

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
PART 1

In our series on Foundation of Faith we have been looking at issues that are important to our Christian faith. Those things that are foundational to our walk because there are many attacks coming against these things today and we have to know what we believe, why we believe what we believe and where can we find it in the Scriptures. In other words, can we defend what we believe?

We are currently looking at the Holy Spirit and we have seen over the last few weeks that the Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force, like wind or electricity, but He is a person. Not only that, but the Scriptures clearly teach us that the Holy Spirit is also God, the third person of the Holy Trinity! Remember what Peter said to Ananias as he tried to keep back some money that he had from the Lord, he was lying about it. It was not that he did not give the money, but he was lying about it that caused the problem and we are told in Acts 5:3-4, **“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’”**

There are two important points that Peter is making in these verses. First of all, the Holy Spirit must be a person because you can't lie to wind or electricity! Secondly, Peter tells us that the Holy Spirit is God and that Ananias lied to God the Holy Spirit! It is as simple as that and to reject this you have to reject what the Scriptures are teaching!

We have also seen the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in this world and in our lives. In John 14:16-17 Jesus tells us, **“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”**

Jesus tells His men and us that He does not want to leave us as orphans when He departs and thus, He is going to send to us this Comforter, also called the Spirit of Truth. And Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit. Now please understand that when Jesus said to His men that He would send **“another helper”** He used a very interesting Greek word for **“another.”**

You see, there are two different Greek words for **“another.”** The first is HETEROS which speaks of another of a different kind. For instance, if I bought a pen that always leaked ink, when I wanted to buy another pen, I would not want to buy the same kind of pen, that would be foolish, but I would buy a different kind of pen, one that did not leak! This is not the Greek word that Jesus used here in John. Jesus was not sending to us a comforter that was different than He was.

You see, Jesus used the Greek word ALLOS, which means another of the same kind here in John chapter 14. Again, if I bought a pen and loved it, it worked beautifully, it never leaked and it wrote very clearly, there were no problems with this pen, then, when I needed a new one I would buy another pen, the same kind, I would not buy a different kind of pen because this one was perfect, it did what it was suppose to do! That is how the Greek word ALLOS is used.

And so Jesus was saying that He was going to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, who was exactly like Jesus. That tells me that the Holy Spirit is God and He is, He is the third person of the Trinity, and thus, has the same attributes and qualities as Jesus, although His work, as we shall see, is different. Thus, Jesus is not leaving them as orphans when He departs because He is going to send God the Holy Spirit to be with them!

Now, here in John 14:17 we are told of two aspects regarding the Holy Spirit's workings in the world. Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will be working in the lives of the disciples and us as He tells us that they will, “. . . **know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.**”

You see, first of all He dwells “**with**” them and us and then He will be “**in**” them and us! Now some like to skip over this, ignore this, and yet it is important for us to understand what Jesus is saying here. He does not just use words that have no meaning to them!

Here in John chapter 14 Jesus used two different Greek prepositions which designate the different relationships of the Holy Spirit towards us. First of all He uses the Greek word, PARA and this Greek word speaks of the Holy Spirit dwelling “**with**” us. In other words, the Holy Spirit is with men drawing them to Jesus, drawing out a Bride for Christ.

He does this by convicting the world of sin, showing them that sin has separated them from God and this sin that Jesus is speaking of is the sin of rejecting Him, His free gift of life that He has given to those who believe in Him. He does this by convicting the world of righteousness, showing them that the only righteousness that God will accept is the righteousness of Christ because our righteousness is like filthy rags! And he does this by reproving the world of judgment, that apart from Christ they will come up short and be judged! That is the work of the Holy Spirit in an unbelieving world as the Holy Spirit comes alongside unbelievers to draw them to Christ!

Then Jesus uses the Greek word EN and this Greek word speaks of the Holy Spirit dwelling “in” us. You see, the moment you get saved, the Holy Spirit is no longer with you drawing you to Christ, but now the Holy Spirit comes inside of you. And when He does He becomes our helper, our teacher, our guide, the Holy Spirit is conforming us into the image of Christ, and He will produce fruit in our lives.

As we submit to the Holy Spirit’s guiding, He will be our helper in doing what is right, and keeping us away from that which is wrong. The Holy Spirit will be our teacher revealing the truths of God from the Word of God. He will bring to remembrance those things we need to know in a given situation. The Holy Spirit will guide us down the right path as we gain spiritual discernment that is according to the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit is conforming us into the image of Christ as we submit to Him. It is out of this relationship that the fruit of the Spirit naturally grows in our lives! That is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer as the Holy Spirit comes inside of us!

This morning we are going to be looking at the third Greek preposition that is used of the Holy Spirit and that is found in Acts 1:8 where we are told, **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

This third Greek preposition that is used of the Holy Spirit is EPI and this word speaks of the Holy Spirit coming **“upon”** us or “over” us empowering us for service. Now there are many in the church today who like to discredit this and say that there is no such thing as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. They will tell you that this phrase, “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not found in the Bible and that is true. But just because a phrase is not spoken of in the Scriptures, does that mean the Bible is silent on this subject? Absolutely not!

Think about the Holy Trinity, the word “trinity” is not found in the Scriptures and yet we see that the concept, the idea of the Holy Trinity or the Triune God is in the Scriptures. Thus, we don’t negate the Holy Trinity because that word is not found in the Bible because the Bible teaches on this concept and we have covered that already in our Foundation of Faith series! Thus, just because this phrase, “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not found in the Scriptures, we will see that the concept of this, the teaching of this empowering is found in the Scriptures and it is very clear as you will see this morning.

When you look at the church today it seems to be anemic, like it has no power and maybe one of the reasons that the church is lacking this power for service is because it is denying this empowering with the Holy Spirit in their lives! It is interesting the way A. W. Tozer saw this. His perspective of the situation regarding the church in his day and I especially see this even today, was this, “If the Holy Spirit was completely taken out of the work of the first century church, 90% of what they did would come to a screeching halt. If the Holy Spirit was completely taken out of the work in the church today, only 10% of what the church was doing would come to a halt.” You see, the first century church was not only directed by the Holy Spirit, but also empowered by the Holy Spirit and like the first century church, the church of today needs that power to bring forth the Gospel message to a lost and dying world!

Now I do understand that there are many out there who deny this baptism and to justify what they believe they point to what Paul said in Ephesians 4:5, where he speaks of “**one baptism**” and they say that there is only one baptism, for that is what the Scriptures teach. They feel that there are no other baptisms, like the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But is that true, is that what the Scriptures are teaching us? Folk’s, that is not true, there is this baptism with the Holy Spirit and we will see that in a minute.

First of all the word “baptism” means to “immerse”, and in the New Testament we can see several examples of baptisms that are spoken of. In Luke 3:3 we see the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance. We read, “**And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.**” So this is a baptism of repentance that John is speaking of here. And so, as John was baptizing people he was preparing them to receive their Messiah.

The interesting thing is this, gentiles who became Jews were baptized into the faith, but the Jews were not baptized or immersed like this. So this is a radical idea and yet it was what was needed for them to return to the Lord, a radical change in their life, a return to Him. You see, baptism speaks of a changed life, and John was turning the hearts of the people back to God!

Another baptism we read of is found in Matthew 20:22-23. Here we see Jesus speaking of the work He was to do at Calvary, and He said, “. . . **‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’** They said to Him, **‘We are able.’** So He said to them, **‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.’**”

And here is another reason why I believe baptism speaks of immersion because if it doesn't then Jesus is saying that the work He was doing, this baptism, He is only sprinkling it into His life instead of immersing Himself into it! And this “**cup**” is a reference to God's judgment being poured out upon sin. Jesus was going to receive the judgment or the penalty for the sins of the world; He was going to pay the price for our sins, He immersed His life into this work. Thus, we see another baptism spoken of here.

And then in I Corinthians 12:13 we see Paul speak of a baptism into the body of Christ, our salvation, and the Holy Spirit is the one doing the baptizing here. We read **“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”** Do you see that it is the Spirit of God that baptizes us here into the body of Christ! And this “body-like” unity of Christians is not a goal to achieve; it is a fact to be recognized. Again, Paul clearly tells us that we were all baptized into one body! Paul here is writing of the common “immersion” that all believers have in the Holy Spirit and in Jesus, a common “immersion” which brings them into one body and this work is done by the Holy Spirit!

Then, in Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist said this, **“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”** Matthew 3:11. Who is John speaking of here? He is speaking of Jesus and He is the one doing the baptizing. Now, we have already spoken of the baptism of John, which was a baptism of repentance. We have talked about the baptism of Jesus into the work that He was to do. We have talked about the Holy Spirit doing the baptizing as we become believers. But here we are told that Jesus is going to baptize us with the Holy Spirit.

Let me just make this point here. Now don't get confused and think the fire is the tongues of fire spoken of in Acts chapter 2. In fact we don't see the tongues of fire mentioned any more in the Scriptures after the day of Pentecost. But what John was speaking of here in Matthew chapter 3 is the fire of judgment, for as we continue to read in Matthew chapter 3, we are told in verse 12 that, **“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”**

You see, the fire speaks of God's judgment and not something for the church. John Walvoord put it this way when he said, “While the church age is introduced with the baptism of the Spirit, the kingdom age is introduced with the baptism of fire.” In other words, he is saying that as we enter into the Kingdom Age, God will judge those who have rejected Him and cast them into Sheol, judging them for their rejection of Him until the Great White Throne Judgment, or the second death, the final judgment where punishment will be put forth as they are cast into the Outer Darkness or the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Now we have seen two important baptisms here and they are not the same. One baptism was into the body of Christ, our salvation, which is done by the Holy Spirit and we saw that in I Corinthians 12:13. The other baptism is that of empowerment for service, which is done by Jesus Christ and we saw that in Matthew 3:11.

Now understand this, prior to the Holy Spirit coming into the disciples, indwelling them, they still were Old Testament saints in a sense. But in John chapter 20, after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, something very interesting happened to them as they were hiding for their lives behind locked doors. We read of this event happening in John chapter 20, beginning in verse 19 where we are told, **“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ Now when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”** John 20:19-22.

Remember what I said as I opened up this message, that the Holy Spirit was **“with”** the disciples, drawing them to Christ. Again, listen to what Jesus said in regards to the Holy Spirit. He said that, **“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”** John 14:16-17.

Up to this point the Holy Spirit was “with” the disciples. They were still Old Testament saints up to this point because Jesus had not died for the sins of the world yet and rose the third day. But now, here in John chapter 20 Jesus has gone to the cross of Calvary and paid in full for our sins and has risen the third day. And as Jesus comes to His men then Jesus breathed on them and at that moment the Holy Spirit was indwelling them. They are now New Testament Christians at this point.

At this point, the disciples are born again. Although they were already following Jesus, they were not yet regenerated because, as I have said, He had not yet died for their sins. But here Jesus breathes on them, which to me is reminiscent of Genesis 2:7, when God breathed life into Adam’s nostrils and he became a living soul.

Now what is amazing to me is that when I read some commentators and Bible teaches regarding what took place here in John chapter 20, they just pass over this as if nothing happened!

Let me say this, when Jesus breaths upon you and tells you to “Receive the Holy Spirit”, something is going to happen, and something did happen here in the lives of these disciples! The Holy Spirit has indwelt them, you can’t ignore that fact, nor can you miss it unless it goes against some preconceived ideas you might have on this subject. But let’s try to remove our biases and preconceived ideas and just see what the Scriptures say, and let’s receive all that God has for us.

Now at this point in their lives, the disciples had all the information. They had spent a little over 3 years walking with Jesus and being taught by Jesus. And thus, you would think it was time for them to go out and spread the good news of Christ. Not yet! They had all the information at this point, but they lacked the dynamic power to take that information to a world lost and dying in their sins. They are saved at this point but not empowered. And thus, Jesus tells them in Luke 24:49 what they needed to do. He said to them, **“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”**

The disciples were told to wait until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit and the reason is simple. If they did not wait they would be working in the power of their flesh instead of by the Spirit of God, and they will only become frustrated and unfruitful in the endeavor. They needed to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered for service. Now information is important, especially the truth, but without the power to properly use it, it is basically empty. Think of it this way for a minute. You can buy the top of the line power tool; one of those battery operated ones. And they look great and have the potential to work great. But as good as those tools look and are, if the power supply is not plugged in or charged up, they are worthless. A drill won't work. A saw will stand still. The nail gun will just sit there. And you can try very hard to use them without the power, but through all your efforts you will only become frustrated, discouraged, and unfruitful. You need the power to run the tools, just as the disciples needed the power of God's Spirit in their lives. We need the power of God's Spirit to take the information we know, and again, as we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will be witnesses of Him!

And think of this. The disciples of Jesus were afraid, scared, hiding after the arrest, death and resurrection of Jesus and when Jesus meets with them here in John chapter 20, they are still hiding. And now Jesus breaths on them and they receive the Holy Spirit, they are New Testament saints right now, but they don't have the power to take what they have been taught and move the Gospel message forward. In fact, they are not doing much for Jesus at this point.

But think about this, after they are empowered by the Holy Spirit they become the most radical group of believers in the history of the world. This group of disciples who waited to be endued with power from on high and it was this group of Christians who, having received the promise of the Father, turned the world upside down without a single book of the New Testament (Acts 17:6). They didn't have Romans, Hebrews, or the Epistles of John. They didn't have the Gospels, Galatians, or the Book of Revelation. What they did have, and the reason they were so powerful, is an understanding that Jesus truly was writing His will on the tables of their hearts, whispering, "Go here," "Do that," "Stay away from this," "Avoid that." They accomplished all this through the empowering of God's Spirit on their lives!

Now where do we find this empowering for service, this baptism with the Holy Spirit? We find this in Acts chapter 1, where we read **“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’...But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”** Acts 1:4-5, 8.

Now here is the question? “Weren’t they already believers, as John chapter 20 pointed out?” Absolutely they were, but here is something that is completely different. They are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit for the Holy Spirit will come **“upon”** them and they shall receive power to be witnesses of Him! This is the third Greek preposition for the Holy Spirit, this empowerment!

What are we going to receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon us? Jesus says that we will receive **“power”** and this Greek word for **“power”** is DUNAMIS, from which we get our English words “dynamic” or “dynamite” from. Now what kind of power did they receive? Is it that explosive power to speak in tongues? No, not at all! Then maybe it is the power to roar like a lion, bark like a dog, hop like a kangaroo, or convulse on the floor uncontrollably? Not even close! Or maybe it is the power to be slain in the Spirit? Not at all! How about the power will be so strong that the people will be worked into a chaotic frenzy in the church, running all around, doing back flips, being drunk in the Spirit. That has to be the ultimate moving of God’s Spirit in power, right? Wrong!

None of these foolish things reflect what Jesus was speaking of when He told us we shall receive that explosive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Now some of you may be offended by what I have just said, and that is not my intention at all. I am not trying to put people down that do this, all I am saying is that this is not what Jesus was speaking of and what they are doing is not of the Holy Spirit, it is not of God. Not because I say so, but because that is what God's Word tells us!

How can I be so sure that I am right and they are wrong? Because Jesus makes it very clear what He is talking about. He tells us that this power in your life will be used in such a way so that you will "**be witnesses**" of Christ! And there is a point that needs to be made here. Notice that it doesn't say that we are to go out and witness. Now that is not wrong, but that is not what Jesus is saying here. He is saying that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be witnesses of Christ. That burning love we have for Christ in our hearts is manifested in our actions and as people look at us, they see something vastly different. They see God working in us, they see Christ in us! We are to be witnesses of Christ!

Think of this power that Jesus is giving us, this empowering with the Holy Spirit in our lives to be witnesses of Christ like steam in a locomotive. The steam in a locomotive is not there to toot the whistle, even though that may be fun, it may sound cool. But this steam in a locomotive is there to move the train forward so it can arrive at its destination.

The same is true with the power of God's Spirit in our lives. This empowering is not there for us to toot our whistle or draw attention to ourselves, but to move the Gospel message forward! Thus, in many of these ultra-charismatic groups, when it comes to these bizarre activities that are attributed to the Holy Spirit, who is getting the attention? The people are and not Jesus! They are tooting their whistle and the Gospel message is not going forward!

Now, for those that are into this power trip, these bizarre activities that are attributed to the Holy Spirit, I want you to think about this for a minute. The Greek word used for "witness" is MARTUS, which has been transliterated into our English word "martyr." It originally spoke of a witness and the meaning was solidified when thousands upon thousands of Christians were put to death, martyred for their faith in Christ. In their death they prayed for those who were killing them, praised God as they were dying, and by their witness many of the Roman soldiers and those who were watching these killings became believers. Their life and their death was a witness of Christ! They were martyrs for their faith!

Thus, a witness or martyr is someone whose faith is totally committed to the Lord and they won't let anything stand in their way, not even death! The only way you can do that is by the empowering of God's Spirit. Human nature would strike back in anger, but God's grace upon us reaches out in love, even in death, undeserving death! You see, your life must back up the words you speak, or your words will become meaningless. As Chuck Smith has said, "Saying it doesn't make you a witness, living it does!" And God is giving us the power to live that kind of life, that we can be witnesses of Him in all that we do, that the Gospel message will go forward without the tooting of our whistle, but exalting the name of Jesus. Now, this may be very different from what you have been taught about the power of God in a person's life. The power they are speaking of many times exalts self, and the power that God is speaking of brings glory to Him, it is a witness of Jesus!

How in the world can any of us live that kind of life that God desires in the power of our own strength? We can't! How can anyone's life be a witness for Christ without this empowering of God's Spirit in our lives? It would be very difficult or really impossible to live that kind of life without the empowering of God's Spirit in our lives.

You see, without it we are ill-equipped to be witnesses in which God has called us to be. Thus, why would we want anything less than what God wants to give us? We should desire all He has for us, for to be a witness of Christ we not only need the tools, but the power to run them, the power to live that kind of life! We not only need to be students of the Word of God, Disciples of Christ, but then we need this empowering of God's Spirit!

Listen to what Pastor Chuck Smith wrote regarding what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives, at least He should be doing if we allow Him. Pastor Chuck wrote,

Years ago, at a conference, I heard a speaker declare that the greatest capacity of man was his ability to contain God. He was preaching on 2 Corinthians 4:7, where Paul says, “We have this treasure in earthen vessels,” and was describing the glory of our bodies being the temple of the Holy Spirit. He made a very inspiring, powerful presentation and I was stirred and moved that my body should be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

But as you read on in the Scriptures, you discover that the greatest capacity of man is not being a vessel that can contain God; rather, it’s being a vessel through which God can be poured out to the world around us. That’s the real glory!

The ultimate work of the Spirit is not merely to transform and change and empower us that we might be blessed. His ultimate work is empowering us that we might serve, to become effective in bringing Jesus Christ to others. God’s Spirit wants to use you and me to bring the love of God to others. He wants His Spirit to flow like a torrent of living water out of our lives and into the lives of those who have yet to quench their thirst at the fountain of God.

The book of Acts is the story of what happens when the Spirit of God flows out in dynamic power from the lives of believers. Through the anointing and the power of the Spirit, Peter preached and bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead – and conviction gripped the hearts of 3,000 men, all of whom committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

When the Spirit flows out in dynamic power from the lives of believers, entire communities are changed. The world is turned right-side up. When the apostles came to ancient Thessalonica, some alarmed citizens ran to the judges and said, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too” (Acts 17:6). Their evaluation was in error. The world is upside down; the apostles were turning it right-side up. That’s what happens when the Spirit of God begins to flow forth out of the lives of yielded believers.

We are called not merely to be a vessel to contain God’s Spirit, but to become a channel through which the Spirit can flow to the thirsty world around us.

- Chuck Smith, *Living Water*, p. 283

So is your life just kind of trickling for Jesus? Is it a kind of drip, drip, drip? It should not be because Jesus wants to empower us for service so that torrents of living water will flow from us and drowned people in the love of God, drawing them to Jesus! So yes, this is important. To say this is not for us today, that we don’t need it is just plain foolish! We are living in a dark and dry world and the only solution is to turn on the light and to allow that living water to flow like torrents from our lives! May we desire that!

Now to think we don’t need the help of God’s Spirit to empower us for the work that is ahead of us is just plain foolishness. Just look at this nation and how it thinks of itself as a Christian nation, but it is in word only, for their deeds, their actions speak the opposite truth. And thus, do you think we can turn this nation upside down in the power of our flesh? Be real! We need just as much help today to be witnesses of Christ as they did when the church first got started in the first century!

Again, as some say that the Scriptures do not support this empowering, but it was only for the first century church, that this was only a promise to them, not to us or any other generation, they are wrong. They feel that there is nothing to support the view that this baptism with the Holy Spirit is for any generation after the first century, that the Scriptures don't support that idea. Well, let's not take man's word, let's look at the Scriptures and let them speak for themselves in this matter, for man has been wrong before, God hasn't!

In Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers who were waiting in Jerusalem for this event, the church got started with a bang. That day 3,000 souls were added to the kingdom of God as Peter, empowered with the Holy Spirit, spoke boldly the things of God.

And as the people listened and heard the truths of God, they asked Peter what they needed to do. The Holy Spirit's conviction upon their lives cut through the hardness of their hearts. And Peter tells them that they needed to repent, get right with God, and turn their lives over to Christ to be their Savior. That was the inward action that took place.

Then, to show the world that they have forsaken all and have separated themselves unto Christ, they were baptized. You see, baptism is an outward display of an inward feeling, an inward change of heart, moving towards God and away from the world.

“But Joe, that does not prove it is for today!” That is true, but Peter, at the end of verse 38 of Acts chapter 2 makes a very interesting statement and he will tell us that this was not only for back then, it is for today. He said “**. . . and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.**” Acts 2:38-39.

First of all this promise is “**the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” The question is, “What is this speaking of?” Some will say it is speaking of the Holy Spirit coming into a person once they are saved. That this Promise is for all believers for you can’t be a believer without the Holy Spirit indwelling you or living inside of you. I have to agree with that statement, you can’t be a believer without the Holy Spirit living inside of you. The Scriptures clearly tell us of this.

Paul makes that point in Romans 8:9-11, when he said “**But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**”

Now in saying all that, I don’t think that is what Peter was speaking of. I think his point is different, even though it is true that to be a believer the Holy Spirit must be in you. I think and believe the Scriptures support this, that the Promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit that Peter spoke of is the baptism with the Holy Spirit or the empowering of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

How do I know that for sure? Because the key to understanding this section of Scripture is going back and checking out what the Promise was all about. We talked about this verse already in Luke, but it is important that we look at it again. In Luke 24:49 we read, **“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”**

We said earlier that at this point they were already saved, Jesus breathed upon them and they received the Holy Spirit. And yet Jesus is telling them to go to Jerusalem and wait to be empowered by the power from on high, the empowering with the Holy Spirit. Notice, it speaks of, **“the promise of My Father”** that was to come upon them. That is the gift of the Holy Spirit, or again the empowering of the Holy Spirit for service.

If you are still not sure, if you are still not convinced about what this **“promise”** is all about, turn to Acts chapter 1 and let’s look at verses 4 and 5. In Acts chapter 1 we read, **“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”**

Again, they were to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit, they were already saved, already New Testament saints at this point, but they were waiting for the promise of the Father, that empowerment for service.

In saying all that, as we look again to what Peter said in Acts chapter 2, we see that the Promise was not just for the first century church, not just for the early church, but for us and for our children and our children's children until the Lord returns! Peter put it this way in Acts 2:38-39, **“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”** That promise is the gift of the Holy Spirit or the empowerment of the Spirit in our lives for service unto Him.

We are going to be looking at next time the examples found in the Scriptures for this baptism and the result it had in people's lives. But for now, I want you to understand this. We receive this gift of the Holy Spirit not on the basis of our merit, or our good works, but because of God's grace! Thus, if you ask God, and believe by faith, He will give you this empowerment for service. But don't wait to feel electricity passing through your body as a sign, although you may feel it. Don't wait for some kind of spiritual sensation as proof that God has empowered you with His Spirit, but believe it by faith. You see, God did not pour out the power of the Holy Spirit into our lives to make us feel something, but to help us accomplish something. God's power is practical power, it is the power to live the life He has called us to live, Holy and separated unto Him for His service!

And the best sign that shows you have this power is not speaking in tongues, laughing uncontrollably, being drunk in the Spirit, roaring like lions or even barking like dogs, but the best sign in our life is **LOVE!** You see, love is the fruit of the Spirit and it is out of that love we see the characteristics of this kind of love flow. We see it in 8 different ways. Paul put it this way in Galatians when he said “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**” Galatians 5:22-26.

You see, when that **AGAPE LOVE** or sacrificial love flows from our lives, not because of our nature, but because of His flowing through our lives by the power of God’s Spirit working in us, we see **JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL**, manifested in our lives! If you have the power of God’s Spirit in your life, then love will flow from you. If you don’t, then ask God to empower you for service and believe it by faith that what He has said and has promised He is able to do!

Remember what Jesus said in Luke 11:9-13 regarding our heavenly Father and what He desires to give us? And keep in mind this can't be speaking of salvation here but to those who are already saved because Jesus says that He is our heavenly Father and that can only be spoken of believers. Thus, we read **“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”**

You see, when you were saved what did you do? You asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior! You mean you didn't climb the highest mountain? You didn't go to church every day? You didn't crawl on your hands and knees for miles? You just asked? Absolutely and the same is true for this empowerment with the Spirit, just ask God. He is not going to keep it from you and you don't have to do anything for it, but ask! And then believe it by faith because our heavenly Father loves us and will give to us all that we need to be a witness for Him!

In closing this morning I want to share with you a portion from Greg Laurie's book, "On Fire." This is what he said,

A town somewhere in the U.S. was battered one night by hurricane-force winds. In the morning, after the storm had abated, the citizens emerged from their homes and shelters to assess the damage. The power of the storm quickly became clear to one investigator who was dumbfounded by an incredible discovery. Mouths dropped open as people came to check out his report: a common plastic drinking straw driven deep into a telephone pole by the night's vicious winds. Obviously, under normal circumstances, a flimsy straw could never penetrate a telephone pole. But the tremendous power of the wind had driven the straw into the wood like a spike.

As believers living in an ungodly world, sometimes we wonder if we can ever make a difference. We wonder if we can effectively penetrate our cynical culture with the good news God has given us to proclaim. The answer lies in the source of our power. If we rely on our own strength and methods, then no, we cannot make much of a difference. But if we choose to be driven by God's limitless power, we become like that straw in the hurricane where nothing can stop us. We can indeed make a dramatic difference.

- Greg Laurie, On Fire, pp. 21-22

Remember what Jesus said to us in Acts 1:8, and this is from The Amplified Bible, “**But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.**” The Living Bible puts it like this, “**But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection.**”

Why not receive all that God has for us and as we do, may others be able to say of us, as they said of Paul and his companions, “. . . **‘These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.’**” Acts 17:6. Or really, in this upside down world, by the power of God’s Spirit, may we turn this world right side up!