

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores the significance, meaning, and experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a vital aspect of Christian life and empowerment.

Duration: 55:25

Scripture: Acts 1:4-5, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 19:1-2, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Filling"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes that the Holy Spirit cannot be obtained at will, but must be received and come upon us. The speaker refers to various biblical passages, such as Acts 1:4-5, Acts 2:1-4, and Acts 4:31, to illustrate the filling and baptism of the Holy Spirit. He highlights that individuals can be filled with the Holy Spirit multiple times, as seen in the examples of Peter and the crowd in Acts. The sermon encourages listeners to seek the filling of the Holy Spirit and to speak the word of God boldly.

Transcript

First, I'll open up your Bibles to the book of Acts, chapter 1, verses 4 and 5. Tonight, we will be talking about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, taking just a week off from our normal verse-by-verse study through the book of Isaiah. The slip that was handed for you is for you to write down any question you might have, and time permitting, when I'm done with the teaching portion, we'll collect those and answer any questions that still may remain. I kind of advise you don't write down your question too quickly, because I hope to answer most of them in the teaching here.

So, the book of Acts, chapter 1, verse 4. And being assembled together with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, you have heard from me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. I think the first thing that we should think about here tonight is to talk about what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is.

Jesus promised that his disciples, who were following him in the book of Acts, and again, this goes beyond just the twelve apostles. The group of the disciples was about 120 people at this time. And Jesus promised these disciples, these followers of his, that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Now, this was actually prophesied before the ministry of Jesus even properly began. Because John the Baptist, in speaking about the ministry of Jesus, repeatedly said, I'm baptizing you with water, but he's going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And so, just as John predicted, as Jesus makes the analogy here in verse 5, for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

And what does that mean? It sounds kind of like nice spiritual talk, baptized with the Holy Spirit, or as might be said, baptized in the Holy Ghost, as they might say down south. You know, whatever, it has a nice religious kind of sound of ring to it. What does it mean? What does it mean to be baptized? The word in the original language of the New Testament simply means to be immersed, dipped, drenched, or covered over.

If you took something and dipped it into a bucket of water, you would say, in the original language of the New Testament, that you baptized that thing. Matter of fact, they have ancient, you know, documents where somebody might be describing the process for dyeing a garment. I think of one especially that I've read up.

It speaks of how to dye a garment, like you were dyeing a t-shirt. This white t-shirt, you wanted to dye it red. Well, here's a bucket full of a mixture of red dye.

You put the shirt in it, it's immersed in it, it's covered over, right? If you leave some of it out, it's not going to have the dye on it. You cover it over, you immerse it. In the original language, it said you baptized that garment.

By the way, and this is purely a peripheral issue, this really argues against the idea of baptizing anybody by sprinkling, right? I mean, the word baptize, in and of itself, means to immerse, to cover over, to overwhelm, or to drench something in. Now again, the word can be used in a literal way. When people were baptized in water, they were literally baptized, right? I mean, there's no two ways about that.

They were immersed in water, put under the water, covered over with water, drenched with water. But the Bible also uses this term baptized in a symbolic way frequently. I can think of many incidents right off the top of my head.

First of all, Jesus talked about his suffering as a baptism that he would be baptized with. That's Matthew chapter 20. Well, you know, how can a person literally be covered over in like a vat of suffering or something? You know, you might think of some old, you know, get smart, where, you know, he was going to be lowered into some, you know, pool of something, but, you know, it's just silly.

Jesus is using the word in a symbolic way, right? Immersed in sufferings, covered over in agony. Of course, there's another passage in the book of Romans which speaks of us being baptized into Christ. Well, you could say baptized into water, and everybody would know what that means, right? You go dunk yourself in water.

Well, you can't literally dunk yourself in Jesus Christ, can you? But you can in the spiritual concept. Everybody knows what you're talking about. You need to be immersed, covered over, drenched with the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

So, doesn't this help us to understand what baptism of the Holy Spirit means? It simply means to have the Holy Spirit upon you in a sense that you're immersed in the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. He

covers over you. It's as if you were dipped or drenched in the Holy Spirit.

So, according to the simple, direct meaning of these words, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit means to be immersed or covered over with the Spirit of God. Again, of course, we're using this in a symbolic way, but we understand what it means. Well, how does the baptism of the Holy Spirit come? Many people think, and this is sort of a classic aspect of Pentecostal theology, that you have to almost earn the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Old-time Pentecostals would have what they call a tarrying service, where they'd get together and tarry and wait. And the idea was you have to kind of work it up within yourself and earn the gift of the Holy Spirit by your absolute devotion and commitment to God and such. And, friends, first and foremost, the baptism of the Holy Spirit just comes as a gift from Jesus Christ.

You know, in John chapter 1, verse 33, John the Baptist said that Jesus was the one who would come and baptize in the Holy Spirit. It's the work of Jesus Christ. It's not the work of us as individuals.

It's the work of Jesus Christ. He's the one who comes and gives us this gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised by John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3. It's also recorded in parallel passages in Mark chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3. Jesus promised the coming of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the text I just read from Acts chapter 1, verse 5. And when was this promise of Acts chapter 1, verse 5 fulfilled? Well, everybody understands that it was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

Let's take a look at Acts chapter 2, verse 1. By the way, you might want to loosen up your fingers here this evening. Maybe lick the tips of your fingers. We're going to be turning the pages of the Bible a lot here this evening.

Acts chapter 2, beginning of verse 1. Now, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now, you know what I find kind of fascinating about this incident, besides the things that are terribly unique to the day of Pentecost? The sound of the rushing mighty wind, the tongues of fire. Nowhere else in the Bible, the book of Acts, do we find this scene replicated.

This is just a marvelously unique thing that the Holy Spirit was doing. I have to think, too, that the tongues of fire upon each one had to be, in a way, perhaps reminding the disciples of this beautiful promise that John the Baptist had made. That he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

I mean, that association probably would have been in their minds. In any regard, what I find fascinating about Acts chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, and if I'm wrong on this point, somebody's welcome to correct me here, I don't find the term baptism of the Holy Spirit used at all in that passage, right? You look at verses 1 through 4, you will not find the term baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet, as far as I know, it is universally acknowledged that this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised.

It's simply understood that the experience of Acts chapter 2 describes this immersion in the Holy Spirit that both John the Baptist and Jesus promised would come. Now, what I find interesting about this is that here they are, they're all filled with the Holy Spirit, they all received on this occasion the gift of tongues. I think

it's very significant to note that the disciples had already received the Holy Spirit.

Keep your finger here on the book of Acts, just turn back a couple pages to John chapter 20, verse 22. Matter of fact, let's get a running start on this and begin at verse 19. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be with you.

Now, when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side, then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. My, this must be an interesting occasion. Jesus just appears in the room, disciples terrified, then he shows him his wounds and they're relieved.

Verse 21, then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you, as the Father sent me, I also send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that it was at this point, John chapter 20, verse 22, when the disciples were born again.

They couldn't have been born again before the finished work of Jesus, but now the finished work of Jesus was complete, they could be born again and Jesus breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. Now, there are some people, and by the way, I mean, I read the works of people who disagree with me. I'm interested to know if perhaps I'm wrong.

On these theological issues that are of some controversy in the Christian community. And so I'm interested to know, but I've read some people who on this point, they say that the disciples did not actually receive the Holy Spirit at John chapter 20, verse 22. That Jesus said it, Jesus breathed on them, but they didn't really receive it until Acts chapter 2. Friends, can I just say, I don't buy it.

I've heard people say what Jesus was just doing was pledging the Holy Spirit to them. I just don't find that in there. I can't regard that as anything else than a biblical interpretation based on wishful thinking.

You don't want it to be there. The simple, most straightforward understanding of this is that Jesus said, Receive the Holy Spirit and breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit. It's hard to read it any other way.

Now, they had received the Holy Spirit, yet God had more for them. And the reception of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 20, verse 22, could not have been the baptism of the Holy Spirit because Jesus said that it was yet to come in Acts chapter 1, verse 5. Another thing that's interesting about this is in the books that I've read that disagree with the position I'm taking on this. The ones who say that Jesus was just giving a pledge of the Holy Spirit here, they say, well, look out, it's plain that the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit here because later on in the narrative, when you put together the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, it's plain that the disciples were still very afraid at times and not really, you know, well, I guess we're going to say that if a Christian's afraid, he doesn't have the Holy Spirit of God.

I don't know. I mean, I think it's possible for any one of us to get in the flesh. I know that after the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter had to be rebuked publicly by Paul on one occasion.

You know, we're not going to say, well, he lost it, he had it, he lost it, he had it. Friends, I just don't know any way to cut it honestly and straightforward with the Scriptures than to say that the disciples received the Holy Spirit at the command of Jesus at John chapter 20, verse 22, and then later on in the book of Acts chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, they received a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit known as the

baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, some people have a very good question.

They want to know, are the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit the same thing? You really find a lot of terms being thrown around about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, don't you? Friends, I would just have to say that there are many different terms used to describe this dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers in the book of Acts. Acts chapter 1, verse 5, says that you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter 4, verse 31, says that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts chapter 8, verse 17, says that they received the Holy Spirit. And Acts chapter 19, verse 6, says that the Holy Spirit came upon them. Well, what's going on here? Is this like, you know, four levels of the work of the Holy Spirit? And, you know, you kind of pick and choose and say which one.

Friends, I really don't think so. I really don't think that God meant it to be necessarily that technical. And that's why he doesn't use any one specific phrase or one specific word in the book of Acts to describe this work.

In many ways, we can say that these terms were referred to aspects of the same work, simply highlighting different aspects of that work. How much of your life does the Holy Spirit want to touch? All of it. Just as much as a piece of cloth is immersed in dye.

So, do you see how the figure of speech of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is very meaningful? Man, that's how much he wants of you. He wants you to be soaked, dripping in the Spirit of God. Well, how does the Holy Spirit want to work? Friends, he wants to work in the inside out.

So that's why it talks about being filled with the Spirit, right? That speaks about an interior work. So God has a purpose in describing it as the filling of the Spirit. Can we go out and get the Holy Spirit as we please? No, not really.

The Holy Spirit must be received. He must come upon us. And that's why those figures of speech are used.

And so, I don't think you can really get down and say, well, four different levels, five different levels. It's a different thing to be filled, to baptize, received, to come upon. In some ways, it's just getting too technical.

There's different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. There's no doubt about it. But the terminology used is pretty free.

I think a far more relevant question to ask is simply, is our experience of the Holy Spirit a one-time thing? Is it a one-time thing? Well, friends, I don't believe the Bible teaches that. And the first place I'd like you to turn to is Ephesians chapter 5. For me, this is one of the most meaningful, short little verses on the work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 18.

And do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation. Do you know what dissipation is? Wastefulness. Is there anything more wasteful than just going out and getting drunk? Man, that's wasteful.

What a wasteful way to live. It says, do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit. Now, in the original language of the Greek, it's very expressive.

You know, the Greek language has a wonderful way, especially with its grammar and its verb tenses and the way it can state things. The literal Greek here is, be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit. It speaks about a continual filling, a continual work of the Holy Spirit in God.

Be constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit. Not just a one-time thing, but to constantly be being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, is this a pattern that we find in the book of Acts? Yes, it is.

Again, turn back to the book of Acts. We already saw in Acts chapter 2, where they were filled with the Spirit, right? Now take a look at Acts chapter 4, verse 8. It says, then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, rulers of the people and elders of Israel. Now, somebody might say, well, it just says that he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

No, the sense of it is that he was filled at that moment with the Holy Spirit. Well, wait a minute, Peter, I thought you were filled with the Holy Spirit back in Acts chapter 2. Yes. Well, you're filled with the Spirit again.

Yes. Look at Acts chapter 4, verse 31. And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

And they spoke the word of God with boldness. Well, I thought this crowd was baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit or baptized with the Spirit back in Acts chapter 2. Yes, they were. Well, here in Acts chapter 4 again? Yes.

You see, it's a being constantly being filled with the Holy Spirit of God. You want to take a look at another passage here? Go to Acts chapter 9. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Apostle Paul. Acts chapter 9, verse 17.

And Ananias went his way and entered the house. And laying his hands on him, he said, Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. This kind of brings me to one of the toughest things about doing a topical study like this this evening.

It's when we go around to so many passages. I want to just explain so many wonderful things in these great passages. Like this is really one of the remarkable events of the whole New Testament where this man Ananias comes to this man who had the most incredible reputation for murdering Christians.

And God tells him to go and go to this man and to pray for him. How many of us would be that obedient to the Lord? Wow, this man Ananias, a great man of God. In any regard, what happened? God instructed him that he would pray for him and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 9. Now look at Acts chapter 13, verse 9. Acts chapter 13, verse 9. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him. Well, again, you see that? Filled with the Holy Spirit. How about Acts chapter 13, verse 52? And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

So again, I want you to see that this work of the filling of the Holy Spirit, it's not just a one-time only event. This is a continuing work that God wants to do in our lives. You might say, well, this is a very crude metaphor, isn't it? I mean, it's as if we're like a bucket.

And, you know, God fills us up with the Holy Spirit, and maybe even makes it overflow, right? I mean, baptizing, it's overflowing. Okay, there you are. It's filled up.

And then what? You've got a leak in your bucket? You know, and it all leaks out. Well, you've got to be filled up again. And I admit that as an example in that way, it sounds a little crude.

It sounds a little rough. But friends, you know what it's like in your Christian life, don't you? I mean, is this foreign to anybody? That one day you can say, yes, oh, yes, God, oh, thank you, Jesus. And, you know, a week, two, three days, whatever.

Half hour, you know? You feel dry as the Mojave Desert. Oh, God, fill me with the Holy Spirit of God again, I need. The old hymn says, I need thee every hour.

So, yes, we'll admit, you know, it's a little bit of an awkward metaphor, perhaps. But we know experientially that it connects with the reality of our spiritual experience. Now, the idea that we are spirit-filled in a one-time only experience, known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is off the mark.

Because I don't believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was ever meant to be a one-time only experience in our life. Although, and let me say this carefully, there may be in our lives a wonderful and first yielding to the Spirit's power. My friends, I can't describe to you how wonderful it can be to come in your life to the realization that the Holy Spirit wants to fill you and use you and to say, Lord, I want to yield to that power.

I want everything you have for me. And yes, you've been a Christian. Yes, you've loved the Lord.

Yes, you've served Him. But your eyes are open to a new boundary, to a new reason. You say, yes, Lord, I want that too.

My friends, that first experience of that, that first step into saying, yes, I want more of that, Lord, that can be a very dramatic experience in a person's life. But God forbid if 20 years later they're looking back to that experience and say, well, yeah, praise the Lord, I was baptized in the Holy Ghost in 65. I want to know, what's the Lord God been doing in your life lately? We must continually be filled with the Holy Spirit and make our immersion in Him a constant experience, though there may be a wonderful and dramatic, if you will, first encounter of a person's experience with the Holy Spirit.

And this, this is an experience that we should encourage people to reach out to the Lord for. To reach out to the Lord. Yes, Lord, I want it.

Yes, Lord, I want everything that the Spirit of God has to give me. Fill me, Lord, use me. I want that.

Now, perhaps an even more pointed question. Can a person be saved and receive the Holy Spirit without being baptized in the Holy Spirit? I'm going to say that again. Is it possible for a person to be saved to receive the Holy Spirit without being baptized in the Holy Spirit? Now, again, let's make this very, very clear that you can't be saved and not have the Holy Spirit of God in your life.

The book of Romans tells us that if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ, he is not his. That's Romans chapter 8, verse 9. If you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you don't belong to Him. To be saved, to be born again, means that you have received the Holy Spirit.

But is it possible for a person to be saved and to have some experience of the Holy Spirit without being baptized, without having perhaps all of the experience of the Holy Spirit that the Lord would have them have? And I would say scripturally, the answer is apparently yes. It is possible. It is possible for a person to be saved, for them to have the Holy Spirit of God in their life, without having all of the experience of the Holy Spirit that the Lord would have for them in their life.

Again, if you want scripture evidence of this, let's go back to the apostles. It happened to the apostles who received the Holy Spirit in John chapter 20, verse 22, right? And then later on were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2, verses 1 through 4, and then had repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit throughout the book of Acts. It happened again in the book of Acts chapter 8. And why don't we turn there, Acts chapter 8, verse 14.

We'll spend a little bit of time in this passage, because it's really a fascinating passage relevant to all this. Acts chapter 8, verse 14. Now, when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

For as yet they had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

I don't think there's any doubt as to what the situation is here. You have a group of people coming to Christ in Samaria, Samaritans, and praise God that these people who were once considered outcasts by the Jewish people are now being welcomed into God's family. You have these people who were born again.

Apparently they were so assured that they were truly born again that they baptized them. Would the apostles or the existing disciples of that day, would they have baptized them in water if they were not assured that these people were born again? Of course not. Yet they had not received the Holy Spirit of God in this fuller experience that they had received when they came upon them there at Acts chapter 8. Now, I'll tell you what people who don't believe in a subsequent experience of the Holy Spirit teach.

They believe that this was a special case. This was just a unique, special case. Well, just file that away because we'll talk about it in another aspect here.

Now, let's turn our Bibles to Acts chapter 19 where there's another, and I would say more difficult to understand aspect of this. This is kind of an intriguing part of the Scriptures here. Acts chapter 19, beginning of verses 1 and 2. And it happened while Apollos was at Corinth that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus.

And finding some disciples, he said to them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said to him, We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit. Now, I'd like to point this out. From everything we know about the ministry of Paul, this was not his opening line with people.

Right? I mean, this is unique in all the record we have in the ministry of Paul. But apparently there was something about these disciples that prompted the question from Paul. I don't know what.

But there was just something about their Christian lives, something about their Christian experience that prompted Paul to ask, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Again, we don't have any indication that it was his custom to ask these people or to ask people in general if they had received the Holy Spirit. Now, their reply is very interesting. They say, We have not so much as heard whether there is

a Holy Spirit.

By their reply, these Ephesian disciples reveal that they have very little knowledge of God's nature as it's revealed in Jesus. They know enough, seemingly, to be saved in students of Jesus. They're called disciples in verses 1 and 2. But they don't know that much about what Jesus Christ has done for them.

They're ignorant. Disciples, but ignorant. Now, Paul teaches them, beginning at verse 3. And he said to them, Into what then were you baptized? So they said, Into John's baptism.

Then Paul said, John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. Now, these Ephesian disciples had only a basic understanding of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and his ministry. It seems that they only understood what could be gained through the message of John the Baptist.

They were in the same place as another guy in the book of Acts, a guy named Apollos, who was in this place before Aquila and Priscilla explained the way of God more accurately to them, to him in Acts chapter 18. Now, it's an interesting question. How did they receive John's baptism? We don't know.

Maybe they traveled to Judea and received it at John's hands. Maybe some of John's disciples, because there were John's disciples spread out abroad the world. Maybe they continued on in the ministry of John after John's death.

We don't really know. But you see, Paul points out that John's baptism was one of repentance, not necessarily faith unto salvation. John's message pointed men to Jesus, but it did not necessarily take men to Jesus.

So, one can imagine that these Ephesian disciples perhaps heard about the coming of the Messiah through John's message, and they heard of their need to be ready to receive the Messiah, and ready to ready themselves through repentance. Yet, they do not seem to have heard that the Messiah had in fact come, and had not heard of their specific need to trust in this person and work. It's difficult.

I tell you, the big question that comes up here is, were these Ephesians disciples, were they actually Christians or not? Well, I have to say, it's a very tough call. And this is the time when I'm glad I have two hands, because I can say on the one hand, and on the other hand. The problem in this is that they are called disciples, which especially in the book of Acts, almost always refers to Christians, genuine followers of Jesus Christ.

However, it must be said that the word disciple does have a broader understanding and application than its most frequent usage. But its most frequent usage is describing a follower of Jesus Christ. But look what happens here in verses 5-7, where it says, When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. Now, having been completely prepared to respond to all of this, they embraced Jesus fully, and they're baptized in the name of Jesus.

And after they were baptized, Paul laid hands on them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they received miraculous gifts from God, the gift of tongues, and they prophesied as well. You know one thing I think is very interesting about this time that Paul had in Ephesus in Acts chapter 19? This is the time when

he wrote the letters of 1st and 2nd Corinthians, which speaks so much about the work of the Holy Spirit and the miraculous gifts. Now, it also, I think it's interesting to say, in verse 7, where it says the men were about twelve in all.

This was not the complete group of the church in Ephesus. This seems to be one set of the group of the church in Ephesus, and Paul was ministering unto them. And so the good question is, what exactly happened here in Acts chapter 19? It's a tough issue, and full of debate whether these Ephesian disciples were actually Christians or not before they received the remarkable filling of the Holy Spirit.

You want on the one hand saying that they were? Well, they're called disciples, and they appear to be part of the company of Christians in Ephesus, things that would not typically be said of them if they were not Christians. On the other hand, they know so little about Jesus, don't they? And, to me, this is a real problematic thing in verse 5. They baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were baptized again.

So were they Christians or not? And you can debate it all day long. But can I get down to a very sincere point here? Paul perceived that they lacked something of the Holy Spirit in their lives. What about you? Would somebody look at your life and see a conspicuous absence of the Holy Spirit, of His peace, of His power in your life? What do you look at when you look at your own life? The Ephesian disciples sensed their need to get right with God.

They knew that the answer was in God's Messiah, but they had to go further than that. They had to go all the way to trust everything Jesus is and everything that He had done, and they needed to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Is this where you're at tonight? You need to receive the power of the Holy Spirit? It wouldn't be a Bible study if I didn't have a quote from Spurgeon, would it? Now, might I say that Spurgeon was no Pentecostal.

Spurgeon was no charismatic. But will you listen carefully to his quote from him? He challenges his listeners and he says, Have you then received the Holy Spirit since you believed? Beloved, are you now receiving the Spirit? Are you living under His divine influence? Are you filled with His power? Put the question personally. I am afraid some believers will have to admit that they hardly know whether or not there is any Holy Spirit.

And others will have to confess that even though they have enjoyed a little of His saving work, yet they do not know much of His ennobling and sanctifying influence. Well, how about it? I'll ask the question Spurgeon asked. Have you then received the Spirit since you believed? Friends, God always wants us to go deeper.

Always to go deeper in our walk with Him. You know, some of us have sipped from God's well and He wanted us to take a deep, deep drink. And then some of us have taken a deep drink where we might have kind of waded in and got our feet wet.

And others, we've waded in and got our feet wet, but God says, I want you to go right out and plunge in. There's always deeper water for us to swim in with the Lord. Now, a fair question is, what if you don't really know? You say, well, perhaps I'm walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit right now.

Perhaps I'm not. I really don't know. I know I'm saved.

I know something of the work of the Holy Spirit in my life, but I don't know if I have this fullness of the Spirit. And I just say that if you're walking in it, you'll know. You know, Spurgeon again, give a man an electric shock, and I guarantee you he'll know it.

But if he has the Holy Ghost, he'll know it much more. I believe. Friends, this isn't something to hope about.

This is something we can know. Just as much as if you know you have a house, a family, and that there's four quarters to the dollar, you can know that you're filled with the Holy Spirit. And many Christians know little or nothing, either mentally or experientially, of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's question, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? It applies just as much to them as it applies to them Ephesian disciples. I would say you could debate all along whether or not these people were genuinely Christians or not. But I think the question still stands to us.

Now, again, we know that a person cannot be saved apart from receiving the Holy Spirit. This is plain from Romans chapter 8, verse 9. And I'll read it to you again. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his.

At the same time, in my judgment, there's absolute scriptural evidence of continuing and differing experiences in the Holy Spirit after this initial reception. These examples and acts are just part of that evidence. Now, some people will say, I see the apostles, I see the people in Samaria, I see the people in Ephesus, but they're special cases.

These are unique cases. Well, I would say if that's so, then the burden of proof is on them to prove why. Why is it a special case? I don't see any scriptural reason why.

Additionally, I'd say they must prove why God has no special cases today. Part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that he treats everybody like a special case. I know I'm a special case before God, not always in a good way.

I mean, I think God deals with special cases all the time. Now, I believe I've answered that question. Can a person be saved and not have all the fullness or all the fullness of experience that the Spirit of God would do on their lives? Let me ask another question.

Can a person receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the same time they're saved? Absolutely yes! Look at Acts 10. Acts 10, verse 44. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished. As many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. Then they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Lord. And they asked him to stay a few days. This is at the same time these people are getting born again.

Friends, we know that they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit because later on in Acts 10, Peter uses the express phrase referring to what happened on the day of Pentecost to them. These people were

baptized in the Holy Spirit at the same time they were born again. You say, well then, how does it work? I mean, you know, why was this person baptized in the Holy Spirit when they were born again? And why was this person left to experience a greater fullness of experience with God later on in their Christian life? I don't know.

Take it up with the Holy Spirit. I don't know. Friends, I think one of the greatest things we need to realize is that the Holy Spirit is sovereign God.

And He works as He wills. He may reserve an aspect of experience with Him for a person later on in their walk. Maybe He wants to get other things worked out with them before they walk into this.

Maybe God wants to bless another believer. Look, man, here it is, the whole thing just at once. I don't know.

I don't think it is for me to know. But might I say, this points out the danger of standing before a crowd and saying something like this. Okay? You've been born again.

If you have not had an experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then I know you haven't been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Well, listen, maybe you did receive, maybe you have received. Who knows? Let me say something about these believers here in Acts chapter 10.

Does anybody believe that they were never filled with the Spirit of God again in their lives? Of course not. They would have read the book of Ephesians and said, Hey, Paul goes to constantly be being filled with the Holy Spirit. We want that.

Let's have this continual experience. Friends, oftentimes the greatest harm of all this controversy is that it makes people not desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Oh, you don't need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

I'm sure it happened when you were born again. Well, maybe it did. Maybe it didn't.

But there's no doubt that we're commanded to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. And why quench a desire that someone has for more of the Holy Spirit by telling them that they don't need more? Perhaps the best way to do it and friends, if there's anything I could do in your minds tonight would be to work on this. Change the way you look at the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Don't see it as an experience. See it as a condition. I don't want to know.

Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? I want to know. Are you baptized in the Holy Spirit? Think about this. And this is where we differ from literal baptism in water to the symbolic work of the Holy Spirit in our life that's illustrated by baptism.

Somebody gets baptized in water. They get out of the pool. Eventually they dry off.

They're all dry. They're not under the water anymore. It would be pretty hard to live your Christian life under the water.

Now, they're not baptized anymore. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is different. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not so much an experience as it is a condition.

The question isn't, did you get wet? The question is, are you soaking right now? That's what the Lord wants. He wants this continual, ongoing work of God's Spirit in our life. Now, let me answer another question here.

This is the last question I'll answer here on my own before we go in and I'll talk about some misconceptions. Hopefully we have a couple minutes for some questions. The question is, do all Christians have the same experience of the Holy Spirit? Friends, the answer is not at all.

Not all Christians have the same experience of the Holy Spirit. Now, why? Part of that is due to the Spirit's will. Jesus said that the work of the Spirit is like the wind.

And it blows and no man knows where it's coming from or where it's going. We just don't know. It's up to the Holy Spirit of God.

And the Holy Spirit distributes gifts. How? As he wills, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. So one reason why you have a different experience of the Holy Spirit than they do is because it's the Holy Spirit's will.

That's just his purpose, his plan. But that's only part of the answer. Part of the reason why some people have a different experience with the Holy Spirit than others is because of their own decision, their own choice.

Friends, we are commanded to ask for the Holy Spirit, right? Luke chapter 11 verse 13 tells us of the command to ask for the Holy Spirit, to seek him, to ask God to send him. Friends, we're commanded to do that. Not everybody obeys that command.

So you can't tell me that somebody who obeys that command and somebody who doesn't obey that command have an identical experience of the Holy Spirit in their life. The Bible tells us to constantly be filled with the Holy Spirit, right? Ephesians 5, 18. Some people obey that.

Some people don't. And so there's a difference of experience. How about this? In Ephesians chapter 4 verse 30, it says do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Well, some people disobey that, right? And they grieve the Spirit. Some people obey that and they do not grieve the Spirit. You can't tell me that those two people have the same experience of the Spirit of God in their life.

Finally, how about this one from 1 Thessalonians 5, 19, where it says do not quench the Holy Spirit. Well, some people don't obey that and they quench the Holy Spirit. Well, if this person's quenching the Holy Spirit and that person is not quenching the Holy Spirit, I suggest they're going to have a different experience of the Holy Spirit.

Look at how Jesus described the ministry of the Holy Spirit in John chapter 7 verse 38. And I ask you to turn there. John chapter 7. John 7, 38.

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. I like how that's translated in the Amplified Version.

The Amplified Version translates it out from His innermost being springs and rivers of living water shall flow continuously. Now friends, can we say that that is the experience of every Christian? No. You know it's not true of your life, right? That's not your experience every day.

Well, why not? But you see, Jesus said that that's what it could be like with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our life. So friends, not everybody has the same experience with the Holy Spirit. Part of that is due to the Spirit's will and part of it is due to our will.

Now, does this mean that those who have a greater or a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit are spiritually superior? Sometimes they act like that, don't they? Friends, they are certainly better off in their Christian life. But if they adopt a spiritually superior or proud attitude, they forget two things. First of all, they forget that it's the work of the Holy Spirit, not them, right? Secondly, they are puffed up just as other people get puffed up over knowledge.

Now, some people say that because some people get proud and arrogant over some experience they have with the Holy Spirit, and believe me, you've been around very long, you see plenty of that. I think it's an offense in the sight of God. But you see some people get proud and arrogant over their experience.

Well, that somehow says that such experiences aren't legitimate. Friends, I don't believe that. We don't stop pursuing God's Word and Christian knowledge because it puffs up some, which it does, right? Paul said knowledge puffs up.

And because some take it and use it as a pretext for pride, doesn't mean that we stop studying our Bibles. In the same way, we don't stop seeking a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit because some are puffed up over their experience. Now, quickly, so we have time for some questions.

Let me just rattle off six mistakes people make in understanding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. First mistake I'd say is the person who thinks, I don't need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. I've got all of the work of the Holy Spirit I'll ever need when I was saved.

Friends, what are they ignoring? They're ignoring the command to constantly be filled, not just the command, but the example in the book of Acts, to be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit. And might I say that that thinking is not only wrong, but we pay a price for it in our Christian life because it discourages people from seeking more of the work of the Holy Spirit. How about this mistake or misunderstanding? Some Christians are filled with the Spirit and some are not filled with the Spirit.

I don't like using terminology like that because that implies that you can be a Christian and not have the Spirit of God in you. I don't think that's good terminology to use. So I shouldn't say that.

Here's an important mistake people make. The evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. If you don't speak in tongues, you're not baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Friends, can I tell you that that thinking is not only wrong biblically, I have to say that I think that that's a dangerous doctrine that has done a lot of damage in the church. The Bible tells us exactly what the gift of tongues is about. The gift of tongues is about our communication with God in a way that transcends our intellect.

It's not about having a merit badge that proves you're baptized in the Holy Spirit. But when you make speaking in tongues the evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, suddenly you have people seeking the

gift of tongues to prove to somebody else or to prove to themselves that they're really baptized in the Holy Spirit instead of seeking it as a way to communicate with the Lord God. People want to know, well, should I speak in tongues? By the way, let me say that I speak in tongues.

I pray in tongues all the time. I'd hardly say that there's a church service that goes by here that I don't pray in tongues in time of worship or somebody comes up in prayer and says, well, Pastor David, I don't see you screaming and shouting in tongues. That's right.

I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to the Lord. It's not something for display.

I'm talking to the Lord. That's between me and Him. So people want to know, well, speaking in tongues, should I have it or should I not? You know what? I tell them this.

Are you ever dissatisfied with your ability to communicate with the Lord? Do you ever feel sometimes that there's so much in your heart, so much on your mind that you just don't know how to express it? You can't find the words. It's just not there. You just feel like you're stopped.

It's not that you don't know. I say if you feel like that sometimes and seek the gift of tongues, God will give you the ability to communicate with Him in a way that transcends your intellect. If your answer to me on that question is basically, no, I never feel like that, then don't worry about it.

If someday you do, then seek God for it. But if you feel perfectly satisfied, and I don't say this in any way to put anybody down, please. I don't want to sound condescending in the slightest way.

But if you feel perfectly satisfied with your ability to communicate with God, then you don't need something that transcends your intellect. But there may come a time when you do. And that's the case.

And seek God. Say, Lord, I need this. I need this gift.

Friends, the wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong reason to seek the gift of tongues is to prove something to somebody, especially yourself. That has led to so much false manufacture of the gift of tongues that it's too bad. Here's another mistake people make.

They say, well, I was baptized in the Holy Spirit back in 1965. That's all I need. Forget it, man.

What's your ongoing experience? I want to know again, are you in the condition of being immersed? Here's number five. Christians who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit are better than Christians who have not. You want to know something? Stop looking at this stuff of, you know, again, the merit badge.

I have this spiritual experience, this spiritual experience, this spiritual experience. You want to know how to judge the walk of a Christian? Look at the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God is not given to us for merit badges.

He's given to us to produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And he may use one tool in your life and another tool in their life and another tool in my life. Hey, what's important is the product.

And the product needs to be the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. It's an old story, you know, written big, you know, some old Pentecostal church. And wow, the gifts are just hopping and happening.

But in their interpersonal relationship, there's so much bitterness and hatred and backstabbing and animosity and unforgiveness. And you just stand back and say, listen, man, I don't know what's going on here, but there's something wrong because the fruit of the Spirit isn't there. That's how you judge the work of the Holy Spirit, not by any specific gift or anything.

You judge the work of the Holy Spirit by the existence of the fruit of the Spirit. That's what he's there to produce. And finally, number six.

A mistake people make in understanding the baptism of the Holy Spirit is they say, we can have whatever experience of the Holy Spirit that we desire. It's up to us to make it happen. No.

Friends, we are not into manufacturing anything in the Holy Spirit. Nothing. It's either the work of the Holy Spirit or it's not going to happen.

I mean, we don't need to prime the pump. We don't need to... Let the Holy Spirit do it. Friends, I am open to whatever the Spirit of God wants to do in our midst.

I just want to know that it's the Spirit of God. Whatever the Holy Spirit wants to do, we're not afraid of that, are we? How could we be afraid of the Holy Spirit who has the same nature as Jesus Christ? That's another great way to judge a work of the Holy Spirit. Do you know that the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, these two men, the second and the third member of the Trinity, do you know that they're in perfect agreement? And that they work together according to the same nature? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together according to the same nature.

And they work as Jesus would work as described in the Gospels. It's a glorious thing. Well, why don't I wrap up in prayer right here and then I wish we had a lot more time to do more things here this evening, but why don't we take as many questions as we can.

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