILLINGS.

Unlike some of the other blessings of the Spirit,  
being **filled** with the Spirit is *not* a once-and-for-all-time thing.

A person who is thirsty does not become full by just taking a sip. He or she must drink and drink and keep on drinking until he or she is full. Even then that person won't stay full.

He or she must maintain the habit of drinking.

Likewise with you and intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

You cannot be **filled** with the Spirit on a permanent basis!

The parching of your soul cannot be soothed,  
the thirsting of your spirit cannot be quenched,  
the vague, diffused, uneasy feeling something is missing  
from your Christian life cannot be quieted  
by a casual or occasional sipping of the Spirit.

You must drink, and drink and keep on drinking.

You must develop a passion for fullness.

**DON'T ASK. CHOOSE!**

Therefore, you should not be asking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You should be *choosing the fullness* of the Holy Spirit.

Deliberately,  
consciously,  
*and repeatedly*

you should be deciding (a process) to place yourself under the *control* of the Holy Spirit.

When you do, “*the baptism*” just happens!

There is outward *evidence* of the inner reality of your being controlled by him.

The *baptizing quality* of being Spirit-filled provides  
a unforgettable snapshot  
of what’s happening (present tense) inside you.

Naturally, effortlessly and spontaneously you produce the fruit of the Spirit:

“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,  
gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

It doesn’t get much better than that!

# 36

## **NO BEGGING, PLEASE!**

You don't have to plead with God to get him to **fill** you with his Spirit.

He longs to do so.

He yearns to possess you fully.

He is eager to share the grandest blessings he can give.

He wants your life to bear the Spirit's refreshing fruit.

What is it that makes water flow with such force from a faucet when you turn it on? It is the power of gravity operating from a pent-up reservoir longing to be released.

In much the same way, the pent-up love of God longs to release itself in you.

To fill you

and then

flow through you

to

bless others.

Are you ready to turn on the faucet?

# 37

## HOW TO BE FILLED THIS VERY MOMENT.

In Sight Bite 4 you read these powerful words:

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

In Sight Bite 5 you learned what repentance means.

First, it means turning *from*.

For me that meant turning *from* a spirit of unforgiveness. That wasn't easy, but refusing to forgive others was making me sick. Consciously, deliberately and by name I forgave everyone who had ever hurt me.

It also meant turning *from* a spirit of pride. I had bought into the notion I could never forgive myself for some of the things I had done.

A. W. Tozer helped me with that pesky demon. Somewhere he said,

*Refusing to forgive yourself may sound humble, but it's actually inverted pride!*

I swallowed my pride and forgave myself.

Second, repentance means turning *to*.

Having turned *to* Jesus for the forgiveness of sin,  
I turned *to* the Holy Spirit and told him to take control.

In the past that would have been frightening. But I was tired of giving the Christian life my best shot and coming up short. My prayer was simple and direct.

Spirit of God, come and fill me now.  
Take control of my life.  
Pick the path I am to walk.  
Keep me away from anything and everything  
which might take God's place in my heart.  
In each and every situation I face today, enable me to  
have the mind of Jesus,  
express the attitudes of Jesus,  
and do the will of Jesus.  
In his name, amen.

That was it. In the deepest most personal part of me I knew he had come *in fullness*.

I invite you to do the same.

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Time\_\_\_\_\_

Location\_\_\_\_\_

## 38

### **CLEARING UP A MYSTERY.**

In pharmacy there are synergistic drugs.

These are drugs which, when taken together, have an impact for healing or harm out of all proportion to their effect when taken separately.

There are also synergistic truths.

An example would be the seven ministries of the Holy Spirit.

Any one of them is wonderful. But, when understood and applied together, their synergistic impact is huge.

Why then, I asked myself, with this seven-fold synergistic ministry of the Holy Spirit available to me, was there a troubling lack of consistency in my walk in the Spirit?

That was a mystery to me  
and a bother as well.

I had been deadly serious, as I'm sure you are, about my decision to become a Spirit-filled Christian. As a result there were exhilarating victories.

But too often, at least for me,  
these were followed by devastating defeats.

Now, however, I was no longer willing to live on an emotional roller coaster.

The answer came when, intellectually at first and then viscerally, I discovered a simple truth.

The Spirit-filled life is not emotional. It is *volitional* (key word).

*It's a choice you make!*

There is an emotional component, of course. And that's grand! As a friend of mine said,

"I don't want to go on feelings, but I sure do want to feel what's going on."

Exactly!

We all want and need emotional support for what we choose to do and be.

The nature and degree of your personal response to intimacy with God will depend on

how you are wired up,

how you were brought up,

how you choose to express yourself.

You won't package intimacy the same way I do.

There isn't a "one size fits all" style of intimacy with him.

How you demonstrate your acts of intimacy in the Spirit will be distinctly you.

And that's ok!

I'm going to guess you want what I want. A growing degree of consistency in your walk in the Spirit. Here's what I learned about that. The hard way!

The Spirit-filled life is not emotional. It is volitional and intentional.

*It's a choice you make!*

## 39

### **DIFFERENT WAYS THE SPIRIT COMES TO YOU.**

The Greek **aorist tense** (pronounced a/or/ist) denotes a sudden, definite act in the past and has no counterpart in English.

Put simply, the **aorist tense** describes a crisis rather than a process.

In a special way Pentecost (Acts 2) was that crisis.

Pentecost is an untranslatable Greek word meaning fiftieth day.

It is part of the Jewish calendar and is computed from the Day of First Fruits.

Jesus was raised on the Day of First Fruits and ministered for 40 days following his resurrection.

After he ascended into heaven his disciples returned to Jerusalem and spent the next ten days in the upper room.

On the 50th day, the Holy Spirit descended upon them in a brand new historical event which had never happened before, and will never happen again.

Pentecost!

“And they were all *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4).



**THE EVENT IS UNREPEATABLE.**

To tarry and pray for a repetition of Pentecost as an *event* is fruitless.

Just as there was

    one birth of Jesus,

        one death of Jesus,

            one resurrection of Jesus

                and one ascension of Jesus

so, too, there was one giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

        That part is unrepeatable.

But, and this is wonderful, *later on* in the New Testament narrative a variety of Christian believers were also *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit to empower them for the crises confronting them.

## 40

### **PETER.**

Peter was in the upper room on Pentecost and was *filled* (**aorist tense**) at Pentecost.

Later, during the first persecution of the early Church, Peter was filled again

“...Peter, *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit, said to them,  
‘Rulers of the people and elders’...” (Acts 4:8).

Peter had a crisis and he was *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit for that crisis.

### **OTHER BELIEVERS.**

When Christians were forbidden to preach or teach in the name of Jesus they rebelled. They prayed for power to face that crisis and,

“...when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

Even though they knew that to do so would mean being put in jail!

PAUL.

Paul was *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Holy Spirit at the time of his conversion (Acts 9:17).

Later, when Paul was severely tested by the sorcerer, Elymas, he was *filled* again (Acts 13:9).

“But Saul, who is also called Paul, (was) *filled* (**ao**rist tense) with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 9:17).

## SO WHAT?

While it's pointless to pray for a repetition of the Pentecost event, it is important that you pray for a repetition of the Pentecost experience.

When you come to

                    moments of crisis,

                    times of temptation,

                    periods of testing,

you may, in fact you must, ask to be *filled* (**aorist tense**)

                    by the Holy Spirit to meet them.

When you do, the good Lord who said:

“Ask and you shall receive” (Mt. 7:7)  
provides exactly what you need exactly when you need it.

# 41

## THE IMPERFECT TENSE.

A second tense which helps define the ministry of the Holy Spirit to you is the **imperfect tense**. It denotes in Greek, as it does in English, a process.

“And the disciples were *filled* (**imperfect tense**) with joy in the Holy Spirit”(Acts 13:52).

While it appears to be the same in English, because the **imperfect tense** is used in Greek, the text actually says,

“And the disciples were *being filled* with joy.”

It refers to a process rather than a crisis.

Instead of *filled* (**aorist tense**) for a moment, they were *being filled* (**imperfect tense**) for the continuing exigencies of life.

It was an ongoing experience.

You pour water into a cup until it's *filled* (**aorist tense**). How do you know it's full?

If there's any question about it, keep pouring!

However, the instant the cup is *filled* (**aorist tense**) it begins to empty  
as the process of evaporation kicks in.

Similarly, when you bring the empty cup of your human spirit to God and ask him to fill you with the refreshing water of his Holy Spirit, he does!

You are, by that decision, *filled* (**aorist tense**) with the Spirit.

Then, just as the process of evaporation begins to empty a glass full of water, so too,  
the ordinary demands of just being alive  
drain something of the fullness of the Spirit from you.

If life places special burdens on you,  
more of the Spirit is drained from you.

If you become involved in ministry to others  
—while that can be, and often is, refreshing—  
you are depleted further and faster.

How do you replenish the supply?

By *being filled* (**imperfect tense**) with the Spirit again.

It's not unlike breathing.  
Each time you exhale and empty your lungs  
you must inhale to fill your lungs again.

As you deploy the Holy Spirit (exhale), you must employ the Holy Spirit (inhale).

# 42

## HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE.

*Being filled* (**imperfect tense**) with the Holy Spirit is not complicated.

If you drain your cup of blessing to *be* a blessing

—or if life itself drains you—

go through the process of Spiritual Breathing as it is sometimes called.

Exhale. Inhale.

Moment by moment.

Exhale. Inhale.

Situation by situation.

Consciously, deliberately and decisively go on *being filled* (**imperfect tense**) with the Spirit  
again and again and again.

## GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO BE IMPERFECT.

Learning to live in the **imperfect tense** prepares you  
to experience the **present tense** and be *full* of the Spirit.

*The previous sentence may be among the most important you will ever read!*

Let me repeat it:

Learning to live in the **imperfect tense** prepares you  
to experience the **present tense** and be *full* of the Spirit.

So give yourself permission to be imperfect!

Life is a process. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that  
living a *Spirit-filled* life is also a process.

Giving yourself permission to be **imperfect**

--to be in process--

protects you from the snare of unrealistic expectations.

You free the loving Father to set the agenda remembering:

“*God* is at work *in you*, both to will and to work for *his* good pleasure”  
(Phil. 2:13). And, “*he* who *began* a good work *in you* will bring it to  
completion” (Phil. 1:6 italics mine).

Incredible!

## 43

### THE PRESENT TENSE.

And that, of course, is the ideal.

“Barnabas is a good man *full* (**present tense**) of the Holy Spirit.”  
(Acts 11:24).

Stephen was a man

“*full* (**present tense**) of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5; 7:55).

When deacons were needed by the early church they picked seven men

“of good repute, *full* (**present tense**) of the Spirit” (Acts 6:3).

They were not *continuously* filled with the Spirit.

They were *continually* (key word) filled with the Spirit.

Something *continuous* is like an unbroken line. There are no interruptions in it.

Something *continual* is like a dotted line which, by its very nature, consists of interruptions.

To be *continuously* full of the Holy Spirit—in the sense of uninterrupted obedience—is *not* your objective. It’s not even a possibility! Sinless perfection in this life is an illusion.



To be *continually* full of the Holy Spirit  
in the sense of *routine* obedience  
*is* your goal.

Obedience is the Big Word in a Spirit-filled life. Not as a “dead works” thing (Heb. 6:1) as if, by being obedient, you will earn additional spiritual “brownie points.” Rather, obedience is the *preferred response* of grateful sinners to God’s amazing grace (Rom. 5:20b-6:23).

That’s what being *full* (**present tense**) of the Spirit meant for Barnabas and the others.

They came to a place where *routine* obedient  
resulted in their being *full* (**present tense**) of the Spirit.

A life *full* (**present tense**) of the Spirit is a normal Christian life.

Not average, *normal*!

If that’s not how it is with you, here’s the answer.

# 44

## LOOK WHERE THE IMPERFECT TENSE IS LOCATED.

Between the **(aorist)** crisis or initial filling and the **(perfect)** ideal of fullness is the **(imperfect)** *process* of being filled.

Barnabas and the others described as being full of the Spirit were not perfect. However, the rapidity with which they repeatedly chose to repent of imperfections resulted in their growth curve accelerating until they were, *routinely*, full of the Spirit.

The same ~~mod~~us operandi will work for you.

As you give out, pause to take in.

As you exhale, remember to inhale.

As you expend, take time to expand.

As you give of yourself, open yourself to receive.

When you sin, seek forgiveness. You'll soon discover fresh infillings of the Spirit are available when you need them.



# 45

## **HOW OFTEN DO YOU NEED TO REPENT?**

As often as needed. A dozen times a day? Maybe more!

In 1930 my father founded the Open Door Rescue Mission in Oakland, California. During the thirty years Dad served as superintendent, God used him to feed, clothe and minister to over three million men on Skid Row. Jesus salvaged thousands of them.

When, in response to the Gospel, one of those poor wretches received Jesus as his personal savior,

Dad would send him upstairs to the rehab center  
where he'd be asked to remove his vermin ridden clothes.  
These were put in a paper bag and tossed into an incinerator.

The man was then given his own bar of soap and told to take a shower. Often he'd say,

“If I'd known it felt this good I'd have taken one two years ago!”

Dad would provide him with a pair of pajamas and, for the first time in a long time, he'd settle down in a warm, clean bed with white sheets for a good night's sleep.

In the morning he'd be told to shower again, wash his hair and shave. Dad would see to it that he got some clean clothes. Not new, but clean. Then came a hot, nourishing breakfast after which he was instructed to brush his teeth.

Later that day Dad would take him down to the barber college and get him a haircut. By then this fellow whom many had tossed aside on the scrap heap of life as worthless, was beginning to feel human again.

Every day thereafter, and as long as he stayed at the Mission, he had to

- take a shower,
- wash his hair,
- brush his teeth,
- press his trousers,
- shine his shoes,
- get regular haircuts.

All of this was based on a simple premise in which Dad believed implicitly:

- The feeling of being clean was the best defense against
- going back to live in the gutter again.

## 46

### **HANDS OFF, SATAN, I BELONG TO JESUS!**

Satan doesn't like it when, through regular confession, repentance and forgiveness you get used to feeling clean clear through. He'll try to convince you God is tired of hearing from you.

“Surely you're not going to bother God with that same old confession again, are you? How many times have you confessed that sin to him anyway? Ten? A hundred? A thousand times? God's weary of hearing from you with your endless confessions.”

Ever heard words like that from the enemy? I have.

Let me give you Gospel for dealing with attacks like that.

“If (you) confess (your) sin (God) is faithful and just, and forgives (your) sins and cleanses (you) from *all* unrighteousness” (1Jn. 1:9).

In that moment of amazing grace you are clean. Clear through!

Better yet, when God forgives he forgets.

“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:34).

So you come to him today confessing a sin you confessed yesterday.

“I did it again, Lord.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Sure you do, Lord. Look it up in your record book.”

This is a bit anthropomorphic, but bear with me. The good Lord turns to yesterday’s page, smiles and says,

“Nope. There’s nothing here. Your record’s clean.”

When God forgives he forgets. Therefore, when you come to him today confessing a sin you’ve confessed a zillion times before:

*It’s as if he’s hearing it for the very first time!*

Wow!

# 47

**DON'T LET SATAN BADGER YOU ANY LONGER.**

Take authority over him. Tell him, in the name of Jesus, to go to hell.

Keep your account with God up to date on a moment by moment basis.

The instant you become aware of sin confess it.

Tell God you don't want to do it again.

Sometimes you can't do that because in the midst  
of your confession you're thinking about doing it again.

On those occasions tell him you don't *want* to want to  
do it again. That's an honest prayer.

Receive the love, acceptance and forgiveness God offers.

In time, the joy of being clean clear through will help you stay clean.





# 48

## KNOWING WHEN YOU'RE FULL.

If the fullness of the Holy Spirit is that means whereby  
you move from infancy  
to maturity in Christ,  
how do you know when you're full?

As you might have guessed, God has not left you without an answer to so basic a question.

"The *fruit* of the Spirit"  
—the visible, measurable, tangible, outward *proof*  
of your being *full* of the Spirit—  
“is *love*” (Gal. 5:22-23).

"*God's love* has been poured into (your) hearts through the Holy Spirit which has  
been given to (you)" (Rom. 5:5)

## FRUIT, NOT GIFTS.

The proof you are filled with the Holy Spirit is not the presence of a particular spiritual gift.

The gifts of the Spirit are wonderful.

They really are!

And it's important that you discover, develop and exercise  
your spiritual gift(s).

But the gifts of the Spirit do not say anything about you.

They only say something about God.

They make it clear God loves to give gifts to his kids.

The loving Father delights in

providing you with the tools you need

to do the work to which He has called you.

But the proof you're looking for

—that you are, in fact, filled with the Holy Spirit—

lies not in the gifts of the Spirit,

but in the *fruit* of the Spirit.

## 49

### THE FRUIT IS ONE.

“But the fruit (singular) of the Spirit is (singular) love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23).

I’ve searched high and low for the origin of the following without success. Here’s my version.

Joy is love singing.

Peace is love resting.

Patience is love waiting.

Kindness is love acting.

Goodness is love protecting.

Faithfulness is love obeying.

Gentleness is love submitting.

Self-control is love ruling.

The budding point is love.

The *absence* (first key word) of *one* (second key word) thing  
—*love* (third key word) in its constituent parts—  
lets you know at any moment of the night or day  
when you’re *not* (fourth key word) filled with the Spirit.

You're rarely aware of being loving, patient and kind. Right?

How about being unloving, impatient, and unkind? Me, too!

Why is that? Your human spirit has, for that moment at least, wrenched control from the Holy Spirit.

When you become aware this has happened—

immediately,

courageously,

and firmly—

give up control.

Free the Holy Spirit to produce his fruit in you again.

Love is not the main thing. Love is everything.

Love is not only the greatest. Love is the great-test.

To be loving is to be in touch with God.

To be unloving is to be out of touch with God.

It is to quench his spirit signaled by the absence of fruit.

Fruit only his Spirit can produce.

The one sure sign you're filled with his Spirit

—that you're being controlled by his indwelling presence—

is that you bear the fruit of the Spirit

without which everything else you are and do

*amounts to nothing* (I Cor. 13:1-3)!

# 50

## JOY IS LOVE SINGING.

The joy of the Lord is not gaiety.

Or hilarity.

The joy of the Lord is not ecstasy.

Or mere merriment.

The joy of the Lord is not grim determination to grin and bear it.

That's not joy.

That's jut-jawed carnality.

That's a determined effort on your part to accomplish in the flesh  
what can only be produced by the Holy Spirit.

Joy is the *Spirit's* fruit.

It is not something you generate on your own.

Like love, of which it is a constituent part, joy is indigenous.

It is native to the soil of a soul full of the Holy Spirit.

Joy springs from knowing:

You are forgiven.

You are clean clear through.

Your days of trying to be like Jesus on your own are over.

And *God* is at work in you to complete what *he* began (Phil. 1:6).

As such, joy is irrepressible.

Joy isn't something you have to struggle to express.

If there's a struggle, it's at the point of keeping it from busting out all over.

Joy is love singing.

Your assurance of forgiveness is so freeing and

your sudden awareness of God's involvement in your life is so overwhelming

love can't help but sing.

And sometimes, weep for joy!

# 51

## **PEACE IS LOVE RESTING.**

There's a difference between your lot and your legacy.

Your lot as a Christian will include tribulation. Jesus made that clear when he said:

"In the world you have tribulation" (Jn. 16:33).

But, while tribulation is your lot, peace is your legacy. Jesus also said:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I *give* to you" (Jn. 14:27).

If you remember the difference between your lot and your legacy  
you will not be thrown by tribulation when it comes.

Instead, you will learn how,  
in the very midst of testing,  
to claim the peace of Christ by faith  
even though you may not feel it at the moment.

The absence of a feeling of peace, while it may be an indication of your having slipped into a carnal state, does not necessarily or invariably mean that.



There are other causes of restlessness. Sometimes they're physical. Relational. Situational.

Learn to distinguish between

love and the emotion of love,  
joy and the rapture of joy,  
peace and a sense of peace.

God wants you to walk by faith, not sight.

Feelings are sight things.  
They are supportive of faith, but no substitute for faith.

If you suffer from an absence of a sense of peace:

Search to see if you have slipped momentarily into a carnal state.

If so, deal with that through confession, repentance and forgiveness.

Then receive a fresh infilling of the Spirit.

If not, remember:

*There's a difference between your lot and your legacy.*

## 52

### **PATIENCE IS LOVE WAITING.**

Patience is not passivity.

Patience is not placidity.

As my friend Dr. A. John Nastari has pointed out:

"Patience does not mean you blindly accept life as it is...  
patience means you have power to overcome life as it is."

Patience is a natural result of love, joy and peace, the virtues which precede it.

A person who knows she is loved is full of joy.

A joy-full person is conscious of having peace as his  
legacy despite any tribulation which may be his lot.

Out of love, joy and peace come patience.

Like the three virtues which preceded it, patience is an attribute of God.

"The lord waits (patiently) to be gracious to you" (Isa. 30:18).

God does not delay because he is capricious.

God does not delay because he is neglectful or stingy.

God does not delay because he wants to deny your request  
or take away your fun.

As F. B. Meyer said so eloquently,

"God's delays are children of his love. He waits that he may be  
gracious. He patiently dams up the current so by holding it back it  
may become a swifter, fuller stream."

Patience on your part is evidence you trust the patience of God. That you honestly believe  
his time, like his will, is best. That his judgement is sound.

Impatience is evidence you're not so sure. So you resort to your own solutions.

Bummer!

## 53

### **KINDNESS IS LOVE ACTING.**

Kindness and goodness, mentioned together in Galatians 5:22, sound like kissing cousins.

They're not. They're as different as night and day.

Kindness is expressed in practical usefulness.

It is concerned with deeds, not just words.

As such, kindness is extremely utilitarian.

Goodness is love expressed in practical holiness.

It is concerned about what evil does to the object of love.

As such, goodness is extremely vigilant.

Kindness is love helping others.

Goodness is love protecting its own.

Kindness is the gentle face of love.

Goodness is the stern face of love.

Having absorbed their differences, look at how each of them works.

Kindness is love blessing others.

The Spirit's fruit is not produced in you to benefit you!

Although it does,

it is produced for the benefit others.

The Spirit's fruit is God's love lived out through you. Sometimes the beneficiary he leads you to bless with an act of kindness is someone you love in the Lord, but don't like (Lk. 6:35).

What then?

Well, this is a supernatural lifestyle you've embarked upon. When your human nature rebels, recognize that rebellion for what it is:

A temptation to stop walking in the Spirit.

Don't react. Respond! The Spirit-filled life is volitional, remember? Make a decision. Give the Holy Spirit permission to do his job. Invite him, in that moment, to reproduce the character of Christ in you. You may not like someone, but Jesus does!

After the act of kindness has been done, a second temptation, in the form of a beguiling thought is likely to present itself.

"Wasn't that kind of me!"

# 54

## **GOODNESS IS LOVE PROTECTING.**

Goodness is not being good or doing good. That's kindness.

Goodness is loving good to the point of hating evil  
for what evil does to good.

Clean anger—that part of the fruit of the Spirit called goodness—boils up at wrong done to others.

Jesus never spoke an angry word to anyone when he was personally attacked.

His indignation was only aroused over evil done to others.

As a Spirit-filled person you will learn to be angry  
at the right thing,  
in the right way,  
for the right reason,  
at the right time.

Clean anger focuses on the sin, not the sinner.

It's purpose is answers, not accusations.

By correction and discipline goodness seeks to purify the object of love.

The goal is that he or she become whole.

As such, goodness is not only helping, it is healing.

### **CLEAN ANGER AT WHAT SIN DOES TO YOU.**

While goodness is triggered by wrong done to others, there also is a place for indignation at Satan's audacity in attempting to

beguile,

bewilder and

befuddle you.

Jesus was furious at Satan's invasion of the temple in Jerusalem. You should be angry too.

Your *body* is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 3:19).

When filled with the Spirit, you will express goodness—white hot anger—at the enemy who would invade you—*God's temple!*—and tempt you to sin.

Goodness is a matter of the heart.

Goodness hates anything which would take God's place there.

Goodness helps you stay full of the Holy Spirit.

Goodness is never angry at you, nor should you be angry at yourself.

You're not the culprit, you're the battlefield (Rom. 7:15-25).

# 55

## **FAITHFULNESS IS LOVE OBEYING.**

When you exhibit goodness, faithfulness follows.

When you love good to the point of hating evil  
you create an internal atmosphere  
which fosters faithfulness to God.

If you are faithful to him you will find it impossible to be unfaithful to  
your spouse,  
your family,  
your partner,  
your friends,  
your fellow Christians  
or, for that matter, *yourself*  
and your higher nature!

The fruit of the Spirit is indivisible. Each facet leads to the next. They stand  
and, conversely,  
they fall together.



*Faithlessness* leads to an inability to be righteously indignant over satan's assaults.

When you cease to hate evil you are tempted to be unkind.

This deterioration of your spiritual state leads to:

Impatience with people.

Absence of peace.

A diminution of joy.

And finally, the loss of feeling loved.

Put simply, the Spirit's fruit withers on the branch  
so the branch gets pruned (Jn. 15:1-8).

*Faithfulness is being where you ought to be, doing what you ought to do.*

To a fruitful branch  
faithfulness has enormous benefits!

# 56

## **MEEKNESS IS LOVE SUBMITTING.**

God's way of doing things is substantially different from your own (Isa. 55:8,9).

Rarely is this so dramatically evidenced as in the case of meekness.

You may struggle, as many do, with the notion that  
meekness is the stuff of which heroes are made.

But it is. It really, really is.

Consider the greatest hero in history. He never threw his weight around. He never took advantage of his position. He never put on airs (Phil. 2:6; Rev. 19:16).

He wasn't a pushover either. He demonstrated tough love on more than one occasion (Mk. 10:13; 11:15; Mt. 16:32; 18:6). But he was never ever defensive about matters relating to himself. In that regard, he was cool!

Without being deferential he referred to himself as

“gentle and humble.”

Without apology he invites you to be like him.

“Wear my yoke—for it fits perfectly—and let me teach you” (Mt. 11:29 TLB).

A spirit-filled life maintains a wonderful balance between toughness and tenderness.

It is meek, but never weak.

Weakness is yielding to your human nature.

Meekness is mastering your human nature.

Meekness is, as Jesus said, something you learn. That's hard to do in this era of raw power. But it can be done. Not as a "dead works" human effort, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Meekness is being God-tamed. It is love submitting.

Don't let the word submitting throw you. It simply means presenting yourself for examination. First, by God. Then, by people close to you. Finally, having passed muster at those two levels, submitting invites examination by the world.

God wants to showcase what he can do with you when he has all of you!

Failure to be gentle should signal a need on your part for some "closet" time. Some "in the garden" time, I call it. Some time when, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, you let your hero bring you up to speed again.

Jesus was not only the greatest teacher who ever lived,  
he himself was the greatest lesson he ever taught!

# 57

## **SELF-CONTROL IS LOVE RULING.**

When you are God-tamed you are ready to be God-trained. That's what self-control is all about.

As you sort through the eight facets of love and come, at last, to self-control you arrive at the point where spiritual growth actually begins.

It is here where the first real battles are fought and won.

While last on this list of the constituent parts of love, self-control is anything but least. In fact, it may be love's most fundamental facet.

How, and by whom, the self is controlled is the really Big Issue.

It is in this area—the area of the self—where your flesh really does battle with the Spirit.

## **SELF-CONTROL IS SELF-CONTROLLED—BY THE SPIRIT.**

It's important that you know self-control is not a grim effort on your part to be like Jesus in the energy of the flesh.

Self-control is not control of the flesh by the flesh.

Self-control is self-controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Like everything else on this list, self-control is the *Spirit's* fruit.

Self-control is putting your human spirit under the control of God's Holy Spirit who  
comes along side you,  
makes Jesus real to you, and  
enables you to be like him.

Self-control is not stern self-repression.

Self-control is a powerful expression of the Spirit of Jesus at work in you.

### **IT'S ALL ABOUT CHOICES.**

God's willingness to bless you is only limited by your willingness to be blessed!

If the fruit of the Spirit is obvious by its *absence*, make a choice.

“Repent and be converted” (Acts 3:19).

Continue doing so  
*as often as needed!*

Allow the Holy Spirit to convert what satan is trying to pervert:

Your mind and way of thinking.

Your emotions and way of relating.

Your habits and way of acting.

Then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you will fulfill your destiny.

*You will be to your little world what Jesus would be  
if he, himself, were where you are!*

And that's what you really want, isn't it? Please say, “yes!”

# 58

## AFTERWARDS.

My decision to be controlled by the Spirit proved to be anything but passive.

It turned out to be an act of aggression  
against the kingdom of darkness  
and satan wasn't happy about that.

I had assumed (always a dangerous thing to do!) that having put myself under the Spirit's control, I was home free. The battle was over. I was wrong. Big Time wrong!

*I was to learn that becoming a Spirit-filled Christian  
means being engaged in spiritual warfare the rest of your life.*

Thankfully, Paul explains that in his letter to the Galatians:

“For the desires of the flesh are opposed to the (Holy) Spirit, and  
[the desires of the] Spirit are opposed to the flesh (Godless human nature);  
for these are antagonistic to each other (Gal. 5:17 TAB).

It took me awhile to “get it.” As I’ve said before, I’m really *s l o w* on the uptake. It helped to have the Apostle Paul openly share his struggle with the flesh. He said, with amazing candor,

“I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want (to do),  
but I do the very thing that I hate” (Rom. 7:15).

Me, too, Paul! There were (and still are) times like those he “fesses up to.”

Paul’s honesty and vulnerability were very liberating. If a Christian of his caliber had to do spiritual warfare—*and lost some battles now and then*—there was hope for me. You, too! Maybe you will be encouraged, as I was, when Paul follows his admission with one of the most glorious verses in the entire Bible:

“There is therefore no condemnation  
to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Hallelujah!

If you’ve stuck with me this far, and took the steps spelled out in Sight Bites 10 and 37—

I have good news for you.

*The “spiritual warfare deck” is stacked in your favor!*

It really is. Listen to this:

“He who lives in you is (mightier) than he who is in the world” (1 Jn. 4:4b).

Satan only has one vote.

But God has a vote and you have a vote.

That makes two votes.

*The Holy Spirit gives you the advantage  
because he always urges you to vote God’s way.*

When you do—

YOU WIN

2 TO 1

EVERY SINGLE TIME!

## 59

### **MORE THAN A MATTER OF WORDS.**

To some, this quest for a biblical theology of personal renewal  
in and by the Holy Spirit is merely a matter of semantics.

I understand. When I first came into a deeper walk with Christ through the Spirit, I had no  
interest in trying to understand it. Or analyze it. I just wanted to enjoy it.

Now I know, and must respectfully insist, it is not just a matter of words.  
It's a matter of sound theology and Biblical accuracy.  
It is also a matter of bringing scriptural sanity to many devout believers  
who have come under a spirit of condemnation  
because they have not been exposed to Normal Christianity.

These dear ones, who have sought a “second blessing” through tears and tarrying  
and have not gotten “it”—meaning the *gift* of tongues—  
often feel like second-class Christians.

Hopefully, if you are one of these, you now understand you can be “filled with the Holy Spirit”  
and not have that *gift*. And, as one who affirms and is familiar with that *gift*, let me assure you  
it's possible to have a prayer language and not be Spirit-filled at times. Ouch!



You have been blessed in Christ

“with every spiritual blessing” (Eph. 1:3).

Your goal is not to seek something new. Instead, focus on learning to continually, patiently and persistently appropriate the blessings you already have.

Some years ago, Harold Bredison gave a most helpful illustration on television. He turned to the man interviewing him and said,

“Here is title to an island in the Bahamas. I give it to you. Will you take it?”

“Yes, I will. Thank you.”

“Now then,” Harold continued, “you own the island. However, you aren’t enjoying it because you haven’t started to use it. When you do you will begin to delight in that which is already yours by title!”

At your conversion, you received the gift of the Holy Spirit. You have title to abundant living in his power. What is required is not that you try to get something different. Something new. Another island so to speak.

Instead, begin to  
constantly,  
patiently and  
progressively *use*  
—and thus enjoy—  
the gift which is already yours  
*by title!*

## 60

### **THIS SIGHT BITE IS YOURS TO WRITE.**

You have embarked on an incredible journey.

It is a journey into wholeness.

Into fullness by the Holy Spirit.

As you move along, sometimes two steps forward and one step back, be encouraged by this:

When you're bearing the fruit of the Spirit,

*you'll be the last to know!*