

THE BAPTISM AND FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT
Life in the Spirit
Dr. George O. Wood

Tonight we're looking at the theme "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit." This is the third in our series. In our first night together on this theme we examined the topic that the Spirit is a person. He is not something therefore that we get a hold of. He is not an it to be possessed. But he is someone who gets hold of us. We do not use him for our purposes. But he seeks to use us for his purposes.

Last week we looked together at the Work of the Holy Spirit. A many sided, many faceted in dimension. Prior to our becoming a believer the Spirit was active in our life in bringing us to an awakened sense of sin. Bringing us to affirm the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And bringing us to an awareness of the judgment against the evil one already handed down.

We found that in conversion we are regenerated, born anew through the work of the Spirit. The Spirit indwells all of us who are Christ's people. And the Spirit leads us into the truth of God and as always assuring us that we are God's children.

When we approach the theme of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit we immediately face in the body of Christ several different views. There are three in particular.

One is the view that the baptism in the Holy Spirit and that terminology which is used in scripture is meant to be taken as synonymous with conversion. That when we give our life to the Lord we are automatically baptized in the Spirit. That therefore the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 represents the moment the early church became Christians. The baptism in the Holy Spirit therefore is not something that is meant to be repeated in the lives of believers today in the kind of way that is described in Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, and 19. But is instead to be seen as God's way of giving the church a giant cosmic shove off into the centuries that it would exist. That the church all at once was born in a TNT of the power of the Holy Spirit and it has been operating off that sunburst of energy of the Spirit of God since its inception.

On the opposite extreme are those within the Pentecostal church who have perhaps not explicitly but sometimes implicitly taught that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the highest goal of Christian experience and once you have received it you can relax.

Unfortunately that is the childhood and teenage view I had of the baptism in the Spirit. In my particular church you couldn't hold office in the youth group unless you had been baptized in the Spirit. I couldn't figure out why the Holy Spirit kept passing me over. It was the highest goal of my life and when I received it I promptly relaxed.

Until years later when the Spirit showed me what the real function of the baptism in the Spirit is. That I think is the third view...

The baptism in the Spirit is part of our initiation into the Christian life. There are several events described in scripture as initiation events into the Christian life. Namely salvation, water baptism and the baptism in the Spirit. Sometimes there is a separation of time between salvation and water baptism. And sometimes there is a separation of time between salvation and the

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baptism in the Spirit. But I believe in the ultimate intentionality of the Lord. It is his purpose to make this a cluster of initiation events into the Christian life.

Those who believe this third dimension of truth about the baptism in the Spirit that it is part of our initiation into the Christian life are called Pentecostal or charismatic. As I grow older I am more and more favoring the term Pentecostal primarily because it seems to me a more biblical word to describe the experience. Where as charismatic is not used in the book of Acts and is generally a word to refer to all Spiritual gifts. The charisma in general.

The focus of the baptism in the Spirit is two fold. Its focus is depending our worship of the Lord through giving us a language of praise, which we have not learned. That is speaking with other tongues. And it's second purpose is to give us power in our Christian witness.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit therefore is a crisis experience even as salvation. We do not receive salvation by osmosis or degrees. But it comes as an event in time to us.

Mainly as I approach tonight the theme that baptism in the Holy Spirit as we have done on previous nights and will do so on nights ahead I choose in my presentation to be primarily doctrinal and biblical rather than antidotal. I don't plan on telling a lot of stories. Many of us who grew up in the Pentecostal movement came to experience the baptism in the Spirit through motivational stories. I thank the Lord for them. Many times we have an experience with the Lord that we could not at the moment thoroughly defend from scripture.

In seminary I used to be troubled by the fact that my colleagues would sometimes tell me that the trouble with you Pentecostals is you have an experience and then go hunting in the Bible to see if it substantiates your experience. It dawned on me one day reading the book of Acts that Peter did exactly that same thing in Acts 10. He had an experience of the sheet descending from heaven and a voice saying, "Eat." And he said, "No, Lord I can't eat." Then finally the experience was so overwhelming that he was agreeable to doing that. The Spirit views that as the bridge moment to bring Cornelius to Peter's presence and Peter into Cornelius' presence. Later it would be Peter who would understand from Mark 7 that the Lord during his earthly teaching had declared all food were clean. But he would have never acted upon the teaching if he hadn't had the experience.

I have no objection of a person having an experience with God before they fully understand it. As long as that experience is ultimately backed up by God's word. And if the experience is not backed up by God's word then by all means we either mean to redefine the experience we have had or repudiate it. That's why I absolutely have no time for those who promulgated doctrine that we can have an experience as Christians of being possessed by an evil Spirit. I find absolutely not a shred of scriptural evidence for it. My heart cannot go where the scriptures don't go because God's word and God's Spirit always agree. In spite of someone's experience I have to keep straying, I've got to redefine your experience before I redefine the scripture.

But when there is evidence for the baptism in the Spirit then we need to take that and deal with it seriously.

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After we have had an experience we test its validity. I think in the Pentecostal movement sometimes many young people have been argued out of a legitimate experience they've had with God because they did not have sufficient grasp of what the scripture said.

As we look tonight at the theme The Baptism in the Spirit, I want to use five scriptural terms that are used of the baptism in the Spirit.

The first term is the baptism *in* the Spirit. Anyone who has translated a language know that prepositions are the most difficult to use in any language. In English for example we have separate prepositions to describe the prepositions "in", and "by". But for the Greeks the preposition *en* could refer to both. Either "in" or "by" or "with."

The term baptism *in* the Spirit – *en* – occurs twice in the book of Acts. Both times on the lips of Jesus. Acts 1:5 "for John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit." And Acts 11:16 where Peter says after the baptism and the baptism in the Spirit of Cornelius "then I remembered what the Lord had said, John baptized with water but you will be baptized *in* the Holy Spirit." I think it's very vital to note the sequence of how this term is used. It is used on the Lord's lips after the experience of John 20:22. We took some time last week to deal with that. Where on the first evening of his resurrection Jesus appears to his disciples behind closed doors and breathes upon them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." We have located that as the moment that the fruit of Christ's victory in the cross and in the resurrection were made applicable to the disciples. Up till at time their faith had only been the faith of every Old Testament person. The faith that anticipated what God would someday do. Now all the benefits that could be won by Christ had been won. His eternal life is now through the Spirit breathed into the disciples and God is making them eternal living beings.

Therefore it is appropriate to say at that moment as it is always appropriate to say of every Christian when we have received Christ we have received the Spirit. The Pentecostal message is grossly misunderstood if anyone assumes that someone has not received the baptism in the Spirit has not received the Spirit in conversion. We all receive the Spirit of God in conversion. No one can even call Christ Lord except by the Spirit. When I became a Christian and when you became a Christian we didn't become a two thirds Christian having the Father's presence and the Son's presence. But we have Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Therefore when Jesus talks in Acts 1:5 and when he is quoted in Acts 11:16 he is still speaking about the Holy Spirit's work. But he has to be speaking about it in a different context than that of John 20:22 since he is talking to the same people that were in the room who had already received the Spirit. He's saying to them, "In a few days you will be baptized *in* the Holy Spirit."

There seems to be some confusion on this in Christian circles especially when we look at 1 Corinthians 12:13 and find the phrase "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free. We are all given the one Spirit to drink." There are those who look at this passage and say, "Here it is. Plain as the nose on your face! All Christians have been baptized by the Spirit." Therefore the idea of a separate work of God called the baptisms in the Spirit subsequent to conversion is not a scriptural teaching because 1 Corinthians 12 says that all have been baptized by one Spirit.

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However this particular view has two problems with it. One is that it fails to understand the difference between the Holy Spirit's work in John 20:22 and that promised by Jesus in Acts 1:5. It also fails to understand the different ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work. It may hang partly on the understanding of a preposition. Because the preposition *en* can mean with or by means of or it can simply mean in.

We are either baptized by the Spirit or we are baptized in the Spirit. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12 that "by the Spirit we were all baptized into Christ." And Jesus says on the other hand that we are to be baptized in the Spirit. Can it be that the same preposition has two different meanings? Let me suggest to you that it does.

For example Matthew 3:11. John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you in water but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit." Same preposition. In other words John is saying the same way I baptize you in water will be the way he baptized you in the Spirit. How did John baptize? Did he baptize by means of water or in the water? If he baptized by means of water it simply meant that he took some water and placed it upon the candidate. If he baptized in the water it meant that he submerged the person in the water. We know from the scripture how John baptized because Matthew 3:16 tells us Jesus went up out of the water. Which meant when the preposition "out" is used that he was in it. John 3:23 says that John was baptizing in a certain place because many waters were there. If he was not baptizing in water he didn't need much water. So the fact that he was baptizing where there was much water was showing that he was putting people in the water.

Phillip and the eunuch in Acts 8:38-39 both went into the water and came up out of it.

Therefore water baptisms means to be baptized in not simply baptized by means of water but baptized in it. Baptism itself in the Greek language meant to immerse. The Greeks used it in reference to the sinking of ships. They were submerged in the water. They used it of crowds overwhelming a city. They used it metaphorically of being drowned in drink.

Therefore the baptism in the Spirit means to be immersed, to be sunk, to be overwhelmed in the environment or the person of the Spirit. John baptized in water. Jesus baptizes in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13 however the element into which we are baptized is not the Spirit but the body. The body of Christ. By one Spirit you were all baptized into one body.

The reason why we assume very clearly that Paul was using the preposition "by" for the Greek preposition *en* is that wherever he uses the preposition "of the Holy Spirit" in 1 Corinthians 12 consistently it is always a means of something happening. 1 Corinthians 12:13 "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God [and it would not be right to translate that "none speaking in the Spirit of God"] says 'Jesus be cursed.'"

1 Corinthians 12:9 "To another faith by [not in the same Spirit but by the same Spirit] to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit." Therefore what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 12 is that by the means of the Spirit in conversion we are placed in the body of Christ. And what Jesus is saying in Acts 1:5 is that he is the one who baptizes us in the Spirit.

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Perhaps a way of putting this all together is to know and understand that there are several baptisms that the New Testament addresses. In fact Hebrews 6:1-2 specifically says that one of the elementary aspects of Christian doctrine is teaching regarding baptisms. The baptism is in the plural meaning that the early Christians, the biblical Christians knew that there was more than one baptism. So plural is used.

There are essentially three baptisms in the scripture. There is water baptism. There is the baptism onto the body of Christ by the Spirit, which is conversion. And there is the baptism in the Spirit, which is the Pentecost experience.

The difference between them is this. In water baptism the agent of the baptism is the minister. He places the candidate into an element and the element into which the candidate was placed was water. The time of that person's placement into the water was following their conversion. Conversion then baptism.

When we are converted the agent of the conversion is the Spirit who places us into the element, the body of Christ. The time is conversion.

In the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2 the agent of the conversion is, not the minister or not the Spirit but Christ who is the baptizer. The element into which we are placed is the Spirit and that occurs either alongside with conversion or after conversions. Therefore in conversion the Spirit acts as the agent ushering us into the life of Christ. In the baptism in the Spirit Jesus is the agent who ushers us into the dimension of the fullness of the Spirit.

In fact the experience of the Spirit with Jesus is a model for our own experience with the Spirit. He was conceived by the Spirit. Yet at his baptism the Spirit came upon him as a dove. The fact that he was conceived of the Spirit meant that all through his existence the Spirit resided in him. Yet as he begins his earthly ministry the Spirit comes upon him. The fact that the Spirit came upon him did not mean that up till that time the Spirit was absent from him. It meant now that his public ministry had begun and he had a need for an empowerment of the Spirit in his ministry. That's why after the temptation he's able to say the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. The Spirit had always been in him. But at his baptism there was this crisis experience of the Spirit coming upon him.

The church models that of the Lord. We are conceived by the Spirit. The life of Jesus is born into us, born of the Spirit. Therefore everyone who has Jesus has the Spirit living in him. Or her. But there is a subsequent work that we find in Acts 2 where the church or where individual Christian get ready to assume their Spiritual responsibilities and work. For that we need the Spirit to come upon us. We need to be placed into the Spirit even as the Spirit has placed us into Christ.

So the baptism in the Spirit is a perfectly acceptable scriptural term. It is found on the lips of Jesus.

A second term that is used to describe the baptism in the Spirit, and there are a number of synonyms for his work, is simply this: the promise of the Father.

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The promise of the Father. Luke 24:49 Jesus says again in his sequence that follows Acts 10:22 where he had already breathed upon them saying receive the Spirit. Jesus states, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised. But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. Jesus is telling believers who already have the Spirit of God living in them don't go out and do your work until the Spirit of God comes upon you. You're going to receive the promise of the Father."

Acts 1:5 Jesus repeats this where he says to them, "Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift My Father promised which you heard me speak about. For John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

All of us know the importance of a promise. Any of us who have had kids know how promises come back to haunt us. We ought to keep the promises we make. The Lord has made us a promise that he is going to give us the Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 tell us that promise came to pass. That on the 120 on the day of Pentecost indeed the Spirit came upon them. In fact he is described as being outpoured or even falling upon them. Peter in his sermon, Acts 2:33, when he describes what the promise is said, "Jesus exalted to the right hand of God. He has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." The important thing about Peter's statement is that he is saying the promise is something you see and hear. We have received the promise of the Father, which he says you see and hear. That is the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Spirit is something that is both visual, something you see and audible, something you hear. We have to ask on the day of Pentecost, what it is the crowd has seen that was both visible and audible. If we can locate that we know some of the entity of what the promise was.

What the crowds saw was a group of people who were praising the Lord in all the languages that were then spoken in the Near East. They heard those people speaking those languages. In fact Acts 2:4 says that this crowd of 120 were speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The New International Version weakens the strong Greek verb here and says simply they spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. It says, "They spoke in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." The force of the original says the Spirit gave them to utter. Utterance is a word that is a key to what the promise is. For what they were uttering according to Acts 2:11 "in other languages" was that they were declaring the wonders of God in tongues they had never learned. "Wonders" is a word meaning magnificent, spender, grand, great, sublime, beautiful, mighty. What they were doing in other languages that people saw them and heard them doing was talking about the magnificence, the splendor, the grandness, the greatness, the sublimity, the beauty and the mighty deeds of God. They were describing how powerful and wonderful God is. The word "utter" itself means when it is used in scripture "to speak out loudly and clearly." There is an emphasis upon enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, by the way, means to be "in God." When the Greek Old Testament used this verb "utter" it was used for prophetic speech. 1 Chronicles 25:1 "David together with the commanders of the army set aside some of the sons of Asaph for the ministry of utterance accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals." That tells us of those who had a ministry of utterance.

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The verb “utter” is used elsewhere in Acts – 2:14. When Peter begins to speak to the crowd. The English version says “He spoke” but the Greek says, “He uttered to the crowd.” The same word that is used in Acts 2:4 is used in 2:14. Peter speaking to a crowd with out a microphone is declaring loudly and forcibly the claims of Jesus.

Again in Acts 26:25 the verb “utter” occurs once more. It does not mean “reply” and the New International Version has it but rather Festus had interrupted Paul and Paul responds to him in very clear articulation. Enthused speech. The promise of the Father therefore by looking carefully at the fact that it is something seen and heard and we assume therefore that the promise of the Father gave the disciples power to utter boldly how great God is, to praise him unabashedly and unashamedly with no intimidation, no reserve and no holding back and after praising him to go out and utter strongly and powerfully as a witness. Probably the two weaknesses we all have as believers is that it is difficult for us to boldly and unashamedly praise God and it is difficult as well for us to boldly and carefully and clearly set forth the claims of Jesus Christ in witnessing. The promise of the Father therefore is to come upon us that we might have this power of utterance which magnificently declares God’s glory and greatness and at the same time comes with power in giving a witness to him.

Acts 2:17 says that Joel’s words of the promise are being fulfilled. The promise of the Father was not a shove off just to get the church started. Peter says in Acts 2:38-39 to the crowd “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off. For all whom the Lord our God will call.”

What is the promise? Who is it for? Just for the 120? Just for the Day of Pentecost? The promise which the Lord gave, the promise which can be seen and heard, who is it for? For those who are afar off. I can’t think of anybody farther off than 20th century Costa Mesa. Far off. It’s for us. It’s not limited to that day. It is for us.

So the scriptural terms are first the baptism in the Spirit. Then the promise of the Father. We want to ask as we look at those terms, “Have you been baptized in the Spirit? Have you received the promise of the Father?”

The third term that is used in the book of Acts is a synonym as well. It simply says to receive the gift of the Spirit. The baptism in the Spirit is referred to as the gift of the Spirit. When so referred to in Acts the word “charisma” is not used. But the other Greek word which means “a gift without payment.” Free gratis. We don’t earn it. We don’t work for it. We don’t find ourselves gradually conjuring up the Spirit of ecstasy where we knock ourselves out in Spiritual therapy trying to get the Spirit. But the Spirit is a gift.

Acts 2:38 Peter declares, “You will receive the gift of the Spirit.” Talking about the same thing that they had just witnessed. The promise of the Father.

In Acts 8:20 Simon Magus wanted to buy the gift of the Spirit of God with money. What he wanted to buy was that which the disciples in Samaria had received when the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of the Apostles’ hands.

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In Acts 10:45-46 the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gifts of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Here's a very clear and explicit reference to the fact that the baptism in the Spirit is synonymous with receiving the gift of the Spirit.

Acts 11:17 "So as God gave them the same gift as he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

The fourth terminology of the baptism in the Spirit is simply to receive the Spirit. First the baptism in the Spirit, then the term "promise of the Father," then receiving the gift of the Spirit, then fourth receiving the Spirit. Here is where we need to be very clear on terminology. The verb "receive the Spirit" can be used in more than one sense. It's obvious from John 20:22 that we all receive the Spirit in conversion. Therefore when we open the book of Acts to Acts 8:15-17 and come to Samaria we find believers that have already given faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of them have been healed. They are devout Christians by that time. But when Peter and John arrive they pray with them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Haven't they already received the Spirit in the sense of conversion life? Yes. In fact they've even been baptized. But now they pray that they might receive the Spirit because the Spirit had not fallen, come upon them, for they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John place their hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The same thing again in Acts 19:2 where Paul coming to a small band of followers of John the Baptist. He says to them, "Having believed did you receive the Spirit?" That's the literal translation. It's possible that some translate that "When you believed did you receive the Spirit?" Or some translate it "Since you believed did you receive the Spirit?" Should we translate it, Since you believed or When you believed. There are some who say obviously Paul is saying when you believed did you receive the Spirit. Because every believer receives the Spirit at conversion. The Pentecostals say No, it means Since you believe did you receive the Spirit because we receive the Spirit after we believe.

Fortunately we have some guidance from the scripture on this. I believe that the action is not identical although some may think that is the case. Therefore when you have this phrase "having believed, did you receive the Spirit?" At Samaria the answer would have been no. Having believed we did not receive the Spirit. But if you had asked Cornelius' house having believed did you receive the Spirit, since they received the Spirit simultaneously with conversion there answer would be Yes.

There's more than one way to look at that question but in both cases the experience of receiving the Spirit was an event subsequent or different from true conversion.

Receive the Spirit. Pentecostals typically have gotten in trouble because in using that verb some things they may carelessly infer to other believers that if you have not received the baptism in the Spirit you have not received the Spirit. That is not the case. The word is used precisely in Acts and it's used to describe the baptism in the Spirit. John uses it precisely to describe conversion.

Which leads us to the fifth term and that is filled with the Spirit. Acts 2:4 on the day of Pentecost they were all filled with the Spirit." Again I note for you that this occurs subsequent to

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John 20:22. “Filled” by the way is the past tense verb, which means that the point is fixed in time that it happened.

This is not the only time however that the word “filled with the Spirit” is used in the book of acts. Acts 4:31. “After they prayed the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled with Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” That’s different than Acts 2:4. It’s different because in Acts 4 the church for the first time as facing persecution. They needed more of God than they’d ever received of him before. So those who had been filled with the Spirit in Acts 2 are described as again being filled with the Spirit in Acts 4. We never take a view of the Holy Spirit that once having been baptized in the Spirit we’ve got all that the Spirit has to offer. There may be one baptism but there are many fillings of the Spirit in our life.

Acts 9:17. “Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands upon Paul he said, ‘Bother Saul the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Spirit.’” He’s talking to a man who has already been converted.

When we speak of the filling of the Spirit, as it is associated with the baptism in the Spirit, we err if we compare our filling to another person’s. I’ve come to realize as an adult that our filling is dependent on our capacity and people are at different levels of capacity. What is a filling for me may be only a thimble full for you. Because your capacity of being filled with all the fullness of God in terms of expressing giftedness of the Spirit may be far greater than mine. They were all filled on the day of Pentecost but only one person got up out of the 120 and preached a sermon and saw 3000 people converted. The disciples were expansible and the gift of God was infinite. They were capable of receiving more of the Spirit and he was capable of giving more of himself.

When you come to the words “filled with the Spirit” later in Acts you will always find it associated with crises. Stephen, full of the Spirit – Acts 6:3 – when he is selected as a deacon but he confronts those who are going to pelt him with rocks and put him to death. When he looks at them, Acts 7:55 says, “He was full of the Spirit.” When that term is used in 7:55 does it mean that up till that time in his life he hadn’t been filled with the Spirit? No, not at all. He was filled with the Spirit when he was chosen as a deacon. He was filled with the Spirit when he was baptized in the Spirit. But never before had he faced a moment when he was going to lose his life. That called forth a demand for a new energy from God. So again the scripture says he was full of the Spirit.

The same thing is used of Paul in Acts 13:9 where he meets the magician bar-Jesus who tries to withstand his gospel witness. And Paul, full of the Spirit looks at him and brings blindness upon him. Paul had never faced a situation like that before and he needed the Spirit in a new measure.

That’s why I would suggest from a scriptural point of view the appropriate question is not “Did you receive the Spirit?” But “Are you filled with the Spirit?” It is not sufficient to earn the baptism in the Spirit like some Boy Scout or Girl Scout badge to say, “I got it!” There are always new demands and new emergencies and new needs in our life and I need God’s Spirit today.

In the New Testament we are never interestingly enough, told to know the Spirit. We are told to know Christ and we are told to receive the Spirit. In receiving we experience him.

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Baptism in the Spirit. Let me close with some analogies. There are some Bible events that are meant to be permanently memorialized when the people of God gather together. Passover has been such an observance. We have it carried over into communion. The Jewish people today still gather for the Passover. When they gather together they memorialize the fact that Israel went out from Egypt and had a dinner on the night it left and the lamb was sacrificed. Through that Passover they are stepping back in time and identifying themselves as part of those people whom God called out of Egypt. When we take communion together we are memorializing the Lord's death. We are as it were stepping back into the room with Jesus and the original disciples and seeing ourselves sitting around that table with him. I would suggest that Pentecost is the same way. That through the baptism in the Spirit we are going back with the 120 to the day of Pentecost. And we are waiting for endowment of God's Spirit.

It's interesting in the modern Jewish instruction, the Haggadah, the instruction for the Passover notes that there are four different characters of sons. The wise, the wicked, the simple and the one who has no capacity to inquire. In regard to the wicked son the Haggadah says, "What mean you?" By the word "you" it is clear he does not include himself. Thus has withdrawn himself from the community. It is therefore proper to retort upon him by saying, "This was done because of what the eternal did for *me* when I went forth from Egypt. For me and not for him. For had he been there he would not have been thought worthy to have been redeemed." Therefore what the Haggadah is saying is when the wicked son says "you" he was saying, "I was not there in the Passover." But if he would say me he would place himself in God's community.

So Acts 2 is such a moment when we are meant to include ourselves in what the Spirit of God does. It's interesting that the baptism in the Spirit has a number of beautiful words to describe what the Spirit does for us. The words were all associated with water. There are three. Acts 2:18 says that the Spirit of God is outpoured. "In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." The idea of the pouring of the Spirit is that we get thoroughly soaked in the Spirit's presence.

Acts 1:5 tells us that we will be baptized in the Spirit. This means we will be overwhelmed or immersed in the Spirit's presence. I'm beginning to love to be able to ask myself the question, "Are you presently overwhelmed in the Spirit?" The word "baptism in the Spirit" sort of has sometimes a very tight meaning to us and we don't think of it freshly. But I want to ask in my own life, Have I been overwhelmed in the Spirit? Am I soaked in the Spirit?

Acts 2:4 uses another word associated with water. That we are filled with the Spirit. So on the one hand when the Spirit is poured out upon us it is the external coming of the Spirit upon us. When we are baptized in the Spirit it is us in the Spirit and when we are filled with the Spirit it is the Spirit in us. Further, 1 Corinthians 12:13 says that we are all made to drink of the one Spirit. John 7:37-39 says that we will have the Spirit of God in a living way welling up with in us, flowing out of us, streams of living water. So the Spirit is described as that person in which we get soaked. That person in which we are overwhelmed. That person who fills us. That person from whom we drink. That one who flows out of us in our life.

These terms speak of our experience in the Spirit and his experience in us.

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Is the term “baptism in the Spirit” a scriptural word? Yes, it is. It’s used by the Lord. Is it meant to characterize our experience today? Yes. What is its purpose? It is to initiate us deeper into the Spirit’s mission. And propel us into two areas of the Spirit’s work. It’s meant to draw us deeper into worship and to God. That’s the function of other tongues, which we’ll look at in more detail next week. And the Spirit is designed to come upon us to thrust us into the world in the work of the Lord. Worship and work. Those are the purposes of the Spirit. And we need the baptism in the Spirit because Jesus himself says, “The work of the kingdom cannot be done without the baptism in the Spirit.” All the things the Lord wants to do in the church and in the world cannot be done unless we are filled with the Spirit. Many things can be done without that. But the totality of what God wants to do will not be done.

My Pentecostal experience has taught me that there is value in waiting in the Spirit’s presence. That the Christian life is not simply intellectual. It is not simply theological. It is not simply mind oriented. It reaches those deeper parts of us that relate to the mystery of the heart adoring God. The Spirit reaches into areas of our life where we know what God’s will is but are not doing it. And the Spirit deeply forms the character of Christ in us as we allow him. The Spirit wants to reach into the complacency of our Christian life where we would be satisfied to always live life as we are now living it. What the Spirit wants to do is come upon us and make us earnest about the work of God. Will he make us care that God’s will and purpose be done in us. To in effect shatter the idea of complacency and the idea that we’re just going to live a normal life without ever giving ourselves in any significant or deep way to God.

There are people in this service tonight that God is calling out of a life of Spiritual complacency. Out of a life just sort of tripping along and calling you to surrender yourself in a deep fashion to God and hear from God like you’ve never heard from him in your life. There are people in this service that are at the crossroads of life, making critical decisions in your life. You need the Spirit of God as you’ve never needed him in your life. He wants to open up avenues of worship and avenues of vision to you that you would never have if you didn’t open yourself completely to the Spirit and say, Spirit of God, I need you because I can never do it on my own. I can’t live the Christian life on my own. I can’t know what your will is on my own. I need your Spirit.

Then give that any title you want to but let’s be open to God’s Spirit and let’s let the Spirit of God move over the forum of our lives like he moved across the form of the deep in creation and bring out of his working that creation of perfection and beauty which he desires. I want more of the Spirit and the Spirit wants more of me.

Father, we thank you this evening for your Spirit, a gift. How could it be that we find ourselves at times afraid of the gift of the Spirit. You, our heavenly Father, give us good gifts. We want to receive in our heart of hearts all that you have for us Holy Spirit. We thank you for coming to us and bringing us into the kingdom of God. Bringing Jesus’ life to us. We pray heavenly Father that in addition you will place the Holy Spirit upon us. We need that, Lord. None of us are strong enough to be a powerful witness for you. None of us are strong enough this year to turn campuses upside down. None of us are strong enough to see a whole office floor won to the Lord. We need your Spirit. None of us can last long times in prayer just simply saying words that we ought to say. We need the refreshing of the Spirit to pray mightily and effectively and with intercession. Pour out your Spirit upon us. Don’t just sprinkle it on us Lord. But give it to us as a mighty downpour. Baptize us in the Spirit of Jesus. Fill us with the Spirit. Let us drink of the Spirit. Let the Spirit flow out of

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us as a living stream. Well up with in us O Spirit of God, we pray. Thank you Lord. Praise your name, Lord. Let's spend some time and wait upon the Lord.

[end of tape]