

The Absolute Necessity of Our Receiving the Holy Spirit

by T. Austin-Sparks

The Holy Spirit is essential for a true Christian life, and receiving Him is the proof of our relationship with God.

Scripture: John 16:12

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Lordship Of Christ"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the absolute necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, highlighting that the Holy Spirit guides believers into all truth and confirms the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives. He explains that true evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit includes recognizing Jesus as Lord, experiencing joy, and undergoing a complete transformation from fear to courage. Sparks illustrates how the apostles, once fearful and defeated, became bold and victorious after receiving the Holy Spirit, which also opened their understanding of Scripture. He stresses that this relationship with the Holy Spirit is foundational to authentic Christianity, urging believers to ensure they have received the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

I want you to read with me two or three short passages of the Word of God:

"I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Holy 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 shew you things to come" (John 16:12,13).

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:16-19).

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, 'Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?' And they said unto him, 'We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.' And he said unto them, 'Unto what then were ye baptized?' And they said, 'Unto John's baptism.' Then said Paul, 'John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should

believe on Him Which should come after him, that is, on Christ 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 spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:1-6).

Now what I want from these verses are just two fragments, "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." And the other one is this: "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" These Scriptures, which we have just read, present to us a matter about which the apostles were very particular. And what was it that the apostles demanded as the proof of this matter? It was that these people had definitely received the Holy Spirit. I expect some of you may say, 'Well, how do we know if and when we have received the Holy Spirit?' Now there are quite a number of things that are the proofs that we have received the Holy Spirit. And I am just going to choose several of the most normal things in this connection.

The first thing is that we have recognized and acknowledged the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ over our life. You notice that when the apostles preached, they always began their preaching by setting forth Jesus Christ as Lord. The first thing that they said about Jesus was not "He is Savior," but the first thing that they said about Him was "He is Lord." "God has made this Jesus Whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ." They said, we preach Jesus Christ as Lord. It was the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ that came first in their preaching.

Now this coming of the Holy Spirit was only the earthly side of what had taken place in heaven. Jesus had been received up into glory, and in glory God made Him Lord: God had said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand." In heaven, Jesus Christ was recognized as Lord. All the angels of heaven worship Him as Lord. The Father God called Jesus, "Lord." This is what happened in heaven. When that happened in heaven, the Holy Spirit came right down from heaven to this earth, and He came down to make what was in heaven true here on this earth. He came to make earth and heaven agree on this one thing, "Jesus is Lord." The first proof that you and I have the Holy Spirit is that Jesus Christ is absolute Lord in our life. We bow to the Lord Jesus and we say, "Lord." And we mean from that time Jesus is Lord of all things in and over our lives.

When Jesus is Lord, there is always one thing that the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit brings into the heart the glory of the Lord Jesus. Jesus was glorified in heaven, because Jesus was Lord there. When Jesus becomes Lord in our lives, some of that heavenly glory comes into our lives. You notice how the people in the New Testament were filled with joy because they had received the Holy Spirit. And that joy was the expression of the glory of Jesus. That is why when we truly make Jesus Lord, we feel so happy, so joyful. We cannot keep it to ourselves. We want everybody to know about it. The Holy Spirit has brought the glory of the Lord Jesus into our lives. That is the first way in which you can tell whether you have received the Holy Spirit. Have you got something of the glory of Jesus in your heart?

You know that Christianity is the only true singing religion in the world. Some other religions make some very funny noises. Perhaps they think it is singing. But it is a miserable noise. It is just an awful noise that they make. We Christians sing, and why do we sing? Because the Holy Spirit makes us sing. You notice what a good time Christians have when they are singing about the Lord Jesus. Well, that is the first evidence that we have received the Holy Spirit.

Another thing, which is the proof that we have received the Holy Spirit, is the complete change that is made in our lives. Now you have only to look in your New Testament to see how true this is. Look at the

disciples before the day of Pentecost. Look at them up to the time that Jesus was crucified. Now we cannot say very much that is good about them up to that time. Those disciples up to the time of Pentecost were defeated disciples. When Jesus was taken by the soldiers, they all ran away from Him. Not one of them stayed with Him. They were so afraid. And Peter, poor Peter, went down lower than all of them. Three times, Peter very strongly denied that he knew Who Jesus was, he said, "I know not the Man." Just think of Peter talking like that. That wonderfully self-confident Peter behaving like that, seeking to save his own life by denying his Lord. Yes, they were all defeated men when it came to the Cross.

Now look at them on the day of Pentecost, and from that time onward, they are men in absolute victory. Let the same rulers that crucify Jesus take these men prisoner, and threaten to put them to death. And what do these men do now? Do they run away? Do they say, 'We do not know Jesus?' Oh, no, they are very different men. They are just full of courage. They stand up to the rulers. And it says, "They counted it joy to suffer shame for Christ's Name." Before they received the Holy Spirit, they were men who were very much afraid, very fearful indeed. You know, we are told that after Jesus rose from the dead, these disciples were all in the room and they had bolted the door for fear of the Jews. If they heard some footsteps coming along the road, all their faces went white, and they began to tremble, 'Are they coming for us now?' Men full of fear. Now look at them, after they have received the Holy Spirit. No white faces now. No trembling with fear now. Fear has given way to a wonderful courage. They can stand up to anybody.

Then look again at them after Jesus was crucified. It says about two of them who were walking to a village called Emmaus, that they walked and were sad. They were very sad and unhappy men. And I think that was true of all the disciples at that time. They thought that they had lost everything. Yes, they were very sad men.

Now look at them when they had received the Holy Spirit. It says they were full of joy and of the Holy Spirit. Rejoicing had taken the place of the sadness. How weak they were before that. They could not stand up to even a little servant maid. You remember the story? Jesus is being tried, and Peter is in the hall near by, and he is warming his hands. You know, you always feel cold when you are afraid; and Peter was feeling very cold, because he was very afraid. And there came a little maid - just a little girl, a serving girl. And she said to him, "You are one of His disciples." And he was afraid of a little girl. He said, "I do not know the Man." Yes, he was afraid of a little girl. How weak they were. Now after Pentecost, you can bring all the girls and all the men in the world, and you can let them say all they like to Peter and the other disciples, for now they are no longer weak, but they are strong.

Then there was another thing. Before the day of Pentecost, the Bible was a closed book to them. They knew it as a book. They had read Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, but they did not understand it. They did not understand what it was all about. They knew it as a book, but to them it was a closed book. Now look at them on the day of Pentecost. Why, they had a new Bible! I would like for you to read carefully Peter's address to the multitude on the day of Pentecost. See how much of the Old Testament he quotes. See how he explains the Old Testament. Now his eyes are opened, and he sees Jesus everywhere in the Old Testament. Yes, they had a new Bible. The Bible was no longer closed, it is an open book. All these things were marks of their receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit made defeated men into men of victory. The Holy Spirit made fearful men into men of courage. The Holy Spirit made sad men into rejoicing men. The Holy Spirit made weak men into strong men. And the Holy Spirit gave them all a new Bible. This is the proof that they had received the Holy Spirit. Now I am sure you will agree with me that the Holy Spirit is very important.

These are the true characteristics of a Christian life. I am not going to keep you any longer tonight. Perhaps at some other time we will have another talk, and I will go on from this point, showing something more of the meaning of the Holy Spirit, what the Holy Spirit means to us in our lives. But for tonight this is the point: The absolute necessity of our receiving the Holy Spirit. And be sure that we have received the Holy Spirit. And we can test this matter by these things that I have mentioned. We can test it and prove it because to us Jesus is Lord of all. He is absolute Lord of our lives. It is the Holy Spirit that does that. If that is true of us, then we have the Holy Spirit. And these other things that I have mentioned must also be true.

We can prove it by this: 'Have you received the Holy Spirit?' Or to put it in Paul's way, 'When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit? Have you really got the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?' And you say, 'How do I know?' Well, I have told you just a few of the things which can make you know whether or not you have received the Holy Spirit. Of course, we often put it in another way. We ask people if they have received the Lord Jesus. And we speak about having the Lord Jesus in our hearts, but it is just the same thing. Jesus said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). And the Holy Spirit and Jesus are one. The Holy Spirit has come to make Jesus live in us. It is the same thing. But it is something that we must be very sure about.

Well, I will leave the question with you. You see, I am trying to be very faithful, and really to get right down to the foundation of the Christian life. I think that one of the greatest weaknesses in Christianity of our time is that we take too much for granted. That is why the apostles were so particular about this matter. They made it a personal matter. They made it a matter of supreme importance. They said, "When you believed, did you receive the Holy Spirit?" **THE ONLY TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS THE LIFE IN WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES JESUS LORD.**

Well, that is my simple word to you this evening, but it is a very important word. I have come a long way to speak to you, I may not be here very long, then I shall be gone and may never meet you again on this earth. But I want to be quite sure that when I speak to you, I am very faithful with you, that I leave you in no doubt as to the true nature of the Christian life - the life in which the Holy Spirit makes Jesus Christ Lord! Perhaps we shall say something about the going on of the Christian life, but this is how it must begin.

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