

The Gifts & Ministries of The Holy Spirit – Part 3

Working with the Holy Spirit / How the Gifts operate

John 7:38

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39) NKJV

*but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." **John 4:14 NASB***

The "Water Pouring" Ritual

John 7:37 says that on the last day, the great day of the feast something special happened. The last day of the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) had a water ceremony. During the seven days' Festival, each morning a procession of pilgrims and citizens followed a white-robed Levitical priest, who was carrying a golden pitcher. He led the people through the "Water-Gate" to the Pool of Siloam where he filled the pitcher. The procession then followed him back to the Temple all the way singing, waving their palm branches, and dancing in the streets. The water symbolized the rain. Now was the time to thank God, and to pray for the "latter rain" for the next Spring harvest

Earlier that morning of the seventh and last day, the sacrifices had already been laid upon the "bronze grating" of the great altar. (Exodus 38:30) The blood of the sacrifices had also been poured out at the base of the altar, to fulfill the law of atonement: *"It is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."* (Leviticus 17:11) Now the white robed priest bearing the golden pitcher with water from the Pool of Siloam, approached the altar. Another priest met him, bearing a golden pitcher of wine for the "drink offering," also prescribed in the Torah. (Leviticus 23:13) Together they mounted the ramp to the altar of burnt offering. Simultaneously, they poured the water and the wine down the silver funnels, emptying at the base of the altar. It seems very probable that it was at this time that Jesus stood up and cried out.

Following this ritual the Levitical choirs burst into song - the messianic and prophetic words of Isaiah:

*Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; For GOD the LORD is my strength and song; And He is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. **(Isaiah 12:2-3)** Ho! everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat ... without money and without price. Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Hear and your soul shall live. **(Isaiah 55:1-3)** I will pour water upon the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground. I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring. **(Isaiah 44:3; 58:11)** And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make strong thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring whose waters never fail. **(Isaiah 58:11)***

It is clear, then from the declarations of Jesus that the coming of The Holy Spirit is designed by God to bring believers an experience of enrichment and refreshment (the well, springing up John 4:14), but more importantly to be the force (power) of God moving THROUGH them (the river) to forcibly impact the world. We see this demonstrated in the Ministry of Jesus (when contrasted with the Pharisees / Sadducees) All extolled the primacy, value and power of God's Word, however only Jesus demonstrated the power of God by allowing The Holy Spirit to flow through Him to those around Him as the Father led Him (John 5:19). The Father, Word and the Spirit moving in perfect harmony to bring about the purposes of God (cf creation).

The Gifts of The Spirit and The Church 1 Cor 12:1-11

This passage in 1 Corinthians forms the foundation for our understanding of the Gifts that the Holy Spirit distributes to the members of the Body. In order for us to properly understand the passage we must realize that Paul was here addressing an issue of confusion and misuse of the Gifts in Services or Meetings. Therefore there is (both here and the adjoining explanatory passage in 1 Corinthians 14) a particular reference to the proper administration of the gifts in these contexts. However Paul's listing of the various gifts of the Spirit helps us to understand how the Holy Spirit works through the believer and the particular manifestations that He uses to express His presence and power.

Paul begins by saying "I don't want you to be ignorant" – or misinformed – about the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is as much an issue today as it was in Paul's time. There is an ignorance of the operation of the gifts which often leads to confusion and fear. Yet, the Holy Spirit wants to move in and through the Church and the Gifts that He gives are tools that enable us and others that we minister to, to experience the Divine presence in various forms.

As we come to understand the Holy Spirit and the way in which He moves in our lives and circumstances, we can be more confident of His assistance in every situation. Knowing that He is truly our Helper (paraclete – one who comes alongside to help). Jesus said that it was to our advantage (*John 16v7*) that He went away for then the Holy Spirit would come to be another – like Him – who would support and aid us in ministering the Kingdom of God to the world. We have to think along these lines – that the Holy Spirit has been sent to help us in the same way that Jesus would help us if He were physically here with us – with the added dimension that He works THROUGH us as well.

Something that will help us in our understanding of the Gifts, is that primarily they are given to help people (both saved and unsaved) experience God. If we truly have a heart for people and seeing them become whole, we will actively pursue the Spirit's activity in and through our lives. Only then will people be heard to remark, "Surely God is in this place" (*1 Cor 14v25*).

Finally, it will help us if we understand that often the Holy Spirit will work through us in a very individual way. He is a creative Spirit. There is no stereotype that we must copy in order to be accurate in our ministration of the Gifts. Often the Holy Spirit will choose to use a particular individual (in prophecy for instance) because He understands how that individual will process and deliver the gift. It is clear from Paul's message in *1 Corinthians 12 v 4-6* that there are – "DIVERSITIES of GIFTS, but the same Spirit. And there are DIFFERENCES of ADMINISTRATIONS, but the same Lord. And there are DIVERSITIES of OPERATIONS, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. (KJV)

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - the promise of the Father (*Luke 24 v 29*)

Jesus told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem for "The Promise of My Father" *Luke 24:49* And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (KJV) This was outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said,*Acts 1:5* For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence..... *v8* But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (KJV) This was something beyond what the disciples had received in *John 20 v 22* And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (KJV)

A separate experience to salvation The revival in Samaria - *Acts 8 v 5-8, 12-17*

Philip saw revival in Samaria. He "preached Christ to them" (v5) As a result: "the people gave heed to those things which he spoke" (v6) "They BELIEVED" (v12) "They were BAPTIZED" (v12) "Having RECEIVED THE WORD OF GOD" (v14) Clearly, as a result of Philip's preaching they were SAVED. However, when news reached Jerusalem, Peter and John were sent. (v14) Upon arrival, they prayed, "that they might receive the Holy Ghost – for He was fallen upon none of them" (v16) They prayed and "they received the Holy Ghost" (v17) This was something different to what had taken place before as Simon, seeing the effect of the Spirit's outpouring (*compare with Acts 2 v 1-4, Acts 10 v 44-46, Acts 19 v 1-7*) obviously he witnessed the believers being filled with the Spirit and speaking in a new language.

The release of power

You shall receive POWER (Gk. Dunamis). Acts 1 v 8 - Literally - Ability, Might, Explosive Power

- **The release of power opens a doorway into the supernatural of God**

Through the Baptism of the Spirit we are equipped to step beyond the natural limitations of our limited, earthly bodies and are released to experience the realm of the Spirit. Literally, we may do the works of God. Under the Old Covenant, men and women would enjoy this “supernatural endowment” for a limited period of time (study David, Samson, Gideon etc.) but now we may enjoy this endowment continually.

- **The release of power enables us to do the works of Jesus**

Jesus said, *in John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. (KJV)*. Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to do signs, wonders and miracles. He declared that we would do the same works – and even greater when the Spirit was poured out in its fullness upon us.

- **The release of power enables us to experience the fullness of God**

When a person is Born Again he receives a measure of the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in him. However God wants us to experience His fullness. As we yield ourselves completely to Him God will fill us with Himself. This yielding involves inviting the Holy Spirit to take fill us with Himself and take full control.

Eph 3:19-20 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, (KJV)

- **The release of power enables us to overcome the world, flesh and the devil**

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to live as overcomers in this life. As we walk in the Spirit, in the power of His might we can win the war with our own selves and our selfish natures and ambitions. We can overcome the world and the demonically ruled world system, living Godly lives to the Glory of God (John 16 v 33). We have been given power and authority over the Devil and his evil armies. Jesus said we would “Cast out demons” Mk 16 v 17. We realize that “greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world”. (1 John 4 v 4)

- **The release of power enables supernatural prayer**

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (KJV)

As we surrender ourselves to the Spirit’s guidance and control, we are empowered to pray beyond our abilities. Indeed, He will pray through us, making perfect intercession.

Anointing & Power *Luke 4:14-21*

After Jesus spent time in the wilderness, seeking the face of His Father and battling the enemy, He returned in the power of the Spirit to begin His ministry. There is a keen link between a) The fullness and release of the Spirit, b) Seeking the face of God and c) Bringing the natural man into subjection. As we become more single minded in our pursuit of God we will know more of His presence and power in our lives. Fasting, in particular, is something that should be a part of our lives as we seek a greater release of the power of God in our lives. It brings a sharper edge to our spiritual lives and makes us more attuned to the spirit realm.

Faith, Obedience & Yieldeness

When Peter stepped out of the boat at Jesus’ command, he took a risk. It was a calculated risk, because His faith was firmly founded upon the Word of Jesus. However, everything around him cried out not to do it, because it was contrary to reason. When we step out to move in the gifts, many times we have to take a risk. We feel the prompting of the Spirit and recognize His leading, yet we feel uncomfortable because we are dealing with something that is beyond the natural operation of life. This may be more of a difficulty in earlier experiences of moving in the gifts, yet it will also be a part of our experience ongoingly as we move to greater and greater tasks. Jesus told us to trust the Father like a little child, believing that as we ask Him to use us that He will. (*Luke 11 v 9-13*)

Evan Roberts, the young leader of the Welsh revival that began in 1904, would continually stress the importance in his messages of instant and implicit obedience to the Spirit of God. Learning to be instant in our obedience to the Spirit will be to our greatest advantage as we continue in ministry. When we delay our response, we invite our natural mind to discuss all of the possible outcomes of such an action. This often results is not only a delay, but more often than not in us refusing to step out. As we learn to be obedient we will experience the leading of the Spirit in greater and greater ways. The more that we are obedient, the greater the testimony that we will have to share. Jesus said “Apart from me you can do nothing” (*John 15 v 5*) as we yield ourselves to the Spirit’s control we place ourselves into a position where He can use us. The more you desire to be used, the more yielded you must become.

Working with The Holy Spirit

- *We must surrender ourselves to the Father’s will by allowing The Spirit to lead us and flow through us (following the example of Jesus) We are to be “led by the Spirit” Romans 8:14*
- *We must desire His moving in and through our lives.*
- *We must co-operate with Him (it is Him manifesting His power THROUGH us)*
- *We must be prepared to perform some action (i.e. act, speak out)*
- *We must overcome the objection of our natural minds which may have some difficulty with what is taking place **1 Cor 2:14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned KJV)*
- *We need to be aware of how “ordinary” the operation of the gift may be*

Many Christian often miss the moving and promptings of the Spirit because they are looking for something other than what they are experiencing. Understanding how the gift of tongues operates will help us as we pursue the operation of other gifts in our lives.

The key to experiencing the Gifts

1 Cor 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual {gifts,} but especially that you may prophesy (NAS)

I believe that the key to experiencing the Gifts is cultivating a desire for them. Paul tells us to “earnestly desire” the gifts – especially the gift of Prophecy. Without an intense desire for the gifts you will pass over opportunities and allow fear and insecurity to rob you of wonderful experiences and testimonies. It is my belief that the Holy Spirit want to use us more than we desire to be used and that He is continually giving us opportunities to be involved in the Father’s business. Being used in the gifts ought to be a way of life for the Christian.