

Did You Receive the Holy Spirit When You Believed?

by Shane Idleman

The sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual power and a relationship with God, highlighting the consequences of lacking these essential elements.

Duration: 22:34

Scripture: Luke 11:13, John 14:17, Acts 1:8, Acts 19:2, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:7, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Spiritual Empowerment", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the feeling of something missing in our spiritual lives, emphasizing the necessity of the Holy Spirit for a vibrant faith. He highlights that many believers may lack the power, boldness, and love that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit, leading to a stagnant and lifeless faith. Idleman references Acts 19, where Paul questions disciples about receiving the Holy Spirit, illustrating that many Christians may not fully understand or experience this aspect of their faith. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God, surrendering fully to the Holy Spirit to experience true spiritual authority and power. The sermon calls for a revival of the Holy Spirit's presence in both individual lives and the church.

Transcript

The title of the message is, Something is Missing. Something is missing. Have you ever felt that before? That something is missing in your walk with God? Something is missing in my life.

I just can't... I don't know quite how to explain it, but something is missing. I want more of God. I want to go to church, but things are pulling me away.

Something is missing in my life. And let me tell you what this looks like from the pulpit. When a church is missing the fire, the power, the anointing, the unction of the Holy Spirit, this is what happens.

Preaching is lifeless and boring. Preaching is stagnant and dull. It lacks authority, it lacks power, it lacks boldness.

There's a weakness, a wavering, you know, kind of a, what do you think? Well, here's what I think. It lacks boldness and spiritual power. Now, it also lacks love and compassion.

Because there's a lot of times from the pulpit you can throw the Word of God at people and get mad about Scripture, right? I get pretty passionate about Scripture. But if you don't have that element of love and compassion, something is missing. And you might say, well, what does that have to do with me? Well, I'm glad you asked.

Because the same can apply to you. When we're missing the power of the Holy Spirit in our life, our spiritual life is lifeless and boring. It's stagnant, it's dull, it's dry.

We have no spiritual power, we have no boldness, we really have no spiritual authority. There's not this overflowing aspect of God's presence in my life. I lack love and compassion.

Something is missing. And that's what we're going to talk about this morning. From Acts 19.

And it happened while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples, here's the key, he was up in Ephesus, it's above Jerusalem, way up there, he's above Jerusalem, he's in Ephesus, he finds some disciples. And then he said this to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Isn't that an interesting question? Why would he ask that? It'd be like me running into somebody, a Christian in Lancaster, and, oh, we're talking, go to this church, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? I'm not going to get deep into the theological ramifications here, because that would take up the whole sermon, that's not where I'm trying to go.

But you do have this side of it that would interpret it different than this side of it. For example, you go down to Jack Hayford's church in Van Nuys, you're going to hear a little bit of interpretation of it than what you would hear in John MacArthur's church, a little ways away in Sun Valley. They look at this a little bit differently.

But the bottom line is that Paul obviously noticed that something was off. I think we can all agree on that. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Also, I want to just encourage you a little bit that you don't need to be afraid of the terminology here this morning.

The Holy Spirit is not weirdness. The Holy Spirit is part of the triune nature of God. Boldness and power and unction and anointing.

And it's the one thing that most Christians are lacking. The spiritual power. So it's not weirdness, it's not a mystical force like Star Wars.

When you talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the fire of the Holy Spirit, these are all biblical terms. So instead of running away from things we don't understand, I think we need to run to them and say, what does God's Word say? So we ask these believers, did you receive, basically did you accept, did you take hold of the Holy Spirit when you believed? So they said to him, we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit. So these disciples said, we don't even know what a Holy Spirit is or what is the Holy Spirit.

And many Christians, I remember 15 years ago or so, in a young marriage group that me and my wife were in before we had kids, I was teaching on this or talking on this topic, and a pastor's son said this to me. He goes, Shane, I would probably ask that same question. I've not heard whether there is a Holy Spirit or not.

Now it's hard to believe. People are in the church, and I'm sure they read the Bible and this aspect of God's Word comes out, but many times, so many people are afraid of what they don't have. That they don't talk about it.

It's the Father, the Son, and the Holy Word. Let's avoid this weird charismatic thing. Let's not go there.

And because they don't have the fire, the unction, the anointing they want to avoid something they've never experienced. It's also why you won't hear the gifts of the Holy Spirit talked about often in church, because you can't talk about what you've never experienced. You can't endorse what you've never experienced, even though it lines up with Scripture.

So this is a very important topic. Paul said to them, into what then were you baptized? So they were baptized into the baptism of John the Baptist. So they said into John's baptism.

Now granted, this is a transitional period in the church history. You go from the Old Testament, now right into the New Testament. You go from the sacrificial system, now to Jesus Christ.

You go from the Holy Spirit coming upon certain individuals, David, Samson, Elisha, but now the Holy Spirit is promised to all believers. You go from John the Baptist baptizing people unto repentance, and now you go into the church baptizing people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There's a transitional period that's happening.

So they said, we've been baptized into John's baptism. What was John's baptism? Well, it's in his name, John the Baptist. So what he was, Scripture talked about this, that he was the forerunner of the Messiah.

He would go, literally it says he would go before Jesus and prepare the way of the Messiah. And what would happen a lot back then is they would go and they would clear the roads. If a king was coming, let's say to Jerusalem or Herod was coming into a different city, they would go before that king and they would clear the roads of all the boulders and maybe the holes there in the dirt that have dug up or robbers were there waiting for something.

They would go and they would clean, they would prepare the way for the king. So in the same way, John the Baptist came preaching repentance to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming Messiah. So they would go down to the Jordan River, they would repent of their sin and they would be baptized before Jesus was crucified.

That was the baptism of John. So they didn't know anything about this receiving of the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't want to get too technical or blow too many people out of the water thinking something that I'm not trying to say, but there was John's baptism, and what he's talking about here, I believe, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person and totally engulfs them in a good way, they become filled with the Holy Spirit. So let's talk about three things on this. Did Paul notice that something was off? I think so.

If the disciples had the Holy Spirit, why ask if they received the Holy Spirit? And if they were not disciples, why call them disciples? So there's an interesting thing that's going on here. I'll throw this out there just so everybody knows up front. I don't believe that when you become a believer, you might get something later of the Holy Spirit.

You know, you've got to wait ten years, five years, three years if you're really good, and what I believe is at conversion, you have all of the Holy Spirit. The question, though, is does he have all of you? That's what the question really is, because the old Methodist circuit riders and John Wesley and a lot of the groups I love and I read their books, they would believe in or call what is a second work of grace, a second experience, because they would become believers, and then, brother, you've got to pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You've got to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and maybe that will happen later on in your life, and it's a second work of grace.

It's something that happens later. However, I think a lot of the groups are saying the same thing. We're saying that many times at conversion, right, there's something missing still.

Something is missing in the life of a believer. Sometimes it's not, and if we had time, I could take you to Oswald Chambers, Adoniah Judson, Hudson Taylor, A.W. Tozer, George Whitfield, John Wesley, and different people, men and women, D.L. Moody that we read, Charles Finney, A.B. Simpson, R.A. Torrey, a lot of the old Christian writers, the books you read sometimes, and Charles Wesley who wrote the hymns. I can show you where they were Christians, and then years later, when they finally surrendered everything and stopped playing church, right, and saying, I got this, I'll be a believer, I'll get my out of hell cart here, so I'm good, but now I still want to play around with the things of the world.

Once they finally come to the end of themselves, D.L. Moody, for example, said that I've been doing the ministry in my flesh. I was building D.L. Moody's empire, and I cried out to God and said, God, it's to you alone, I humble myself, I fully surrender myself, and he was so filled with the Holy Spirit that he had to go into a room for a few hours and just weep before God. Years later, same with A.W. Tozer, years later, Adrian Rogers, you ever listen to him? His old Baptist pastor died about 20 years ago.

Listen to his sermons, listen to Adrian Rogers. He received the second work of the Holy Spirit later on, and often, all the times I read about, it has to do with fully surrendering your life. That was a changing moment in my life.

I was a believer, no power, being led astray by the world, falling into the entrapments of the world, loving the lust of the world, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, and in this carnality, but wanting God, but stuck in this world system. No power. If you asked me if I was a Christian, I'd say, sure, yeah, I'm a Christian.

If I filled out a survey, yeah, I'm a Christian. But dare not talk about it, because you don't talk about something you don't have. So I was in this prodigal state, not wanting to be in church, not wanting to grow, not loving worship.

I loved Metallica. Right? Our country boy can't survive. We had Hank Williams down.

I just want to get drunk and get on the country music. But God, I need you. And then when he broke everything out, and he just broke the pride and the stubbornness, it's still there.

It rises up, don't get me wrong. But when he brought me to the end of myself, and I cried out to God, I said, God, I'm coming home. Then the Holy Spirit, this endowment of power, this anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I could say, no, I didn't receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit when I believed I was living in carnality. But once full surrender took place, now the Word of God becomes alive. Now worship is exalted in my soul.

Now I can't get enough of God. What happened? The filling of the Holy Spirit. The anointing, the unction, these words that we don't want to talk about.

And here's why we don't want to talk about it, because somebody acts weird on TV. Or we go to a church and they're acting crazy. Like, this is the Holy Spirit.

I don't want anything to do with that. So we throw out the baby with the bath water. That's where that saying comes from.

Not the Holy Spirit, but it comes from giving a baby a bath. Oh, this water's dirty, right? And they would go throw it on the grass. Well, don't throw the baby on the grass, too.

Get the good things out. But see, the enemy will try to counterfeit anything that is of God. You don't think this is counterfeited? They'll come by your house once a month and go like this.

Can we talk to you? Can we just share God with you? Oh, yeah, you must be a Christian. Oh, sure, we're a Christian like you. And it's counterfeited.

Counterfeit worship, right? Bells and whistles and smoke, and it's all up there. It's all about them and entertainment. It's not heartfelt worship.

He'll counterfeit that. Same thing with the work of the Holy Spirit. Counterfeiting.

And people that are acting weird and possessed of the wrong spirit, representing the Holy Spirit and looking weird. Like, I don't want anything to do with that. I don't either.

And let me just give you something to think about. The power, the anointing, the unction of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with the weirdness and charismatic excesses. It has everything to do with power and boldness and authority and preaching the word of God and being bold.

Actually, not wavering, but stable. Not weird, but explosive and dynamic. And it's not intimidating, is it? It's not intimidating.

It doesn't intimidate. It doesn't back down. It preaches with spiritual power.

I told you guys, I mentioned it last week. A friend of mine, a considerate friend, came to the first service. An atheist, high-profile atheist in our community.

He enjoyed the service, said he'll be back. Did I back down? Oh, no, sir. I turned up the heat.

Got a little passionate about God's word. Right? Because that's the spirit wants to minister in boldness and authority. See, the word of God, when you preach, you don't go, You know what? I think it says here.

What does Rob Bell say? What does Joel Stein say? What does that church say? What does that Muslim teacher say? You know, I think this is just my opinion. I mean, I could be wrong, and I don't know. Can we just be friends? Can't we all just hug? I mean, come on.

That's the fear of man. That's the fear of man in trying to please everybody. That's not spirit.

You think Jesus would do that? He addressed the most powerful religious leaders of his day, and he said, You're whitewashed tombs. What? Oh, yeah, you look great on the outside, but you're full of dead man's

bones on the inside. Why don't you repent? You brood of vipers.

Who is this guy thinking? Boldness. That's really the fruit of the Holy Spirit is boldness, not arrogance, not being mean. Because there are a lot of people being mean.

I was talking slang there for a minute. There's a lot of people, they're very mean with the Word of God. That's not boldness.

Because if you look at somebody truly filled with the Holy Spirit, they're on the verge of crying many times because they have the truth and the compassion. They have the truth, but the love for the people. They feel the love.

See, they feel the heartbeat. They feel their kids getting ready to run into the street. No, come back.

Come back. I can see you getting hit by that car. Same thing with preaching.

Come back to the gospel. Come back to the God who saves and sets free. That's why I love that song, Spirit Breakout.

King Jesus, would you come back on the throne in this nation? King Jesus, would you begin to restore the families? King Jesus, would you be proclaimed from the mountaintops and from the pulpits again? King Jesus, take your rightful place on the throne. We bow to you. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord.

Praise God. Oh, my goodness. This sermon's been burning me all week.

I'll tell you what. Something is missing. And we're still on the first point.

Let me get, let me, where was I? Okay. That was a good rabbit trail, though. Something is missing.

And that's, I'll just tell you up front why I'm so passionate about this topic is because, and I'll get a little personal here, this is what many of you in this room are missing. Many of you are not filled mightily with the Holy Spirit. And I don't say it as judgment.

I say it as love. Just being straight with you because I've been there. And guess where I can slide right back to? Can I? Slide right back to that.

Go right back into that carnal state. And just get, you know, it goes, and we can drift back. So be careful in this area.

So let's talk about this for a minute. Did Paul notice that something was off? Hey, your disciples, great. Did you believe, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And let's just throw that question out this morning.

Did you receive something when you believed? Is there, did you receive something when you believed? So what happened here? Well, three things probably happened, or one of three things. You choose whatever one you want. I'm not convinced either way yet.

In my opinion, the first one is probably what happened. They lacked spiritual power and there was no fruit. Paul said, did you receive, your disciples, maybe he's hanging around them, your disciples, you believe, but you're not witnessing for Christ.

You're not, wait a minute, this is different from the disciples in Jerusalem who met the Lord, who received the empowerment of the Spirit, who were at Pentecost. There's something missing here. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Because something is missing.

So if you're lacking spiritual power and fruit, right, if there's a cherry tree, you see these cherry trees out here? Right? It's a wonderful business. You work one month a year and you can, you know, do pretty well. Now, those who own that, no, it's a year-round thing.

I know it is. I'm just joking. But what do you do if you go out there and there's no cherries? Is that a cherry tree? It's something.

I mean, there's no fruit. There's no, and I should probably clarify. What I mean by spiritual power is not, you know, we think of power, you know, a big hemi motor or a race car.

And it can't, it's along those lines. But spiritual power is you're meek when you need to be meek. You're loving when you need to be loving.

You're not angry and hot-headed at home. You can speak to the demonic realm in somebody. I speak to people that you can tell there's demonic strongholds in their life.

You have the authority to say, you, out. You, leave. You work for my boss, not the other way around.

And you walk into the confidence of God's word. See, you can say, you can counsel and employ. Here's what God's word says.

You can counsel a friend. Here's what God's word says. There's spiritual authority and power behind your words because it's the Holy Spirit bringing that weight.

Or they did not hear about Pentecost that happened earlier in Acts 1.8. Jesus said, but you will receive power. Now, this is Jesus. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

So they didn't know about this Pentecost. They didn't know that there was something else that could take place in their life as they fully submit to God. You shall receive power.

That's a clear teaching of the Bible on what happens when the Holy Spirit empowers somebody. Or, number three, they said they believed, but they didn't have a relationship with God. So it's possible they said they were disciples, but Paul's seeing there's zero fruit.

He goes, well, what were you baptized into? Did you receive the Holy Spirit? Because something is wrong here. And that also applies to many people who come to church. They believe intellectually, but they've never given their heart to Christ in repentance and surrender and belief.

Because that belief, that word belief is interesting. Right? I can believe that a plane is going to England. But if I don't jump on it, I'm not getting there.

I'm not going. So I can believe. I remember hearing a story.

It was many years ago. It was this guy who was a tightrope walker. He walked on the tightropes from building to building.

And he was able to push a wheelbarrow across and turn around and come back. And he's been doing this, so he set it up in a city. And he ran to a guy the morning of, and the guy said, I truly believe you can do that.

I've heard about you. I think that is possible. I believe it.

And the guy said, good, I need someone to sit in the wheelbarrow. Did he? No. That's the same thing that happens in the life of believers.

Or those professing believers. They profess. They profess to know God.

But they don't know Him. There's no fruit.

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