

(Basics) 9. the Gift of the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit as God's provision for overcoming past failures and facing future challenges through faith.

Duration: 12:51

Scripture: Acts 2:38, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 2:8, Hebrews 4:16

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Forgiveness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses two problems that all human beings face: guilt and failures from the past, and concerns about the future. The good news of the Bible is that God has made provision for both. Through Christ's death on the cross, God has provided forgiveness for our past sins. Additionally, through the Holy Spirit, God offers us grace and power to overcome future temptations and trials. The speaker encourages listeners to come boldly to God, believing in His provision for both their past and future, and to ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

What the Bible says concerning God's provision for our future. See, we have two problems basically as human beings. All human beings have the same problem, whatever our religion, whatever our culture, whatever our language, whatever our education or temperament or anything.

And we could simplify these two problems by putting them in two categories. One, it is a problem relating to our past, our guilt and our failures, our sins. And the other is problems relating to the future.

How are we going to deal with what comes forth from our nature in future? Is it going to be a repetition of the same old failures in the past? Do we have to keep on going to God again and again, asking Him to forgive us the same old sins that we have asked for many times in the past? Or has God made some provision so that we can overcome in the areas where we failed in the past? And the good news of the Bible is that God has made provision. He has not only made provision for our past failures through Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. That was a complete and total taking care of our past failure.

He has also provided for this problem of the possibility of our failing again and again in the same areas in the future by offering us the gift of His Holy Spirit. Now, Jesus said to His disciples when He was on earth just before He went up to heaven, He said that it is good for you that I go away, because when I go, I will send the Holy Spirit from heaven to dwell in your hearts. The Holy Spirit is the very person of God, the

Spirit of God, and this is a gift freely given by God to us just as much as forgiveness of sins.

The first day that the Christian message was preached in this world was 2,000 years ago, and it is described in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2. It was the Jewish feast of Pentecost when many people had come together in Jerusalem, and the apostle Peter got up and proclaimed the gospel message that Christ had died and had risen again from the dead and ascended to heaven and had poured out His Holy Spirit that had filled the hearts of these 120 people who were praying that day in Jerusalem. And then he said to all the thousands of people who were listening to him these words in Acts 2, verse 38. He said, Repent, we considered what that meant, and let each of you be baptized.

And that is being immersed in water to symbolize a break with the past, the burial of the old man and the resurrection of being a new man. That is the symbolism of going into the water and coming out in baptism, that my old man is dead and buried, and now I am a new man in Christ. And then he said, If you do that, you will receive two gifts.

One, the forgiveness of your sins. That deals with our past. And second, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That is God's provision for the future. So both our problems are dealt with, our past as well as our future. The taking care of the guilt of our past and the provision of strength to overcome when I am faced with temptation and problems in the coming days.

Now many, many Christians think only that God has dealt with our past problem. And like I said in my last study, you can receive from God only what you have faith for. If you don't believe, you cannot receive.

If you don't believe, for example, that God will give you strength to face your problems in the future, you won't receive it. You may desire it. God may also desire to give you that strength, but you still won't receive if you don't have faith.

Every gift of God is received by simple faith. It's not because we deserve it. None of us deserve even the lowest of God's gifts.

We don't deserve anything but hellfire. All of us deserve judgment. All of us deserve to burn in hell for eternity because we have sinned.

We have sinned deliberately. We have dishonored God. And so God places all humanity, the entire human race, under sin so that he can have mercy on everyone.

This is God's way, to put us all under sin so that we all are in the same category, so that no one can boast over another, saying, I'm better than you. You know how many people there are in the world who think they're superior to others? It's because they haven't seen themselves in God's eyes. It's like I said in another study of the child who gets 20% thinking he's better than the child who gets 5%.

And worse than that, it's like the child who got 20% thinking he's far superior to the other child who got 19.5%. How much superior is he, really? And that is the foolishness of one man who thinks he's better than another. It's all relative. In God's eyes, we're all failures.

We've all failed. And he gives us a promotion to the next class freely. That is forgiveness.

And he gives us strength to face the problem of our own sinful nature, the problems that we can face living in a world that is still under the curse. And that is through the gift of his Holy Spirit. It's his own presence coming and dwelling in our hearts, filling our hearts, giving us strength from within.

You know, when Jesus was on earth, he could only encourage people and strengthen them from the outside. He walked with the disciples. He talked to them.

But he could be only in one place at one time. If he was in Galilee, he could not be in Jerusalem. If he was in Jerusalem, he couldn't be in Galilee.

If he was in Palestine, he couldn't be in India. And that would have been terrible if it had continued like that forever. Because then we would always have to be, all of us would have to be where Jesus was.

And even that wouldn't help us because how many thousands could get near him in any case? And so Jesus said to his disciples, it's better that I go away. Because if I go away, I will send my Holy Spirit who will come and dwell in your heart. And that will bring my presence everywhere in the world.

All the disciples could receive this Holy Spirit in every part of the world and have the presence of Jesus with them wherever they are. And even better than that, not just wherever they are, but instead of having Jesus outside of them, they could have Jesus inside of them. And you know that's far better.

Because you know with the disciples, even though Jesus was with them for three and a half years, and even though he taught them, encouraged them, challenged them, rebuked them, blessed them in so many ways, yet we see that at the end of three and a half years, they were still competing with one another to see who would take over the leadership after Jesus died. They were still competing with one another for honor and position. That inward problem could not be dealt with even with Jesus' physical presence.

Jesus' physical presence only dealt with external problems around them, like if there was a storm in the sea, he could still it. Or if there was not enough food to feed the multitude, he could provide it. Or if there was not enough wine at a wedding, he could change the water into wine.

External problems could be dealt with. But the internal problem, which is far more serious, of sin within themselves, could not be dealt with as long as Jesus was outside. And that's another reason why it was good that Jesus went away to heaven.

Because he sent the Holy Spirit, who is the third person of the triune God, to come and dwell in our hearts. So that the presence and the power of Jesus comes to us through the Holy Spirit within. And how do we receive this gift? Exactly the same way we receive forgiveness of sins.

Peter said, repent, confess your faith in baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2.38, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is no extra condition required. It's not some postgraduate degree.

No. It's the beginning of the Christian life. Many people have thought that to receive the Holy Spirit, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, is something which is to come many years after we begin the Christian life.

No. On the very day that you begin your Christian life, you are to receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. You open your heart and receive.

It's like going to a shop where somebody has already bought a two-volume encyclopedia for you. And if you come home with one volume and you discover that you don't have the whole thing, what would you do? When you discover that both volumes are paid for, you go back to the shop and say, well, I'm sorry, I didn't take the second volume. That's paid for too.

And you take it. It's free. So, Peter offered forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit to those people who repented.

That is what God offers us today. In Hebrews 4.16 it says, Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, so that we may receive two things, mercy and grace. Mercy and grace are not the same.

Mercy is referring to the forgiveness of our sins, dealing with our past. We've all sinned. We need mercy.

Grace is referring to God's power that He can give us to help us to be overcomers in the coming days. It's referring to the future. And it says here in Hebrews 4.16 that let us come with boldness to God's throne, so we can receive mercy to deal with the past and grace through the Holy Spirit to help us face everything that we can face in the future.

Temptations, problems, trials, whatever it is. Isn't this wonderful good news that God has provided for our past as well as our future? And all we need to do is come in faith. So, I want to invite you right now to come to God boldly.

Don't hesitate. He invites you. Say, Lord, I believe you've dealt with my past.

But today I also want to believe that you will strengthen me to face the future. I want you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. I want you to fill my heart with your power, with grace, so that I can face the coming days.

Believe and it will be yours.

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