

GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS

20. Work of Holy Spirit (3)



An Introduction

The Holy Spirit is given to us by our Heavenly Father when we put our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. We have already learnt how he works within our lives, bringing us to Christ and how he helps us live a life pleasing to God. Let's see the ways in which the Holy Spirit works through our lives.

1. WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE BELIEVER

(a) By our lives

When the Holy Spirit is working in a person's life, sanctifying it, they become more like Jesus. We see this in 2 Corinthians 3:2-3.

- So the first way the Holy Spirit works through us is by changing our character. John 13:35
- The second way is by our actions that prove we are Jesus' disciples. John 15:8, 1 Peter 2:12
- Why was Stephen's life of such calibre? Acts 6:3, 7:55

(b) By our words

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would give us the right words for the situations we may face.

- For example when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost he was filled with the Holy Spirit and his words convicted those who listened. Acts 2:4, 37

(c) The Lord's guidance in our lives

In the Book of Acts we see the Holy Spirit guided the apostles, showing them where he wanted them to go, and what he wanted them to do. He will do the same for each one of us if we listen to his voice.

- The Holy Spirit told Philip to draw near to the chariot. Acts 8:29
- The Holy Spirit also told Peter to go to Caesarea. Acts 10:19, 11:12
- The Holy Spirit told the leaders at Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Saul. Acts 13:2

(d) By specific gifts

The gifts of the Spirit are given by the Holy Spirit and are used in his power, to demonstrate the reality of the living God, and to enable people to turn to the Lord. There are many examples of the apostles and early believers exercising these gifts.

- The gift of healing: Peter in Acts 3:6
- Miraculous signs: Stephen in Acts 6:8
- Miraculous signs and healing: Philip in Acts 8:4-7
- Miraculous signs and deliverance: Paul in Acts 13:9-12



What is the common factor in all the examples above? Acts 2:4, 6:3, 13:9



The extent to which the Holy Spirit works through our lives depends on us! The early disciples were effective witnesses because they lived in total dependence on the Holy Spirit. This is the only way we can be effective too. So what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

2. FILLING OR BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus' promises in John 14:13-14 are for us today! And it was the Holy Spirit who would make this possible. In John 14:16 Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever." The disciple's power came from the same source as Jesus' power came from – the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1, 14.

The questions arises: Is there a second experience following our conversion when we receive the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit, where we receive power to be a witness? At conversion we experience God's saving work, but does it end there? Study the following verses: John 3:34, John 7:37-39, John 20:22, Acts 2, Acts 4:31.

Just as we are born again by the Holy Spirit and made a new person, we also need the Spirit to work in our lives to empower us to be witnesses for Jesus, to exercise the gifts of the Spirit and have the fruit of the Spirit increasingly manifest within us. We have seen that the key in the life of Jesus and the disciples is to be full of the Holy Spirit.

(a) Hindrances to being filled

A person may be filled with the Spirit the moment they are converted, but often it comes later because:

- They haven't been taught how to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- They haven't been ready to fully surrender.

Before a person can live a life continually filled with the Spirit, there must be an initial filling.

(b) Nature of initial filling

Should we call an initial experience, 'being filled with the Holy Spirit', or 'being baptised in the Spirit'?

1) What should we call this experience?

- Different expressions are used in the New Testament, which all refer to the same experience.
- John the Baptist had said Jesus would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and power. Matthew 3:11
- In Luke 24:49 it says they would be 'clothed with power from on high.'
- Jesus had promised the disciples would receive power 'when the Holy Spirit comes' on them.
- In Acts 2:4 we are told the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

2) What should the evidence be?

People have different opinions! Some feel there should be a clear evidence, others that this is not necessary. Some say all should speak in tongues, while others believe this is not so.

- There are several examples in the Book of Acts of those who were filled or baptised in the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues. Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6
- In Mark 16:17 speaking in tongues is one of the signs listed that will accompany those who believe.
- However it is never stated that speaking in tongues is the only evidence. The most important thing is that a person receives the power of the Spirit. Acts 1:8

3) What should be the result of this experience?

If a believer has fully surrendered to Jesus and filled with the Spirit, there will be an increase of joy, love for the Lord and desire to please him. There will be a new boldness and power to speak about him too.

4) Should we seek the gifts of the Spirit?

The simple answer is 'yes'!

- God wants us to exercise the spiritual gifts, so we can be a blessing to others. 1 Corinthians 12:7
- We are to earnestly desire the gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:31, 14:1, 14:39
- Paul wanted all believers to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. 1 Corinthians 14:5. The reason for this is that the gift of prophecy builds others up.



Some people say that unless you speak in tongues you aren't a Christian! How would you answer that?

Why does Paul say that love is more important than the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 13?



God has given us a wonderful gift, the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is with us all the time! The Holy Spirit wants to equip us so we can do the same things Jesus did, but the only way to do that is to be filled with the Spirit and live in his power. Have you asked Jesus to fill you with his Spirit? Have you asked the Holy Spirit to empower you and gift you the gifts you need to be his witness? Why not do that now!