

The Endowment of Power and the Variety of the Spirit's Working

by Zac Poonen

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the experience of being filled with the power of God, enabling us to live the Christian life and serve Him effectively.

Scripture: Luke 11:13, John 7:37, Acts 1:8, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 14:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Power"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of being baptized in the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's ordained ministry, just as the first apostles and even Jesus Himself needed this anointing. The baptism in the Holy Spirit provides power for godliness and service, transforming believers into bold witnesses for the Lord. By acknowledging our need, thirsting for God's power, and having faith in His promises, we can receive the Holy Spirit and have rivers of blessing flow from us to others.

Transcript

The first apostles had forsaken everything to follow Jesus. But they still had to wait until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit before they could go out and fulfil their God-ordained ministry. Jesus Himself needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit and power before He could begin His public ministry (Acts 10:38). If even He needed this anointing, how much more we need it. Jesus told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they were 'clothed with power' (Lk. 24:49). And just before He ascended up to heaven, He told them again that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would 'receive power' (Acts 1:8). On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. And those cowardly men were immediately transformed into bold, fiery witnesses for the Lord (Acts 2:1-4). What they received was exactly what Jesus had told them that they would receive - power. What we need in order to live the Christian life is not just a doctrine but the power of God in our life. The baptism in the Holy Spirit gives us power for godliness as well as power for service.

The Holy Spirit is pictured in the New Testament as a river flowing from the throne of God and falling to earth (Rev. 22:1; Acts 2:33). To be baptised in the Holy Spirit is to be immersed under this waterfall. Jesus said that all those who thirsted could come to Him and receive the Holy Spirit so that rivers of living water could flow out from their innermost being (Jn. 7:37). To have rivers of blessing flowing out from us to all who come in touch with us is the will of God for our lives. The first step towards this is to acknowledge our

need. Having taken that first step, we can then trust God to grant us what we ask for. All we need in order to be baptized in the Holy Spirit are thirst (an intense desire, born out of a great longing to glorify God) and faith (the absolute confidence that God will give us what He has promised). Let us ask then, with thirst and with faith, for this power, and God will not deny us our request.

The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind in the Scriptures; and the wind blows in different ways at different times. "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit", Jesus said (Jn. 3:8). Each believer's experience will therefore be different in the external details of being baptised in the Holy Spirit. The inner endowment with power however, is what really matters. God gives us 'gifts of power' through the Spirit so that we can serve Him effectively in building up the church as the body of Christ. He is the One however Who determines which gift each of us should have.

Prophecy (the ability to preach powerfully to challenge, encourage and comfort) is the most useful of these gifts (1 Cor. 14:1-5). There are also gifts of serving, teaching, healing, exhorting, giving money, leadership, etc., (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10). The ability to speak in unknown languages ('the gift of tongues') is another gift that God gives, to enable us to pray and praise Him, without the limitations of our mind and our mother-tongue.

If you have not been baptised in the Spirit, seek God and claim your birthright. Ask Him also to give you an assurance of this. "If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.....You do not have because you do not ask" (Lk.11:13; James 4:2). Let us then cry out to God with all our hearts, and say like Jacob said to God at Peniel, "I will not let You go until You bless Me" (Gen.32:26).

There is no partiality with God. What He has done for others He will do for you. Even today, He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). He is more than eager to give the Holy Spirit in His fullness to all who desire to glorify Him.

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