

Baptized into God

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving the Holy Spirit in our lives, highlighting the need for a personal, transformative experience beyond just having information about God. It delves into the significance of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, leading to a union with God and a divine transformation within us. The message urges listeners to move beyond mere knowledge and embrace a deep, personal encounter with the Holy Spirit for true spiritual empowerment and a life filled with the fullness of God.

Scripture: Acts 19:1, John 14:16, Ephesians 3:16, 2 Peter 1:4, Luke 3:16, Psalm 51:10, Ephesians 1:13, Malachi 3:2, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Personal Transformation"

Description

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Transcript

Well, welcome here, every one of you. And welcome to those who are not here, who may be listening in to this message from somewhere in the world. Who knows where? I don't know.

I do know that there are people listening obviously in very many places around the globe. And I'd like to say what a tremendous privilege it is to be able to stand here in this room and to share something of the truth of the gospel with you. You know, there's a hymn that we quite frequently sing here.

And the words go like this, Speak, Lord, in the stillness, whilst I wait on thee. Hushed my heart to listen, in expectancy. Speak, O blessed Master, in this hallowed hour.

Let me hear thy voice, Lord, and feel thy touch of power. And that's my prayer this morning. And I trust that that's your prayer also.

I'd like to ask you to turn with me to the book of the Acts of the Apostles. If you have your Bible handy. And I'm going to read some verses which are very familiar to us, I'm sure.

From the 19th chapter. I'm reading from verse 1. It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus and found some disciples. He said to them, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said to him, No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.

And he said, Into what then were you baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men. Amen.

In this little section of scriptures, and in this situation that is presented to us, there was one towering problem that we recognize, and that problem was inadequate information. When we receive information, there's a huge challenge that we face, and that is, what will we do with the information that we do receive? And that's kind of setting the scene a little bit for what I want to share with you. Before going any further though, as I was reading these verses and thinking about this message, a very simple illustration came to my mind.

It's kind of a story that is half true, so you can guess as I tell the story which half is not true. But certainly when I first left school, my first job was in a car dealership in Liverpool, England, and they sold some remarkable vehicles there, such as Aston Martins and Lagonda cars, if anyone's ever heard of them, and Rover vehicles. And quite frequently in those early days, I was known to volunteer to work late in the office where I was working, and I had an ulterior motive, not merely that I would get a little extra money in my pay packet, but I could go to the upstairs showroom.

They had a big hydraulic elevator or lift that took the vehicles from the ground floor to the second floor, and also to take them down into the basement. So either on the upstairs showroom or down in the basement where there were vehicles parked, I would start the vehicles and I would move them around and go forwards a bit and go backwards a bit and whatnot. I have to confess that on one occasion I realised that in the upstairs showroom when I was turning, I was actually leaving black tyre marks on the floor, and that called for an extra long stay that night, trying to clean up the evidence of what I'd been doing.

But on one occasion, the boss of the company came and said that he was going to be going away, he was going to go to Australia as a matter of fact, and he was going to spend a couple of years with his family in Australia, and so that was fine and off he went. When eventually he came home, he called me into his office and he said, I noticed that my blue Range Rover is still where I left it when I went away. And I said, yes sir.

He said, well, did you not read the note that I left on my desk? And I said, no, no sir. He said, well, there was a note and it had some transfer papers which were completed, stapled to it. And I said, no, I had not seen that.

And he said, well, what drew my attention to ask you this question is I see that you're still, not only is my vehicle still there, but you're still riding your bicycle to work. He said, in that note, he said, because I had noticed just how much you really enjoyed looking at that vehicle and I allowed you to drive me around in it a little bit, he said, I made a decision that I would actually give that vehicle to you as a gift. And he said, that was written on the note and I had completed the transfer papers, so the vehicle was yours.

And at that point, of course, I was completely stunned when I realized, I remember saying, you mean to say, sir, that for these two years, that vehicle sitting there has been my vehicle and I could have been driving? He said, well, that's right. The Apostle Paul asked these disciples, as they're referred to here, he said, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Seemed like a straightforward question. No doubt about that.

But then notice how they replied, they say, we've never even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. Perhaps you've remembered what I said right at the beginning. I said that the real problem here was inadequate information.

In other words, they confessed something which was absolutely true and reasonable. They said, we didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit. So how could we possibly have received him? The fact of the matter is that they, at some stage in their journey, they'd met up with John the Baptist when he was out there in the wilderness with the crowds of people that gathered around him and they'd listened to him preaching there and as you know very well, he invited them to respond to his message by actually submitting themselves to be baptised in the water.

And they had done that and they'd clearly done it sincerely, but they had no understanding of who the one was who John said would follow him. John sought to explain in some degree of detail, I'm sure he explained all that he knew actually because this was a realm of incredible mystery. He said he was not the Messiah.

They were all looking for the Messiah to come. That had been the way that people had looked for a long time now. And he said, I am not the Messiah.

Don't get this confused here. I am not the Messiah. He's coming after me and he's greater than I am.

And when he comes, he has a different kind of baptism altogether. He'll baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. And I can't even begin to imagine what that meant maybe even to him himself, but to the people who were listening to him such as this group of men who evidently were there on one of those occasions.

What could they possibly have taken from such a strange statement? I mean they could relate to the fact that here were people listening to John's preaching and they were certainly identifying with what he was saying. They were responding to what he was saying and they were submitting themselves to be dipped in the water there. They could relate to all of that.

Their hearts were open to the one who was going to come after him but they would not know detail who and what. They could not even have begun to understand the significance of the death of the one who was going to come that John spoke about. Or in fact his resurrection and this reference to the Holy Spirit.

What in the world could that have meant to them? All that they really knew was that this baptism, this baptism that John was preaching about and encouraging them to participate in was really a recognition of their own sinfulness and their unpreparedness for the one who would come and for the kingdom that he would represent when he came. And they had no real idea of the fact that that baptism and the things that John was saying were actually symbolic. They were prophetic.

They were pointing towards something. This baptism, John had said as much but how could they have related to the fact that this watery baptism was actually symbolic of a far greater, far more profound

baptism which John referred to as a baptism of fire. It was impossible that the message could have reached them.

You know, when they said, no, we've never even heard. It just had not registered and become meaningful to them at that time. But today, for you and for me, we can't find ourselves lining up with those disciples and we can't say what they said because we have the note, do you remember from my illustration, we have the note and let me just tell you that the note has got transfer papers pinned to it as well.

And the problem is that so many men and women who profess to be Christians perhaps regularly attend church when we're allowed to do that and participate in the church activities and tithe and all that's part of that but so many have never ever really read the note. Let me read it to you. I'm turning back a few pages.

I'm in the first chapter of Acts. Here's the note with the transfer papers attached to it. I'm going to read from the very first verse of the book of Acts, chapter 1. The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven and he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen.

To these he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many convincing proofs appearing to them over a period of 40 days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised which he said, You have heard from me for John baptized with water but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they had come together they were asking him, saying, Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority but you will receive the power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Amen. Here's one of the problems we face I think in our evangelical setting I think that we unwittingly have bought into a kind of groupthink which is a modern expression I never learned that when I was at school but we've been influenced by a groupthink within the Christian community by and large and that is, well, we got the Holy Spirit when we first responded in that evangelistic meeting or when someone prayed with us or when my father prayed for me when I was a young boy and so on. The Pentecostals and their charismatic people they embrace the concept that John was talking about and that Jesus has just reconfirmed but I question to what extent they really understand what it is that the Scripture is speaking about what it is that's written in the note, as it were and the fact of the matter is that this experience that we're looking at this promise that we're looking at here is not presented in the Bible as the second blessing we don't read that expression anywhere in the Scriptures the fact is that what we're looking at here that which is written in this note is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ it is the Gospel in fact the Apostle Paul would say writing to the Romans on one occasion if any man have not the Spirit of God he is none of his it doesn't come much clearer than that as far as I can see and Jesus has said in this first chapter in chapter 1 and verse 8 of the book of Acts he said, just note these words that when you receive this power he said it will be power to be just notice those two words power to be you shall receive don't leave Jerusalem until you receive the power to be so the question really that I want to put out to you the question which I believe the Holy Spirit of God would want to preach broadly is the question that we find in chapter 19 did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? I believe in my heart that this is the most needed question to be asked in the churches indeed in the Christian churches of today I believe it's the most needed experience today among those who are professing to be Christians you see it was Jesus who said without me you can

do nothing and I've reminded you that Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit who said whatever you do don't go out don't go out and try and minister don't leave Jerusalem until you have received this power from on high this power which will enable you to be to be Christian in the truest sense trying to live the Christian life without this power is to try and live a life that I do not possess it's impossible and all I'm left with is a powerless profession you know there are some questions that we don't ask one another I mean we don't for the most part we don't ask even how old are you? there are occasions when that seems ok but we don't ask one another how much do you have in the bank? we just don't do that and we don't for the most part say how much did you pay for that such and such and such and such we're discreet about the questioning that we engage in with one another but you know this question is so imperative that I must ask you it's not to throw doubt into your mind it's to ask you what you know to be true did you receive this Holy Spirit when you believed? it's the question that Paul asked and I'm asking you on this occasion you see the issue really is not of the Christian experience is not imitation where we're trying to imitate the Jesus of history but it's participation and I want to explain that a little more to you as we go through here you know someone will say well I believe that I you know I received the Holy Spirit when I accepted Christ as my Saviour notice that there's another phrase that doesn't appear anywhere in the Bible and yet it's common in our evangelical circles the issue is not accepting Christ we can be misled by this groupthink these terms, these phrases, these ideas we need to come again with our eyes wide open and our hearts engaged with God as we say Lord show me what this note says here show me what your word says here I want to get this clear the fact is maybe someone did receive the Holy Spirit at that particular time but you know there is a principle in the Bible to do with redemption and our experience of it and that is that it's it's God's gracious gift certainly but so far as our experience of it in our lives it will always be by faith faith is the key factor and it is the principle upon which I am able to believe God and it's the key to receiving from God as we're seeing here but you remember that Paul says this faith is not something that we just conjure up ourselves we're not convinced by someone's impressive argument about Christianity and so we say yeah ok we can say yeah I acquiesce, I understand and yeah I agree with that that's not the issue the Apostle Paul speaking by the Holy Spirit he said faith comes by hearing the word of God and again he would say that we live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me you see it's taken out of our borders altogether it's part of God's gift as he speaks and for those who are interested it's the Greek word rhema his rhema word not the logos word but God by his Spirit is able to transform his written word his logos word into a rhema word that is it's personal it's particular it's subjective as God speaks into our hearts and he creates and quickens faith within our hearts to believe the truth of the Gospel he also creates faith in our hearts to open our lives up to consciously deliberately receive his Holy Spirit into our lives faith comes by hearing this is not automatic there's nothing automatic about the way God deals with us God doesn't give out this is general grace and providence that we can all talk about in our lives but in terms of the great work of salvation God doesn't hand it out sort of unilaterally and give it or so on and it's not like a handout like a surprise parcel oh look what I've found in it but truth is revealed to us and as truth is revealed to my open heart faith is conceived within my heart and that faith calls for action on my part and this is summed up in this simple statement we've heard from John the Baptist to Jesus and the apostles repent and believe they were exposed to the truth and there was faith quickened in the hearts of those who were responding to him and they acted upon it and that's exactly what's going on here in this section that we've looked at we read and Paul asks them well who was it what was the baptism all about then that you experience and he explains to them and then by verse 5 we read this and when they heard this they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus that was the action they were exposed to the truth of the word of God faith was quickened in their hearts and they acted upon it and that's the formula that will always be for God's dealings with us in this whole realm of his redemptive

purpose in our lives let's just look back again to Jesus when he said you will be endowed with power from on high he also referred to this as you saw from the reading in chapter 1 that this was a fulfillment of his father's promise and you could read that specifically in Luke chapter 24 and verse 49 the promise of the father he was speaking about the Holy Spirit being given Jesus was saying this will be the product of the father the heavenly father's promise and Paul would speak of this same thing he would go back into history and he would be able to show to the Galatians in particular that this was the blessing of Abraham that ultimately there would be those through his offspring in the remote distant future who would actually receive the spirit by faith the apostle Paul would also speak about this baptism right into the Ephesians Ephesians 4 and verse 5 he speaks about the one baptism the one baptism are we really able to see what Paul is saying he's talking about there being an experience he said it's the one baptism he describes it again as a baptism into the death of Christ and again yes he would speak of it as a baptism into the body of Christ we need to spend longer to make more sense of all of this but Paul is saying that there is one baptism and it will involve and include these various other statements which are made in different passages of scripture someone may say well if what we're looking at now is the normal Christian experience how many people are really experiencing this the real question is if this that we're looking at here is the normal Christian experience are you experiencing it this is how it boils down in Paul's questions to these disciples he said have you received this which was the promise of the father which he himself Paul was preaching about and would continue to preach about in these various ways and expand and enlarge the truth to men and women's understanding may God do that for us again this morning the sad thing is today I think that the normal is measured by the average and that's a grave mistake in other words everybody in our Christian community in our group this is the way we're operating and so that can create sort of an indifference and that's sad and then the normal is lost and is degraded into something which is just average but immediately that takes place with the Christian gospel we lose the gospel itself this is how Paul tackled the same problem right into the Galatians once the true gospel becomes interfered with diluted or altered or adjusted made more appropriate for the culture in which we may find ourselves and so on we destroy the gospel we cannot alter, change or manipulate any particular part of it sometimes it's being done with with what we could call good intentions the hope is that we make it more understandable by the people that we're talking to make it simple so everyone can understand but as soon as we start doing that we lose the gospel itself and it's degraded and it becomes the new normal but the fact is it's not normal the only normal gospel is the gospel which is detailed clearly in the notes detailed clearly in the Bible, in the scriptures and that's what we need to come back to sadly so many are so easily satisfied with a minimal response minimal challenge and minimal understanding about the gospel and it's just considered to be sufficient but it's not sufficient that's the challenging truth and I think it's as though there's an underlying deception here and that is if you believe it you have it but that's not true there is information I've talked about this many times here in this church, there's the information of the gospel, we've got the wonderful teaching in the book here before us and that's information and information is important and the information must be believed by faith, it must be believed but there's something that needs to be experienced, that's the wonderful thing so we're not left merely with words even if they're biblical words high lofty truths we can become so knowledgeable this is one of the snares that we engage with our minds and we like mindy preaching and we like to understand well there's truth which needs to be explained from scripture certainly, but the scripture that is being explained to us is not profiting us until we actually receive what God is offering to us and it's experienced the trouble is there's clearly a disconnect between our believing and our experiencing we cannot say with these men here in this passage of scripture that we've never heard we can't say that I've just read to you the truth even if you didn't know before this moment we know that there is a Holy Spirit which God is intent upon imparting to men and women who will receive it

and so we can't say we didn't know it may very well be that people who are listening right now have been dealing with limited or partial information that's certainly true and I trust with God's help we're able to bring the whole counsel of God, the whole truth, the body of truth as it relates to this to one another and that the Holy Spirit will quicken the words and quicken the information to us in our hearts you know, it's as though it's as though we've got the story of Jesus, we've got the story of his redeeming work and the provision that he has made by his great redemptive sacrifice but we need to understand that that's the solid ground upon which we stand but the point that I want with all my heart to convey to you today is there's another part to the story can I put it this way, Pentecost is the rest of the story of Jesus Jesus in his life and through his death and resurrection accomplished this for as objectively never asked me to do it how could that have happened anyway he never asked anybody about it he did that, it was in response to his own father's will and purpose, I need to read that information, I need God to make it clear into my heart what price has been paid for my redemption but God's plan is that having recognized and understood and believed that truth, there is now another part of the story which began on the day of Pentecost when as the result of what Jesus had done and to make what Jesus taught to become a reality in the lives and experience of men and women God sent his Holy Spirit Amen, and it's the other part of Christ's ministry, it's the other part of the Gospel the issue is not then do I believe that there's a Holy Spirit it's not really do I believe in the Holy Spirit, here's another story that's completely untrue, there's no half right to it but if I were to give you or I say to you I want to give you a check for a thousand dollars I mean you could go home and you could be very excited about it and you could you could have teaching seminars about what you're going to do with a thousand dollars maybe I should have made the number a bit higher than that but the question is what are you going to do, have you received it do you have it in your hand and that's the truth even those who are involved in preaching, we can preach about the Holy Spirit we can read the texts, but the question is have you received the Holy Spirit into your life Jesus, as we've seen and I've reminded you already, he said that when you receive this it's going to be power to be power, you're going to get power from outside of yourself, imparted into your life which is going to enable you to live the Christian life which is not, the Christian life is not something that we try to fulfil and copy and mimic the way Jesus lived you know the question used to be asked what would Jesus do, that's not the question it's whether I receive his life within me once again Paul said if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, well he's not in it yet at this point in time in that text, in Acts 1 verse 8, the Greek word is diunamis, you shall receive power, in the previous verse he's used the word power at least in the Old King James translation, but in that context it was to do with authority, it's not for you to know the things that God has put under his own authority, that's how chapter 1 verse 7 reads, but he said you shall receive diunamis, you shall receive ability, after that the Holy Spirit of God has come upon you and this is an impartation of a supernatural dynamic enabling from God, it's something which I have never received by my first birth, it's outside of the realm of my human nature you know the scripture speaks about Saul in the Old Testament, Saul who became King Saul, and the text back there is very telling and prophetic I think as far as what God would do in the fullness of time, the text says that the Spirit of God came upon Saul and he became another man do you see what we're talking about, we're talking about a divine supernatural power, the power of God imparted by the Holy Spirit into a life that recreates us so that we become another man, another woman we become another creature and so on Amen, I think perhaps just to highlight this once again I'm thinking of the disciples who walked with Jesus for three or three and a half years let me just focus on Mary she's the best example of this, but it would be true in a limited sense for the disciples Mary was chosen by God she didn't know anything about it, but she'd been chosen and selected by God, the call of God was on her life from the moment she was conceived but in the fullness of time an angelic being comes and speaks to her, you know the story and based upon her response as faith was quickened in her heart, it was surrounded in an

atmosphere of mystery and uncertainty she said, how can this be, you know and she was told, well the Holy Spirit's going to come upon you and that which will be conceived in your womb will be none other than the Son of God and do you remember how she responded it's a great example for how we are to respond, she said, well these are my words, I haven't got the foggiest clue what you're talking about, or how this can ever be but whatever it is, let it be according to your rhema your rhema is the word, amen and she opened herself up, so picture her in the fullness of time she gives birth to this holy child, she spends years nurturing him and we don't know very much about it, we don't know anything until he reaches age 12 and then suddenly just a little cameo of information and then it moves on, but the fact is she knew Jesus in a very, very unique way that is indisputable but she was in the company of the other disciples also, when Jesus said don't go anywhere don't leave Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high the point is he's talking to people who if they were to somehow let's be ridiculous, if they were to present themselves in our community at this point in time, just imagine the remarkable, remarkable person that they would be and the story they would share but Jesus was saying, don't go anywhere because there's something you don't have yet and you need it desperately how much more then would that apply to you and to me today and I think a number of the things that John said are really quite prophetic, my time is now limited but let me briefly make one or two references do you remember, if we were to turn the pages back to Luke chapter 3 we could read this but do you remember how he said as he's preaching to the crowd about the one who is coming after him he said, he will lay the axe to the root of the tree he's saying this in the context of saying that he who is going to come, is going to bring a fiery baptism for men and women and he will lay the axe to the root of the tree here's man's real problem here's our real problem, apart from a work of God man's root problem is in his heart, it's in the roots of who he or she is, we talked about spiritual heredity a week or two ago and so on, the root of that spiritual heredity is sin we reminded ourselves not the fact that we commit sins but sin where it comes from from the root, sin that dictates our behaviour, sin that places us under the judgement of God sin that prohibits us from having fellowship with God sin which leaves a man hopeless because his situation is irreconcilable and ultimately he cries as did Paul in Romans 7 O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me? I need and you need something supernatural to change this and this is the promise of the gospel, it's the promise that we're focusing on here this morning I need the stuff that I have inherited from Adam to be broken in my life and so does every man and every woman in fact I could suggest to you that before I can fully express the rich life of Christ through my person I need the stuff of what I've inherited from my forebears I need that God with his axe would blow to the very root of my being and break me free to sever me from that which I've inherited through my first birth and that which I've collected through my relationships in the course of my life and you know there's a verse of scripture in Ezekiel it says, as is the mother so is the daughter there's another scripture that says the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge the same idea is presented there is context for those statements certainly but then how wonderful when the apostle Paul is able to say but where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, amen and this is the wonder of the gospel you know, John in the very act of baptising as we have seen already he's drawing a contrast between a watery baptism which is symbolic and the fiery baptism which is the reality he could minister the symbolic baptism but the one coming after him would be the one who would minister the fiery baptism and when John said that to the crowd that were around him there would be many, perhaps all of the people listening to him were quite well saturated in the scriptures that were available to them and I'm sure there would be those when they heard him talking about this strange fiery baptism their minds would go back to scriptures like Malachi chapter 3 where the Lord is likened to a refiner's fire purging out the impurities and the dross and the scum from the life and certainly there's a sort of prophetic pointer in these very words to this one who would come after him and would bring that kind of purification, of course what

John didn't know and couldn't understand at that point in time was that this that he's describing as fire would actually be produced through the very blood of the one who was coming after him, it would be his sacred blood that would be shed upon the cross only the blood of Christ can cleanse the heart from sin and cleanse the very conscience of men and women and purges us from all of the indwelling impurities in our thoughts and in our minds and our base desires as Charles Wesley called them on one occasion, you know in chapter 11 of the book of Acts here the apostle Peter by this point in the previous chapter has been in Cornelius' house, Cornelius was a Gentile and through a whole strange set of circumstances and some that Peter had trouble with to start with, he finds himself in Cornelius' house preaching to a group of people that had come together to hear what he Peter would say and clearly the Holy Spirit comes in that meeting and is poured out on the group of people there and there's a transformation that takes place and so on by the time we reach chapter 11 Peter's being called before the other elders and basically saying what in the world are you doing going to Cornelius' house, a Gentile you've gone there with this message of Jesus and then do you remember how he said to them and I'm paraphrasing it to make the point very plain to you, it's as though he was saying to them, do you remember what happened to us when we were gathered in the upper room on that day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down upon us and do you remember how our lives were so transformed as the result of what happened Peter said that's exactly what happened in Cornelius' house and then he goes on to say and he purified their hearts by faith, implying that that is exactly what happened when they experienced this fiery baptism that their hearts were purified by the supernatural power of God and he's saying and it happened in Cornelius' house and we're going to keep preaching it to the Gentiles as well because this is the gospel, that's about the way it was going there Amen I'm thinking about David of old who became King David his heart panted for this do you remember, there's a background to this story that I'm thinking of right now in Psalm 51 and we hear David write, it's a very central verse of the chapter, it says create in me a clean heart O God, he's before God he's got a passion, he's got a longing, something burns within him, a longing to experience this inward state to be somehow supernaturally transformed and altered you know that couldn't happen for David in the way it can happen in your life today, because Jesus had not yet been to the cross and his blood had not yet been shed and the Holy Spirit had not been given, but there's a man a classic example of someone with a heart that just longs for God I talked already this morning about so many people who seem to be so passive and they're just caught in the group think and everything's sort of grey and bland and powerless, so it's filled up with other things that make it more colourful and more exciting I'm talking about church meetings when the real need is for the Holy Spirit of God to come, may God stir each and every one of our hearts you know there's a hymn that we sing wash me O Lamb of God wash me from sin by thine atoning blood O make me clean is that your prayer this morning? now let the crimson tide shed from thy wounded side be to my heart applied and make me clean before I close I want to just show you that as we think about this baptism that is promised and that is available and is so needed there's a feature of it which we could say above every other feature that we could think of, I've only mentioned one or two this morning there's a towering pinnacle of truth that is promised for those who receive him you see, the Holy Spirit there's a very unfortunate translation in the Old King James where it makes a reference to the Holy Spirit as it the Spirit itself, the Holy Spirit is not it and then we read about power coming upon us as we've been thinking already this morning but the reception of the Holy Spirit is not to receive some nebulous power no this is a baptism, not into a nebulous power it's a baptism into God this to my mind, this is the Mount Everest of truth and promise that is contained in this great truth it's a baptism into the holy life of God think of it my body becomes the temple of his Holy Spirit my body becomes his dwelling place Paul said this didn't he? do you not know? your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit he's not calling for us to all presume we have to be sure that it actually is it's not going to serve us well just to believe the concept we've been

there this morning for that to become true will we truly have you receive the Holy Spirit since you believed or did you when you believed amen and this great truth the Holy Spirit how can one explain it the Holy Spirit uses the bridge of the cross as his means to transform and translate us from God being with us to God being in us it's certainly true where two or three are gathered together certainly but the new covenant truth the cutting edge of new covenant truth is he's here because he's here it's not because if you get enough people together I'll be there in some nebulous way but no it's all very personal and in transferring the offer of his grace from him being with us I am with you said Jesus but I shall be in you when the Holy Spirit has come when Pentecost becomes your experience then I'll no longer be just with you this has been great disciples but there's something far better I'm going to be in you he said as the result of that which will take place Amen Paul I want you to read here from this translation the Old King James from Ephesians and chapter 3 listen to Paul he said for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ I'm in verse 14 of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named this is what he's praying for that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in your inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith and that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and the length and the depth and the height and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge just pause there he's talking about something which by his own confession and we believe every syllable he's saying is beyond our knowledge it's as though he's saying I'm talking about something that I can't understand this is what I'm about to say is totally in another league altogether that I cannot relate to what is that to which it's as though if he's saying well here it is this great mountain of revelation that he's been explaining and going through and he's praying earnestly that God would open your eyes to see it he said in fact it's beyond our knowledge but Paul doesn't give up at that point and say well there it is but he pursues it, may God do that in your hearts and mine he still keeps climbing up this mountain of revealed truth and he said that you might be filled with all the fullness of God now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end amen it's wonderful we're not filled with all the fullness of God there's a technical thing here it's filled into all the fullness of God is the correct way that the phrase should be translated and there's a variety of ways that we've tried to explain this over the years but I'm thinking right now this morning of an old rusty can rusted out, it's garbage but it's been thrown somehow or other into the Pacific Ocean and out there it sinks down into the depths and for who knows how long the Pacific Ocean washes into it in and out of it, so it's still a rusty old can but it's filled into all the fullness of the Pacific Ocean I told you this is the peak this is the ultimate, this is what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is all about it's to bring men and women into union with God that is so wonderful even though we'd be just an old rusty can another illustration puts it this way speaking about being filled with the Holy Spirit I had this in a note that I've had for years and years I don't even have a clue who said this so I'm quoting someone but they said it's like a material, a piece of material is to be dyed a different colour and the material is dipped into the dye and it becomes overwhelmed by the dye and becomes infused by the dye and is then inseparable from the dye it doesn't become the dye but it receives and absorbs it and radiates its character hallelujah, this is what God is wanting to do and Carolyn earlier in her prayer made reference to 2 Peter chapter 1 where Peter talks about being made partakers of the divine nature let me ask you as I close, do you know anything about this in your experience? something that can be realistically equated with what we're finding written into this note that's been left for us I've read the note to you this morning I trust it describes a gift which has been put into your name the transfer papers, they were done at Calvary it's got your name on it notice this in verse 5 of our chapter when they heard this they acted there has to be that willingness in your heart don't just receive the information it was actually 1815 I don't remember

this personally although I do go back a long way but it was then that Blondin was walking backwards and forwards over a 2 inch rope across the Niagara Falls and there's a whole variety of things he did which I'm not going to try to describe but I want to illustrate it this way he was happy to be blindfolded that was one thing but where real reckless faith came in was when Blondin's manager climbed onto Blondin's back and Blondin walked 200 feet across this roaring, raging river flowing over the precipice and he walked across with a man just clinging onto his back and I think that's a great example humanly you can hardly even relate to anyone doing either of the two things but certainly not the second thing climbing on someone's back he placed all of his confidence in Blondin God's calling you this morning to respond with this reckless abandon this total signing over of your whole life another hymn has a line in it and I'm finished with this I take thee blessed Lord I give myself to thee let's pray Father you know every single person that will listen to these words and I pray Lord with all my heart that somehow by your Holy Spirit you will take the words of a rusty old can that's been graciously engulfed into the ocean of your loving kindness and redemptive power and cause your word to come through somehow Lord with a clarity and a sharpness that no man is able to produce will you do that Lord and speak to men and women's hearts today Lord grant that faith will be quickened by your Holy Spirit and action will be found Lord as men and women give themselves to you without reservation and with a complete confidence that faithful is he who is calling them will be sure to do it so Father we cast the seed and look to you Lord to nurture it in waters and bring fruit forth according to your will in Jesus name Amen

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