

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND YOU

John 14:26

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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 only a superficial knowledge of the Third Person of the Trinity and, while such casual familiarity with Him does not necessarily breed contempt, it has, in thousands of Christians, produced confusion if not indifference.

SEVEN WORDS DESCRIBE SEVEN FACETS

Now, there are seven facets of the Spirit's ministry to believers and these are highlighted in seven verses of scripture. In each verse a different word is employed to describe a different phase of the Spirit's ministry to you and me. Each word has its own weight and meaning. So it's in a combination of all seven that we fully see the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives today.

ONE—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” (Mark

16:15) and He knew they could not fulfill this Great Commission on their own. So, He promised

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

A Very Precious Truth

Sure enough, as we read in Acts 2:14,

“when the day of Pentecost had come...they were all
filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Then—to their amazement—as they began fulfilling their ministry to the world, they learned a very wonderful truth:

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

As they moved about and talked with Gentile Christians, they discovered the Holy Spirit had *also* been given to them. Thus was revealed a very precious truth:

One does not need to be a special kind of Christian to
receive the *gift* of the Holy Spirit.

This is God’s *gift* to *all* His children!

Acknowledge and Appropriate Him

Like any other *gift*, the Holy Spirit has to be acknowledged and appropriated to be fully enjoyed as our possession. 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.

The possession was that part of the inheritance they actually appropriated.

As you will remember, they never did claim all God had promised—to their regret and loss.

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 Spirit of Christ does

not belong to Him” (Romans 8:96).

But there is a sense in which we must appropriate this **gift** if, *from a functional point of view*, the Spirit is to be our possession.

We cannot say that just because God has given the **gift** of the Holy Spirit to all believers that all believers are enjoying the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Obviously they are not.

What God has given, people must acknowledge and appropriate. Our inheritance does not become our possession until we claim it as our own.

No Begging, Please!

Christians do not need to beg or plead for the Holy Spirit. To beg for something is to attempt to gain a favor. Or to attempt to acquire that which is not your own.

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

If, for instance, you have \$500 in the bank and you receive a bill in the mail for \$50, you don't go to the banker and, with hat in hand, beg him to give you \$50. You simply write a check for that amount, present it and claim funds which are 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.

All you need do is *claim* what God has already graciously given to you.

The Spirit *is* yours existentially and will *become* yours experientially when, as a deliberate act of the will, you claim Him.

At that moment your inheritance will become your possession!

Two -The Seal of the Holy Spirit

The second of our verses is found in Ephesians and speaks of the *seal* of the Spirit.

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

A Mark of Identification

There are two purposes of a *seal*. One is to identify the object sealed.

It’s significant to note that reference to this particular work of the Holy Spirit is found in the book of Ephesians.

Ephesus was a sea port and a center for the lumber industry. Merchants from all over the world came to Ephesus to purchase lumber. Of course, they didn’t cart it home with them in their suitcase. It had to be transported over water to its final destination.

So, when they completed a purchase they put their *seal* on it. 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 that he had bought and paid for it.

The analogy is clear, and one which the Ephesians quickly grasped. Christians have been bought by the precious blood of Jesus. But when we become children of God—His special possession— He does not immediately take us to be with Him in heaven. Rather, He allows us to remain here on earth to fulfill a ministry to the world.

God's game plan is not only to get people into heaven,
but to get Himself into people *on earth*!

While we become God's immediate possession, He does not take us immediately to be with Him. So the Holy Spirit *seals* us. That is to say, He puts God's stamp of identification upon us. Throughout our life-long journey, from the moment of our conversion until we reach our home in heaven, the Holy Spirit identifies us as the particular possession of a particular person:

the Lord Jesus Christ who purchased us with His blood.

A Mark of Security

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

Once we have been born again we become God's children. We remain God's children from that moment on throughout eternity.

Even as our children can do nothing to destroy the parent/child *relationship* which exists between us as a result of birth or adoption, neither can we do anything to destroy the parent/child *relationship* which exists between ourselves and the Heavenly Father as a result of our new birth or spiritual adoption.

So the Holy Spirit—who is God's special *gift* to us— *seals* us.

He identifies us

and secures us

until that glorious day when we reach our final destination. Then our blessed Lord will step forward to redeem us by presenting a bill of sale—signed in the crimson of the cross—indicating He has paid for us and thus claims us as His own.

Three - 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?” (I Cor. 3:16).

The key word is *dwells*, and teaches us the Holy Spirit is *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 John 14—

“The Spirit...*dwells* (present tense) *with* you and will be (future tense) *in* you” (John 14:17).

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 these two little words “*with*” and “*in*”.

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

Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was *with* people. He came upon people for special service.

After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was *in* people, and continued to *dwell in* people, through all their days.

Before Pentecost, people had the Holy Spirit.

After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had people.

Before Pentecost, they were using Him.

After Pentecost, He was using them.

The difference is between *with* and *in*.

Old vs New Testament Pattern

It’s a very important difference for it is that which 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 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.

And this is important because it is *this* which distinguishes us from them.

The very special blessing which is ours as Christians, and which belongs to no one else, is that since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit not only comes *on* us during times of special need to provide us with special power to meet those needs creatively; He also *dwells in* us every moment of every day.

“Do you not know that you are God’s temple—God’s dwelling place—(for) God’s Spirit *dwells* in you”
(I Cor. 3:16).

The Holy Spirit is to us what Christ would be if He were here Himself, so that we can be to the world what Christ would be if He were here Himself!

The Holy Spirit, who is God’s *gift* to all His children, not only *seals* us (identifies and secures us until the day of redemption), but *dwells* in us to re-produce the *character* of Christ in us.

Four - The Earnest of the Holy Spirit

But even that is not the end of the Spirit’s ministry to believers. Listen to this:

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

Now, 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 lay in store for them.

In like manner, the Holy Spirit is

“the *earnest* of our inheritance.”

He is a foretaste of that glory which awaits us as Christians in our promised land. He is the assurance that the best is yet to be!

A father and his little girl stood with sorrowing hearts at the grave side 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 dose off for a moment and then wake with a start and cry out:

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

The daddy—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. And then the heart-broken father slipped quietly out of bed,

dropped to his knees and
carried his little girl’s whimpering cry up to God:
“Oh, Father, it’s so very dark! You’re here, aren’t you?”

As he knelt in prayer, his troubled heart received these comforting words:

“Lo, I am with you always...” (Matt. 28:20b).
“I am the resurrection and the life; (she) who believes
in me, though (she) die, yet shall (she) live”
(John 11:25).

Many of us have loved ones over yonder.
Many times we have asked questions about the future.
Often we 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 our experience in Christ is in this life,

the Holy Spirit is a constant reminder that this is just a sampling of the joy which awaits us in the presence of our Lord. And until that glad and happy morn when we meet our Savior face to face,

“the Holy Spirit is the *earnest*

(the pledge,

the promise,

the prospect) of our inheritance.”

Fifth - The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The fifth verse of scripture speaks of the *Baptism* of the Holy Spirit and is found in the first chapter of Acts.

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

There has been a lot of confusion about this particular facet of the Holy Spirit’s work. It’s not my purpose this morning to argue with anyone about their point of view. Rather, it’s my hope we can get hold of the *Biblical* point of view so we can enjoy this fifth facet of the Spirit’s blessing.

Future Tense - Past Tense

In that regard, it’s important to remember that, in each of the gospels and in the first chapter of the book of Acts, the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is always spoken of *prophetically*. We have just read

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

Check it out. Don’t just take my word for it. If you do, you’ll find the language of the four gospels and the first chapter of the book of Acts is *prophetic* as it deals with the *baptism* of the Spirit.

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 *past tense*, as we read in I Corinthians 12:13:

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

They Meet at Pentecost

Where do they meet? In Acts 2 when, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on all who believed and those individual Christians were *baptized* by the Spirit into one Body which is the Church of Jesus Christ.

What we have in the New Testament are five verses in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts *pointing forward* to the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit and one verse thereafter *pointing backward* to the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit.

Thus, we see that the *baptism* of the Spirit was a singular blessing which God bestowed upon all who believed on the day of Pentecost. Ever since that day, we who believe have come to share in that *baptism* at the moment of our conversion. *At that moment*, the Holy Spirit *baptizes* us into the Body of Christ. We become members of His Church and, as part of that spiritual Body, we share in His blessings.

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 a part of a wall, so, too, the Holy Spirit *baptizes* each of us, at our new birth, into the Body of Christ so that, while we retain our individuality, we become a part of the Body of Christ.

“For by one Spirit *were* we all *baptized* into one Body”.

Sixth - The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

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

“He which establisheth us with you in Christ and hath
anointed (key word) us is God” (II Cor. 1:21 KJV).

Tasks to Do and Power to Do Them

This a reference to the Old Testament practice of *anointing*
the priests,
or prophets,
or kings for service.

The *anointing* was the official sign that they had been given the authority which accompanied their responsibility.

Here again is a wonderful and encouraging truth.

God not only saves us and sends us forth to serve—He not only gives us a responsibility—He also gives us accompanying authority.

He *anoints* us for service and

He gives us resources to serve effectively.

We have tasks to do and the power to do them!

Now!

Notice, please, this is not something to which we must look forward.

It is not something which will take place *some* day.

It is strength for *this* day.

It's a done deal!

The scripture says

“He that establishes us with you in Christ and *hath*
anointed us (past tense with present tense
implications) is God.”

Oh, how rich we are beyond all comprehension through the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit.

God has given us a *gift*.

He has provided an inheritance which we simply have to possess.

God has *sealed* us.

He has identified and secured us as His own special and peculiar possession.

God now *dwells* in us.

His Spirit enters us to re-create the *character* of Christ *in* us.

God has given us an *earnest* of our heavenly inheritance.

He has presented a foretaste, a sampling of what it's going to be like in Glory.

God has given us the *baptism* of His Spirit.

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

God has given us an *anointing*.

He has seen to it that we have authority equal to our spiritual responsibility. We are assured that whatever demands He lays upon us, we shall be equal to the task by His Spirit at work in and through us.

Think of that! Ponder, for a moment, the amazing resources which are available to you as a Christian.

You have a *gift*,

 a *seal*,

 an *indwelling presence*,

 an *earnest*,

 a *baptism*

 and an *anointing*.

Only one thing is required to get this all together and that is revealed in the seventh word defining the Holy Spirit's work.

“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 *we* must do.

This is *our* part of the bargain.

We must be *filled* with the Holy Spirit.

It Means Giving Up Control

I confess that for many years I didn’t understand what that meant. Then one day I came across a little paragraph 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 Lucille and I held a week-long crusade there in 1950. 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 several other thoughts I’m sharing today:

“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.”

Basically, to “be *filled* with the Holy Spirit” is to give up control. That’s not easy for most, if not all, of us to do.

It means letting go and letting God *be* God in our lives.

Difficult? Yes!

But that’s the secret to joy-filled, peaceful, abundant living.

We Need Many Fillings

Now, unlike the other blessings of the Spirit, this is not a once-and-for-all-time experience.

It calls for repeated action on our part.

A person who is thirsty does not become full by just taking a single 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 a Christian.

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

The parchment of your soul cannot be soothed,

the thirsting of your spirit cannot be quenched,

that vague,

diffused,

uneasy feeling that 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 receive and receive and keep on receiving.

You must believe and believe and keep on believing.

You must rejoice and rejoice and keep on rejoicing.

You must develop the habit of drinking in,

of satiating your soul in the refreshing water of the Spirit.

Then, and only then, will you be filled to overflowing.

God's word for you today is this:

“Be filled with the Holy Spirit.”