

Discovering the Holy Spirit

by Fred Tomlinson

This sermon delves into the journey of the early disciples in discovering the Holy Spirit, highlighting the transformation and empowerment they experienced after Pentecost. It emphasizes the significance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a work of redemption, not just a second blessing or anointing, but a profound encounter with God's holiness and power. The message challenges the audience to seek a deeper understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit's work in their lives, leading to true transformation and boldness in proclaiming the gospel.

Scripture: John 14:16, Acts 1:5, Acts 2:1, Ephesians 4:5, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 3:16, Galatians 2:20

Topics: "Empowerment by the Holy Spirit", "Transformation through Encounter"

Description

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Transcript

I was given an opportunity to speak to the women in the church via this Zoom process. She said how strange it was. She was sitting at home doing this, and there on the screen were all these, she said, all these blank faces of these people all sitting in their homes, listening to her, and she felt it was a bit off-putting.

But there's so much about today and the way things are today for us in terms of church and fellowship and ministry, as Sheila was mentioning in her prayer, which is also foreign to us and so contrary to what we would consider to be right and normal, but here we are. And having said all of that, I'm grateful that I do have some people here, real people to talk to, and to just do some of the recordings we've done with no one present, just my faithful friend at the back there who's recording, is definitely strange. But great to be together anyway, and praise the Lord for that.

The title, I don't normally do this, but I have chosen a title in advance for what I want to share with you this morning. And that title is Discovering the Holy Spirit. And I can almost hear voices out there objecting to that statement and saying, well, surely you've got that the wrong way around somewhere, have we not?

But I don't think I have got it the wrong way around, and I'm certainly clear about the way in which I'm thinking about that statement this morning.

I'm thinking from the human perspective. I fully appreciate that God is, and how many times do I say this, He is the initiator of everything. It's not us trying to find God.

He knows who we are, so He's not trying to find us either. But He knows who we are, and He knows what His plans are for each one of us well in advance, before time as a matter of fact. But in the process of being human and being alerted to the things of God, there is a sense in which our desire and our longing is to know more about Him.

We want to know more about the person of the Holy Spirit. We want to know more about His purpose, His working, what He's doing, what He's attempting to achieve in our lives, and so forth and so on. So there are very many ways in which we could pursue this, it seems to me.

But what I want to do this morning is to think about discovering the Holy Spirit, but I want to do it through the eyes of those early disciples. That's the way I'm approaching it, and I want to do it, excuse me if this sounds strange for me speaking in this way, but it's as though I want to suggest three sort of video clips as we say. We're not having videos or anything, but little cameo views of the early disciples in their process of getting to understand the things of the Holy Spirit.

And in doing that, I'm trusting that we'll be able to allow the Holy Spirit today, here, as He's dealing with us individually right now, to have access to our hearts and to our minds and increase our understanding of what He's doing. Before I go any further, I'm admitting to you that this subject that I'm sort of venturing on is so vast and so broad, and yet we have just a very limited time here. And so at the end, there'll be brief cameos, but they won't all be of equal length, I promise you.

And the way I'm thinking of this is, I'm looking at the disciples and what they knew about the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection first, that's the first video clip, and the second one will be after Jesus' ascension back to heaven. And then thirdly, after Pentecost, and may the Lord search all our hearts in whatever way He chooses to do that as we pursue this. As I think about the early disciples, we could certainly broaden this and be thinking about during the period that they actually walked with Jesus, and there's a lot to be found relevant in that period.

But the way I've chosen to do this is, after His resurrection, well, that includes everything that went before up until that point. And the fact of the matter is that the days, particularly the most recent days prior to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, had been exceedingly dark days for the disciples. And you all know exactly what I'm referring to.

But in particular, of course, highlighted when we find ourselves in Gethsemane and when we find ourselves at Calvary, and we try to imagine the impact these events were having on these precious men, the eleven now, who were faithful to Him, and so on. But even going back a little further, on the other side of the cross in Gethsemane, to the hours immediately prior, there had been so much that was confusing to them, indeed baffling to them, and strange for them to understand. I mean, Jesus was talking in terms of going away.

I've got my Bible open here, if you wish to open yours. I'm at chapter 16 of the Gospel of John right now. And in terms of them becoming confused and baffled by what Jesus was saying, let me just actually read

a few verses here.

Imagine this. Excuse me. In verse 5, Jesus says, but now I go my way to him that sent me.

And none of you asks me, whither goest thou? I'm reading from the Old King James, as you can tell. And he says, but because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth.

It is expedient, or it's necessary, it's vital, it's critical for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the comforter, he's referred to him in the chapter earlier already, but the comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And then he says some other things, but I'm just leapfrogging down to verse 13. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak.

And he will show you things to come. And he shall glorify me, and receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine, therefore I said that he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.

A little while, and you shall not see me. And again, a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said among themselves, what is that he says unto us? A little while, and you shall not see me.

And again, a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father. They said therefore, what is this that he's saying? A little while. We cannot tell what he's saying.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, do you inquire among yourselves that I said a little while, and you shall not see me? And again, a little while, and you shall see me? And then it continues, and you can read the rest at your leisure. But do you see what I'm trying to focus on here? That in these days now, immediately before the cross, and Jesus is talking about going away and yet coming back, and not only that, but it was vital that he went away so that this other person, who is referred to as the Comforter, or again as the Spirit of Truth, can come. And it's going to be to their great benefit that he comes.

He's talking about another, who is really not another. It was a strange, confusing situation for them at that time. We look back, and we've got a much clearer view of things, because we've got a broader view than they had with the rest of the Scriptures here, but that's what these men were facing.

And it was all strange. And then, of course, it moved on to the actual events of Gethsemane and Calvary and all of that. The whole thing was baffling.

But now, after the resurrection, there was still mystery. I mean, the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead and they'd seen him, which, I mean, of course, was just amazing in the extreme. But at the same time, it only raised more questions in so many ways.

So they were baffled, they were confused, and yet, post-resurrection, there was also this supernatural, if you like, because it was outside of the normal realm of things, this supernatural confidence that whatever it was he was talking about will all come to pass somehow or other, because, look, this remarkable miracle

has taken place now. It wasn't just that they were being given all this baffling information, but he'd actually been brutally brought to death on the cross, and he's now alive again three days later. That had to bring incredible confidence to them that things that he'd intimated, hinted at in his teaching and so on, that he was, in fact, the incarnate Son of God, was now completely credible.

That would bring great confidence to him. And for these men, at this stage, after the resurrection, as they thought about these things and considered them, they would remember the privilege of being called by him. They were called by this one who clearly is whom he claimed to be, the incarnate Son of God, and that they had been chosen by him.

I mean, talk about privilege. And that they had had the indescribable benefit of being with him as his friend for three and a half years, to fellowship with this incredible man. They knew him to be that, and they listened to his great statements, but now, look, he's alive again from the dead.

And they had seen his miracles, they had listened to his teaching, they'd witnessed his death, and they witnessed his resurrection. That gave them great confidence in the future. Just pausing here, what an incredible story these men would have, and had, clearly, at that particular time.

They had also, during that period, they had 40 days more after his resurrection to be with him. Talk about out-of-this-world experiences, but they're with him. And we spent some time a week or two ago thinking about the way that Jesus had passed the message along to them.

Do you remember? And said, tell my disciples to meet me in Galilee. And I believe, I'm convinced that the bulk of those 40 days would have been spent in the familiar area of Galilee. And we're told very plainly in Scripture that during that period, he taught them, he continued to teach them and speak about the kingdom of God and so on.

This is adding to the story that I've already been trying to sort of paint, or the picture I've been trying to paint for you up until this point. Please stay with me, but allow me just to use my imagination for a moment. And this is a big stretch of your imagination to come with me.

But imagine if today, at this point in time, this is so outrageous, I'm afraid to even say it. But an announcement was somehow made that one or two of those very disciples were going to hold an event. They would probably choose Liverpool because that's the capital of the universe.

You'd probably say, well, shouldn't it be Jerusalem? But supposing it was announced that there was a venue, I don't know what kind of venue it would be, but in a specific location where these two disciples who had experienced all of these great privileges that we've been talking about, the staggering experiences, they'd known the incarnate Son of God, they'd walked with him, fellowshiped with him, they'd seen him put to death, they'd seen him after his resurrection, they'd fellowshiped with him for another 40 days, and they're going to be in town on Tuesday, you know. And can you just imagine the kind of chaos that would bring? We think we've got chaos today, but in terms of people around the entire world, I mean, who had the means and ability, they would want to be there for that event. I'm talking about people, primarily there'd be religious people, Christian people, to have this opportunity to be with them.

And you know, they would be able to talk about all these remarkable things. The only reason I'm even mentioning this is to try to highlight to our attention the incredible privilege of these disciples who, with all of the confusion and all of the uncertainty about so much that Jesus was and the things that he was

saying, this was an incredible privilege that these men had experienced. And at the end of those 40 days, you remember, Jesus led them to Bethany.

Bethany seemed to be a place he liked to be. He knew he was loved in Bethany, on the slopes of Mount Oliver. And he talked to them once again, and let's just read what he said to them, shall we? Just come to the end of Luke's Gospel with me, chapter 24.

You'll see this. Just reading toward the end of the chapter. Verse 49, and behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, go back to Jerusalem in other words, until you be endued from power from on high.

And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

Amen. But the story continues, and I'm looking at my second video clip at this point. And this is what they knew after Jesus' ascension, so it's moving on in time.

There would be ten more days before the great feast of Pentecost. Now Jesus has left them physically. He's gone from them.

They've got this promise of the Father according to Jesus. And I'm confident as I try to think of these men, although they were greatly privileged, they were just human beings, and I'm a human being, and so I'm not in their situation and never shall be in their situation. But as I try to imagine myself there in that little group through those ten days with this promise and this command of Jesus, don't leave Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.

I'm sure that there were certainly questions in their minds, but I think in the context of their conversation, they would be asking one another questions like, what are you thinking about this? I mean, what exactly are we waiting for? That would be a reasonable question. I wouldn't be surprised if someone said, well, let's just recap for a minute. Let's just think over the earlier events and try to get some clearer sense of what's going on.

Someone would say, well, one thing's for sure, whatever it is that's going to happen is going to happen soon. Because in Acts chapter 1, and I'm turning there now, excuse me, moving around quite a bit here, they would remember how the Scripture reads in Acts 1 and verse 5, for John truly baptized... No, I'll go back to verse 4. You know what? I'm going to go back even further, just covering what I've already talked about. The chapter starts out, the former treaties have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was taken up after that through the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, you have heard of me. For truly, John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he says to them, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own

power, but you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the outermost parts of the earth.

When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. You can see clearly there's a complete overlap of what I just read to you from Luke 24, and now in Acts chapter 1, and of course Luke is the author of this document, and there's a clear overlapping here that we're finding, but there's a bit of extra information that we find here, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. I frankly believe that the word ghost, and I'm a King James person at my root, is really not the best translation for us, because I think if we were talking about the person of the Holy Spirit, and I'd like to do that sometime soon, then I think the word ghost is a bit misleading, really, to us, in the minds, it puts perhaps a different idea, it takes away from the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person, he's not a ghost, he's not an apparition or something, or a feeling, or anything, he's a person.

Be that as it is, I'll move on from there. But they're hearing Jesus say here, wait in Jerusalem, because you're going to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, not many days hence, so we're now in that 10-day period, and I'm suggesting that they're asking one of the questions, what's going to happen? And someone says, well, whatever it is, it's going to happen soon, because they knew that the Feast of Pentecost was coming up, but nothing had been suggested about what might happen that would be unusual on this day of Pentecost, I mean, after all, it was the 15 centuries that have been days of Pentecost, why would this one be any different? Little did they know. But the fact is, here they are with these questions, what was Jesus talking about, what will it look like, how can it be, who is this other person, this comforter, this spirit of truth, it's going to happen soon.

So I suggest to you that they're reflecting on these very things. I know that at least two of the disciples, I only know the name of one, and his name was Andrew, but at least two of the disciples had actually formerly been disciples of John the Baptist, and my opinion, for what it's worth, I think I'm right, mind you, is that the other disciple was John, because as I read the Gospel of John, one of the features of John's Gospel is that he never names himself at any point. He refers to himself, we believe, when he says things like the disciple whom Jesus loved, for example.

So it's no surprise that he doesn't use his name in this context where he is recording the fact that there were these two men who had been disciples of John the Baptist who heard of Jesus, and so on. But for those two men, in particular, there may have been others, but for those two that are mentioned particularly, in the context of these baffling questions, and they're trying to recap what they know and bring together what they know, for those two, their minds would go right back to that vivid, never-to-be-forgotten occasion three and a half years ago, when they were actually with John the Baptist in the wilderness, when he was speaking, and it was there that they heard this phrase, he will baptize you in the Holy Ghost. And Jesus actually endorses that in this first chapter of Acts.

He said, John truly said that. So it wasn't just that John thought up some phrase and sort of added it in. He was speaking that which was the Word of God.

Jesus confirms that in this chapter one and verse five here. And the impressive thing that is on my mind is that they would have heard John the Baptist saying concerning he who was coming after him, he makes it plain, he says, for this reason he's coming in order to baptize men and women in the Holy Spirit. And once again, I'm thinking of these men thinking and pondering on these things.

Was this that we're now anticipating, this promise of the Father, actually the reason for God becoming incarnate? Is that what John was saying there, in order to baptize men and women in the Holy Spirit? And they would have concluded, as I do, if that were true, this that's about to happen is an incredibly significant event. In fact, it's such a big event that it impacts itself on the whole plan of salvation. What am I looking at here? If this is why he came, and I can find some other scriptures which speak about why he came to destroy the works of the devil and so forth, and so on, then I can only conclude this that whatever John was talking about and whatever Jesus has been alluding to that's been mysterious to us, that's going to happen shortly, is so significant that it is indispensable to redemption.

Think of that. In fact, if I believe that, and as a matter of fact I do, then that would mean that without it a person is not yet a Christian. If this is why he came to do this, and I know from a plenitude of other scriptures that when he came he was coming to bring salvation for men and women, and this is now being sort of interfacing with it, it's being brought together with this that John was saying back in that early stage, that Jesus has now authenticated as being truly the Word of God.

This is really big. You know, I think there's a common error, all too common, I think it's a fatal error, and that is to undervalue the things of God. You know the saying, familiarity breeds contempt, and for many of us, I being one of such, we've been raised in a Christian home, we've been hearing these things, you know, as far back as our memory goes, and we become familiar with phrases and statements.

Some of them have become clichés, not deliberately, but just because of repetition and familiarity and so on. And even the things of God, this is why I was trying to, talking about the disciples and two of them coming to Liverpool or somewhere, to sort of shake us into thinking this is big, this is really big. And then we've been thinking about this statement that's now on the table for us, about the significance of this baptism in the Holy Ghost, and I'm suggesting to you that in so many ways we diminish these things and we lose the impact and we miss what God has done and what God is saying and what God is wanting to do in your life and in my life in these days.

I think, for example, it's all too common to diminish this very phrase that we're looking at at the moment, to baptize in the Holy Spirit. And so it's made, here's a cliché, it's made, well, it's the second blessing in the minds of many, certainly. And there are those who say, well, the evidence that this has been experienced in a person's life is they speak in tongues.

And I'm saying, that doesn't gel with what we've just been seeing here. I'm not diminishing the gifts of the Spirit at the moment, I'm wanting to elevate what this is that we are being exposed to here in the Scriptures. I think, if we say, well, this is, because, frankly, I think that in many churches, it depends on which sort of brand we're looking at out there, there's a dismissing of this phrase, they're dismissive about this phrase, so we don't really hear much about it.

It's what John the Baptist said, and that's it. On the other hand, we've got bodies of people who make much of it, and they say, this is the second blessing, and you need this, you know, this is the much more that God wants to do in your life, and then the proof of it will be, as I've mentioned already, you may speak in tongues, or you will speak in tongues, and so on. And I'm saying, in underestimating or undervaluing the true baptism in the Holy Spirit, we end up undervaluing the new birth.

What then is the new birth? And of course, we've got, whether we agree entirely on this together or not, it remains to be seen, I'm sure, but there's a tendency in our modern evangelicalism to so undervalue the Christian gospel that becoming a Christian is simply the matter of making a decision in one setting or

another, deciding for Christ is a cliché phrase, and we pray what has been called the sinner's prayer, and when you've prayed it, now you're in, now you've got the Holy Spirit, off you go. That's a bit callous, it can sound a bit callous, but that's about the way it is, and so on. And we've undervalued.

What is the new birth? There's such a need for a redefinition to intelligent, hungry, spiritually hungry men and women, say, no, this is what it means, and we're doing that, we're saying, this is what we want to know about this baptism in the Holy Spirit. What is this? If we underestimate that, that seems to have such a prominent place in the way this is all unfolding, we end up saying, well, the new birth wasn't sufficient to do it, so we got this sort of booster shot further down the road here. Is that right? Is that what is being taught in Scripture? And of course, another conclusion that misleads us, I think it's a fatal error, again, is that we've been told and led to believe that the disciples prior to the day of Pentecost were born again.

Well, I don't believe that. I don't believe that at all. The new covenant, the price on the cross was paid to inaugurate the new covenant, certainly, but before that, these were religious, devoutly religious Jewish people who were privileged to be in the company of Jesus, to listen to his teaching and to embrace it and so on.

But Jesus says, don't go anywhere. Go back to Jerusalem. Stay there until this that I've been talking about happens to you.

They needed it, this big thing that Jesus came to make a possible for men and women. And if we believe, well, the disciples, well, they were Christians, well, so what happened then after that? And what does that mean for ourselves? We've undervalued the gospel. We've undervalued the work of Christ.

We've undervalued the redemption. We've undervalued this that we're talking about here this morning. I think people are seeking this more because they haven't really experienced the true new birth.

Mind you, if you go down that road too far and I've been down this road, you run into trouble and people fall out with you. You say, oh, no, this doesn't fit in with the way we've always thought about it and so on. But I believe that this is the truth and we can sort of be in this sort of crazy world where we just sort of accept it, well, yeah, well, he's a good guy or, you know, he's prayed the sinner's prayer and so on, nice personality, got a lovely ability to even teach the Bible.

It's more than that. It's a dynamic work of God that we're faced with and we need. When I remind myself that this that John the Baptist termed the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the reason that Jesus came to do this, he didn't say he's coming so that he can, and I could think of a list of things I could suggest, but it's foolish.

But this is what he said it was for. That tells me this is important. It's more than a second blessing.

It's more than an anointing for a more fruitful ministry. It's more than an ability to speak in tongues. And it's certainly not in order to experience these sort of hysterical things that some people get involved in and say that this is the evidence of the Holy Spirit.

I believe that what John referred to there and Jesus authenticated is a prophetic pointer to the action of regeneration or to the new birth. It's a prophetic pointer toward it. In other words, and I wrote this down because I wanted to say it exactly as I believe it to be, that all the vital elements of what John called the baptism in the Holy Spirit are included in and fulfilled in and expanded in the new birth.

As we look more closely into this, I'm hearing what Jesus is saying. Do you remember these? You do, I'm sure. Jesus talking to his disciples, we're back in John 14, and just cutting out this one short statement, he said, I am with you.

I shall be in you. In a sense, that says everything. This is the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant.

God with, God in. Right there. And Jesus is saying to his disciples, and John was alluding to it, he said, he'll baptise you, and I'll talk a little more about this in just a minute, in the Holy Spirit.

In is the word in this context, not with. Mind you, if he's in you, he's with you. But if all we know is with, then we're missing the real reason that Jesus came into the world and gave his life on the cross.

The first principle of the message that John the Baptist was preaching at that time was tied up in this one little word, in. And sadly, most of your translations don't use that word in the reference of John. It says, he'll baptise you with the Holy Spirit.

But the Greek word, it's a preposition, the Greek preposition is enn. It can be translated different ways, but this is what it means. And perhaps I can illustrate this by just telling you my father had a Newbery Bible, which is Thomas Newbery was a man who lived a long time ago, and without computers in those days, he did an incredible work, obviously incredibly knowledgeable in Hebrew and Greek, and he devised a whole system of symbols which he incorporates into the text to show us moods and to show us all kinds of features of these two languages, which are both very full languages compared or contrasted to our language.

We have three tenses in the Greek, they've got five tenses and so forth. And I'm remembering just now one page which in the Bible, right in between the Testaments I believe it was, there was a diagram that Thomas Newbery had come up with. So it was a diagram, a very simple box, and then he had lines coming to and from this box.

And this was to illustrate, help people to understand the various prepositions in the Greek language. And one of these words, it didn't even have a line. It's the Greek word which we translate in.

It's just right in the box, in. We may, if I allow myself a little time, we may be able to think of another word which is the preposition eis, E-I-S in our language. It's a relevant word here for what we're looking at, but that word means, and it's most probably I think translated into.

So here's a line, I thought I'd have to say this at this point, because I've talked about lines. Here's a line that's coming from who knows where, and it comes into the box. So it comes in, but it suggests this is the way it's moving.

Someone's coming into something, into the box, which is where we're all to be. But with the preposition in, it carries through the idea of to be in and at total rest. It's fixed, it's there, it's solid, it's secure, it's immovable.

And this can be illustrated with other verses that we can't try and find right now, and so on. But this, let us not forget, is the crux of the difference and contrast between the Old Covenant and the New. Take that one home with you.

I am with you, says Jesus, I shall be, future, I shall be in you, not many days hence. And it fulfills also the mystery which is revealed at the end of the ages. We could read about that in Colossians chapter 1, we're not going there this morning, and so on.

Since I've mentioned the word into, ice, this is a great statement where Paul says that you, in chapter 3 of Ephesians, that you may be filled into all of the fullness of God. All this makes so much sense of what John was talking about. He says, I baptise you with water, but the one who comes after me, who is greater than I am, I'm not worthy to even unloose his shoelaces.

He, by way of total and absolute contrast, will baptise you, not in water, in the Holy Spirit of God. As we remember just a number of things coming to my mind here, Paul talks about being in Christ, doesn't he? And if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation, and so on. Once you see this, it's written all over the New Testament, everywhere.

John's message, John's baptism was allegorical. Jesus' baptism is going to be dynamic. It's going to accomplish something very real and wonderful.

If we just look at one more thing, I'm digging things up from a long way in my past here. But when we read the words in the Scripture, John's words, he shall baptise you in the Holy Spirit. And so many times we hear people talk about baptism in the Spirit.

Well, that phrase never appears in the Bible. It's not baptism in the Spirit. And as a matter of fact, in the text that I'm quoting, the words of John, it has no definite article.

This is all foreign to our language, isn't it? But the definite article is expressed in a number of ways, but very frequently by the word the. He shall baptise you in the Holy Spirit. But that's not there in the original Greek.

That phrase, if we read it literally, would be, I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you in spirit holy. In spirit holy. And right now, and I'm trying to hurry along, believe me, the dominant feature of this statement is holiness.

He's referring to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit, but the way it comes here, he shall baptise you in spirit holy. And the essence of the Spirit is holy. He's a holy God.

The wonderful thing about what we're looking at here is that, and we know that in the whole teaching of justification, that in that process, Paul explains this, of course, later. He says that God, because of what Christ has accomplished at the cross, he has imputed to us his holiness. And that word imputed is, as we've learned, I'm sure, it's an accounting word.

It means it's calculated. His holiness is credited to my account. And on that basis, I'm accepted by God.

Not by works of righteousness, which I have done. It's by his mercy that he saved us. He, through the redemptive work of Christ, has credited his righteousness, his holiness, to me.

And on that basis, I am acceptable to God. Now, experiencing what John is talking about and what we're looking at this morning, the Holy Spirit of God, his intent is to produce holiness within our lives. Imputed to me, produced in me.

Two different things. I'm not saved by what he produces in me. I'm saved by what he's imputed to me.

But rest assured, this Holy Spirit who is to be in us, this Holy Spirit who is to be in me, will be intent upon producing that holiness of Christ's life in each and every one of us. And in John's passage again, just one last look back here, he incorporates ideas of, two or three words stick in my mind. Do you remember John said, when he comes, he will lay the axe to the root of the tree.

And then again he says, he will thoroughly purge his floor. And without going into a lot of detail here, do you see, this is being said in the context of this, which is the promise of the Father, which was going to happen shortly to these disciples. It was going to be a work of God the Holy Spirit.

It would be this spirit fire baptism. He will baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire is the fully expression. This fiery spirit baptism will have a destructive element to it.

He must destroy the power of slavery to sin, for example, in our lives. He must terminate that which has been functioning and working in us. And then he works by his spirit with our responses to him now, to refine that which is the person that I am or that you are and so on.

This is that fundamental, unmovable purpose for which Jesus came. What we are looking at clearly is the work of redemption. After Pentecost, these men have got a new story.

I am almost finished. They have been in the upper room on that never to be forgotten morning. They heard the sound of the rushing mighty wind.

The fire from heaven had fallen. Suddenly, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were utterly and completely transformed.

We can find some scriptural evidence to support the contrast between these frightened men immediately prior to this in the upper room with the door locked. And now they go out with such confidence and boldness proclaiming the message of the gospel. This that took place in the upper room that morning was what John the Baptist called the baptism in the spirit holy.

This that happened in the upper room was what Jesus called the promise of the father. It is what Peter the apostle described as on the day of Pentecost in this way. This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

And then he goes on to quote from Joel's prophecy another five verses on this. Follow that. This is what Paul referred to as the one baptism.

Do you remember in Ephesians 4 verse 5? This is what he calls, Paul the apostle again, what he calls in Romans chapter 6, the baptism into Christ's death. This baptism with spirit holy is clearly the one baptism which is a baptism into the death of Christ. We're looking at redemption here without any question.

Paul goes on to say it's by the Lord's mercy they have been saved through or by the washing of regeneration, that's new birth that means, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. That's Titus 3 and verse 5. This is what Paul again refers to as being filled into all the fullness of God. This is what Paul meant when he speaks about being strengthened with power by his spirit in the inner man, so that or in order that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Ephesians 3, 16, 17. It's at the back of Paul's words when he says, Christ liveth in me. It's by the Holy Spirit of God in this mighty work.

Amen. This is not the gospel light. This is the true baptism in the Holy Spirit of God.

Peter also declared on the day of Pentecost, this promise is for you and it's for your children and for them that are far off, for as many as the Lord our God shall call. This very briefly and perhaps somewhat awkwardly was those early disciples' story. It was developing.

It was increasing. It reached this great crescendo on the day of Pentecost. My question this morning is, is it your story? Charles Wesley responded this way, O that in me the sacred fire might now begin to glow.

Burn up the dross of base desire and make the mountains flow. O that it now from heaven might fall and all my sins consume. Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call.

Spirit of burning, come. Refining fire, go through my heart. Illuminate my soul.

Scatter thy life through every part and sanctify the whole. Let's just pray, shall we? Father, we thank you this morning that we have right here before us the Holy Scriptures. We thank you that they contain the word that God, our God, has breathed.

Our prayer continually, Lord, is that you will breathe again across the sacred page and illuminate and make real to us your word of truth. We pray, Father, that even with these fumbling words this morning, you, Lord, will succeed in reaching the deep parts of our inner man and remind us and refresh us in the truth, Lord, in the truth of God, in the truth of the gospel. Lord, we pray that you will give to each and every one of us hungering and thirsting hearts, Lord, that are not satisfied, that refuse to be satisfied with some light, superficial message.

But, Lord, we come hungering to truly know you and to truly know your word and to truly and more fully experience that which you have made so possible for us. Will you do that in each one of us hearing this message this morning? In Jesus' name, Amen.

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