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The Holy Spirit (Part 2)



The Holy Spirit - Steve Gregg

Explore the profound teachings of Steve Gregg as he delves into the concept of the Holy Spirit in this enlightening discussion. Gregg highlights the unique nature of Jesus, who was granted the Spirit of God without measure, unlike anyone else. He emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment as seen in Luke's Gospel and the book of Acts. This deep dive into the work of the Holy Spirit in the church unveils the ongoing revelation and discernment required to accurately transmit the Spirit's message.

Transcript

Well, let's continue now. We talked about the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, and how the prophets predicted an age of the Holy Spirit where he'd be poured out like rivers in the desert and produce all kinds of fruit. We know that the Apostle Peter identified the day of Pentecost as the beginning of that fulfillment.

And John, in his Gospel as we saw in John 7, 39, predicted that it was not yet while Jesus was on earth. But while Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit was operating in a unique way for the first time in a spirit-filled man who was not like a prophet that the Spirit came upon and went and came upon and went. Jesus was the embodiment of God himself through the Holy Spirit, the Word made flesh.

I don't want to speculate too much about how the incarnation works because that's one of the many things in the Bible that we're affirmed about but not explained to us. We know that Jesus had all the human, what should we say, handicaps, human limitations, he grew tired, he was hungry, he was mortal, he could be tempted. None of those things are true of God, but they were true of Jesus because in addition to being God, he was man.

But he was a man in whom God dwelt fully. It says that the Spirit of God was given without measure to Jesus, which apparently is different than anyone else before that. He was full of the Spirit from early on.

Now I don't know about the years before he began his ministry, I don't know what the

nature of his relationship with the Holy Spirit was. These things are very, almost nothing in the Bible telling us that. And of course, most people would have an opinion of some kind, but I'd rather stay as far as I can from opinions that have no biblical support, even if they might be true.

Our speculations may be nearer or further from the truth, but we won't ever know if the Bible doesn't really tell us. So I prefer not to speculate overly much. But we do know that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit because that's what we're told in Matthew 1.20 when Joseph had found out that Mary was pregnant and of course assumed that she had been made pregnant in the normal way, an angel came to her and told her, no, don't be afraid to take Mary, your wife, because that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

And so he was conceived of the Holy Spirit. When Mary herself was approached by the angel previous to that and told that she would have a child, that was in Luke 1.35, she had asked, how can this be? I do not know a man. So the angel gave something of an explanation of how it was that she would become pregnant.

He said, the Spirit of God will come upon you. Well, that in itself doesn't make people pregnant. The prophets had the Spirit of God come upon them.

But he said, and the power of the highest shall overshadow you. Therefore, that holy thing that shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God. Now, in other words, whatever it was, it was the Spirit of God's work.

It was the Spirit of God coming uniquely upon Mary to bring about the conception of Jesus in her womb. And this must mean at the very least that God himself supplied that portion of the genetic information that a father would normally add to that of the mother and produced another human being. And that human being had DNA that was human through his mother.

But also the other, frankly, the other DNA was human too, but provided supernaturally by God. We can say little else than that. At least I can say little else than that, since I don't, I'm not a geneticist to know that much about what's involved.

But we know that Jesus was uniquely conceived, and it was the work of the Holy Spirit, and that he was anointed when he began his ministry. In Luke chapter 3, we read that Jesus came to be baptized by John. And when he did, in addition to the voice of God speaking from heaven, it says the Spirit of God came upon him in the form of a dove.

Now it does say the Spirit of God came upon him, the same expression that was used of the prophets or the judges or the kings of Israel in the past. But obviously, Jesus was already God in the flesh before that. The coming of the Spirit upon him apparently was a special anointing of power that resulted in the beginning of his public ministry.

There is no evidence that Jesus did anything supernatural before that point, when he was 30 years old. He lived the first 30 years of his life in a carpenter shop for the most part, learning carpentry. He was a sinless boy, and a very intelligent boy too.

We know that because Luke tells us that at 12 years old, Jesus was able to amaze the teachers of the law with the brilliant questions and answers that he was able to produce. But that doesn't suggest necessarily supernatural. There's many precocious boys at age 12 that would amaze other adults.

I think we have to say that before Jesus began his supernatural ministry at age 30, he was a specimen that God had probably made of an unusually intelligent young man, precocious. And therefore, in a sense, the Holy Spirit used his natural gifts as well. It would seem, just like the Holy Spirit might with you.

It may be that when you're filled with the Spirit and God puts you in the ministry, that he simply anoints some of the natural abilities that you've been given. That's not always the case, but it can be. Certainly a person who's a teacher before they're a Christian might be anointed to be a Christian teacher when they're filled with the Spirit.

Or not. They might never have had that spiritual gift, even if they had the natural tendency. We'll say more about the gifts later on.

But Jesus was a brilliant young man, but not operating in supernatural capacity until the Spirit came upon him. After that point, there were miracles and wonders and all kinds of things, and he seemed to operate entirely through the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10, 38, when Peter's preaching in the house of Cornelius, he describes Jesus as a man anointed by God, who went around doing wonders and miracles.

The Holy Spirit was working through him supernaturally. And I think it's important that we understand that, that Jesus was doing these supernatural things through the Holy Spirit. Since our theology tells us correctly that he was God in the flesh, we just assume he did this because he was God.

But again, he told his disciples that the things he did, they did also. And they're not God. We're not God.

But the same miracles that Jesus did were replicated in many cases among some of his disciples. The apostles primarily, but others as well. Stephen and Philip also did signs and wonders, and throughout history there have been some who have done those things.

Not everybody. But those are a certain gift of the Holy Spirit. But that's the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon them.

And each one who's filled with the Spirit has some kind of a gift. The Holy Spirit, Jesus

said, would convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. He said that to the disciples in John 16, 7-11.

We read that Jesus operated through the Holy Spirit. In Luke 4, 1, after he had been tempted to the wilderness for 40 days, it says he returned in the power of the Holy Spirit into Galilee and began his ministry. In the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew chapter 12, when Jesus was accused of casting out demons by the power of the devil, he said, no, I'm not doing it that way. He says, I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God. In Matthew 12, 28, he said, if I'm casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Which of course he was affirming to be the case. In Acts chapter 1, summarizing the earthly life of Jesus, or I should say the earthly ministry of Jesus, Luke is telling Theophilus that, if you look at this, in Acts chapter 1, it says in the first book, the book of Luke, oh Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up, after he had given command through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. Now notice Luke is referring to his previous work.

My previous work, Theophilus. Well the book of Luke is the previous work to the book of Acts. Both are addressed to Theophilus.

And he says in my earlier work, I told you the things that Jesus began to do and teach until he was taken up. Well that's just the beginning, then what's the continuing? Well, that's what the book of Acts is going to tell you. My first book just gave you the beginning of Jesus' teachings and actions.

This book is going to continue telling you about Jesus' teachings and actions sent through his body, a corporate body. The same Holy Spirit, when he was on earth, he gave teachings, it says to his disciples, gave commands through the Holy Spirit. The Bible teaches that what Jesus did, whether it was teaching, whether it was miracles, whether it was casting out demons, was done through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And that's what Peter said in Acts 1.8, what happened to, I'm sorry, Jesus said to Peter and the apostles in Acts 1.8, said that you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And that's what we see happening in Acts chapter 2 at the day of Pentecost, which we'll look at later. We are told that the Holy Spirit inhabits the church like God inhabits the temple.

In fact, we are the temple of God because of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. In Ephesians 2, Paul says that we are a habitation of God through the Spirit. Jesus said in John 14, 17, I will send you another comforter who will remain with you forever, unlike the Old Testament where the Spirit came and went, apparently, on certain individuals.

The Holy Spirit will abide in the church forever. He is an abiding presence in those who

are Christians. And like we saw earlier in Romans chapter 8, Paul said, if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he's not one of his.

So every true Christian has the indwelling Holy Spirit. That's apparently one of the things that makes it very clear and defining of being a Christian. In 1 John, both in 1 John chapter 3 and chapter 4, it says this is how we know that we abide in Him and He must be by the Spirit He's given us, or because He's given us of His Spirit, John says.

Because we have the Holy Spirit, we know we are abiding in Christ. We know we're Christians. We are His because the Spirit of Christ is in us.

The Holy Spirit also, because He dwells in all Christians, unites the collective of all Christians into a single organism, which is, of course, called the body of Christ. We see this in 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 13. Paul said, for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit. All Christians have drunk of the Holy Spirit. Like Jesus said, if anyone is thirsty, let him come unto me, and you believe me, the living water will flow through you.

You drink, and then you become a fountain for others to drink from. The Holy Spirit operates through you. First you receive, then the Spirit continues through you to allow others to receive.

After all, you receive the Holy Spirit largely through the influence of other Christians. Of course, the Holy Spirit directly had to come upon you. No Christian can make that happen.

But you would never have known the Holy Spirit, if not for Christians, through the Spirit, preaching the Gospel to you. And so, you become a conduit of the power of God and the Holy Spirit. But, he takes all those who have drunk of the Holy Spirit and makes them into one body.

We've all been baptized into one body by the Spirit. Now, this is not, it's easy to mistake that for talking about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But you see, he's not saying we're baptized in the Spirit.

But in the Spirit we're baptized into the body of Christ. The word baptized simply means immersed. And it's used in many different phenomena in Scripture.

Yes, we'll see in Ephesians 4, he said there's one baptism. But what Paul means by that is that we were all baptized, when we were baptized in water, we were all baptized into Christ, not into Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, and so forth. There's only one baptism, one formula, uttered over all of us when we were baptized in water.

He's not saying there aren't other baptisms of different sorts. Because the word baptism just means immersion. John the Baptist distinguished between water baptism and baptism in the Spirit.

He says, I baptize in water. But he comes after me who is greater than I, the lachery of whose sandal I'm not worthy to bear. And he says, he will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

So this is another kind of baptism, not water. And then of course Jesus said to his disciples when they said, can we sit at your right hand and your left hand, John and James asked him this, in your kingdom. He said, can you be baptized with the baptism I've got to be baptized with? They said, sure, why not? They didn't know what he was talking about.

And he said, well you will be baptized with the baptism that I'm baptized with, but as far as the right hand, left hand, that's my father's decision, not mine. The point here is, he was talking about another kind of baptism and apparently in suffering and even martyrdom for them. We see that the Holy Spirit then baptizes us into the body of Christ.

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is something else because in that case the Holy Spirit is the element into which we're baptized. Analogous to being baptized in water. Water is the element in which we're baptized.

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is like being baptized in water, but in the Holy Spirit. But here Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, talks about the Holy Spirit baptizing us into the body of Christ. Yes, in the verse I just read, it says in one spirit we're baptized into one body.

Some translations say, and legitimately, by one spirit we're baptized into one body. It's the Holy Spirit who immerses us into the body of Christ, places us in the body of Christ, gives us our position in the church as it were, the body and the function that is in fact defined by what the Holy Spirit gives us to do. The gifts of the Spirit define the function that we have and therefore the position we have in the body.

Paul says this in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 3 and 4. Paul says we should be eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. He says there's one body and one spirit, just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

He's saying basically Christians have these things in common with each other, which means that whatever else we don't have in common, for example race, there's Jews, Gentiles, Barbarians, Scythians, Greeks in Paul's day. In our day there's every nation in the world has ethnicities that it's contributed to the body of Christ. There's many things we don't have in common, our race, even our gender.

Certainly our differences of education, differences of occupation, differences of

circumstances, but there's things that we have all in common and those are the things that make us one. One faith, one hope, one baptism, one God, one Father, one spirit, one body. It's the spirit of God possessed by all Christians that creates the unity of the spirit.

And Paul says there in Ephesians 4, 3, you need to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit. It's interesting later on in verse 13 of that chapter he says until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a mature man. But we will eventually come to unity of faith, meaning we'll believe the same things, which is not the case right now.

Not all Christians believe all the same things. But we do have a unity that we already have in our to keep the unity of the spirit until we come to the unity of the faith. We don't have to wait to have unity of the spirit because if we have the Holy Spirit that means we're Christians.

If we are Christians we are part of one body, one united body, although we don't act like it often enough and that is our sin. We are commanded to act like one body. The church has not always been as obedient as they should.

But we do know that in the New Testament the church was able to continue the work of Christ because they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the same spirit that was in Christ. In other words it's a work of the spirit done first through Jesus Christ and then continued to be done through him, that is his corporate body of which Jesus is the head. Jesus was the whole body when he was here.

When he ascended to heaven he became the head of a corporate body and he incorporated all of us. The spirit baptized us all into that body so that we are now members of a more complex body made up of a lot of people, millions of people around the world. But still one body, still Christ operating, still the Holy Spirit operating through a body of Christ.

The Holy Spirit also was to be the guide of the church, not just empowering the church but directing the church. Christians are supposed to be led by the Holy Spirit. Romans 8, 14.

Paul said as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God. That means the same number of people that are sons of God are led by the spirit of God. And so the Holy Spirit who dwells in us is also the one who leads us in various ways.

We're going to have to talk more about what that looks like. In chapter 16 of John and verse 13 Jesus said when the spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth for he will not speak on his own authority, etc. He will speak as he is given.

Now the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the church is seen in various ways in the Bible. Sometimes through prophetic words, sometimes even in dreams and visions. But also

the Holy Spirit works and guides us in much more, I should say less sensational ways.

It's not always through a prophetic word that you're going to get guidance from God. There's a lot of ways that the Holy Spirit leads and we'll have more to say about that later. But in the early church they counted on the Holy Spirit being the guide.

As Luke's gospel emphasizes the Holy Spirit's work in Christ more than the other gospels do. So Luke's second book Acts emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. And therefore we see it's really, some people said the book of Acts shouldn't be called the Acts of the Apostles.

Since in fact there are very few apostles whose acts are recorded in the book of Acts. But it should be called Acts of the Holy Spirit. Or as Luke apparently would say, continuing Acts of Jesus.

Operating through his spirit in another form through the body of Christ. So that 1 John 2 in verse 27 says, You have no need that any man teach you, but that anointing that you have received abides in you and teaches you all things. We have the Holy Spirit guiding us individually as well as corporately.

The church is supposedly corporately guided by the Holy Spirit. But we as individuals also are led by the Spirit. As many of us are led by the Spirit are the sons of God.

Now of course some of you might say, well then why are we having these teachings at all if we don't need anyone to teach us. Aren't you a man? Or we need no man to teach us. I agree, you don't need me to teach you.

The Holy Spirit can teach you everything he's ever taught me. If you do the same study and you spend the same time, you'll learn as much as I do. You don't need me.

The fact is the Bible says that God has given various gifts of the Spirit. One of which is teaching. And even when a teacher teaches, if it's his gift, it's still hopefully the Holy Spirit is teaching.

But you can't be sure that a gifted teacher is always perfectly transmitting what the Holy Spirit is saying. That's why you who possess the Holy Spirit also have to judge all things. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, even when people are prophesying, let the prophets speak two or three but the others judge.

You have the Holy Spirit in you. You don't depend on me or any other human being to teach you. You can benefit from the various gifts of the Spirit, hopefully including the teaching gift of some people.

Save you some time. I put in the time, I say something out, I can pass it along to you. If I'm right, you've learned something, hopefully from the Holy Spirit's gift.

But you have to learn from the Holy Spirit himself too. You have to discern. Is this right? Is this wrong? And so you have a relationship with the Holy Spirit.

Yes, there are teachers, but you don't need them ultimately. You don't depend on teachers. You depend on the Holy Spirit ultimately to teach you all things.

He is the teacher of the church. Now, I want to talk about what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Because this is a term that not only is used of the disciples in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, 4, where it says they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, but there's actually an imperative that we be filled with the Spirit.

The Bible actually commands us to be filled with the Spirit. Which is kind of interesting because that imperative is found in Ephesians, chapter 5, and there, in verse 18, Paul says, do not be drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but he says, but be filled with the Spirit. And the word be, the Greek word there, is not in some kind of a perfect tense, it's an imperfect tense, which means it's ongoing.

A lot of teachers would say that means be being filled with the Spirit. Be continuously filled with the Spirit. I suppose that's probably the proper way to understand the Greek tense of the verb.

We should be continually being filled with the Spirit. But the reason I say it's interesting is because Paul is commanding that to the Ephesian readers, but he has already told them in Ephesians 1 that they have the Holy Spirit, that they have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. When they came to faith, they were sealed, they received the seal of the Holy Spirit.

Now a seal, in biblical times, was a wax blob that had somebody's signet ring stuck into it, and it was hardened into a permanent image of what was on that ring. The purpose of a seal, well, one purpose was of course to keep a document shut. You roll up the scroll and put a seal on it, it keeps it from unrolling.

But more importantly, it wasn't just to keep it from unrolling, it was to keep the wrong people from unrolling it. There was an authorization implied in that seal. That's why when Jesus was buried, the enemies of Christ asked that a seal be put on the tomb.

This doesn't mean that they took a bunch of mortar and sealed around the stone so it was airtight. It means they put a Roman seal on it, which meant by Roman authority, do not violate this tomb. Anyone who touches this is violating Roman authority.

This seal of Rome, probably a pilot, is a guarantee that Rome stands behind this. And when a document had a seal from a government official, it had his signet on there, it was the way to guarantee it really came from him because nobody but he had that ring. People might want to forge letters as if they were from authorities, but if they didn't have the seal of the authority, you'd know, okay, it's not authentic.

But if the seal was there, you'd know it is authentic. A seal was a proof of genuineness. And so when Paul says, we have received the seal of the Holy Spirit, what it means is that the fact that we possess the Holy Spirit is the proof, the guarantee that we are authentic Christians as opposed to impostors.

A seal proves that it's not a forgery or a counterfeit. It's the real deal. So when Paul says in Ephesians 1 that we have received the seal of the Holy Spirit, he's saying we who are true Christians have the Holy Spirit and that proves that we are true Christians.

But he speaks to those of whom he has already said that they are sealed with the Holy Spirit. And he says to them in Ephesians 5, the same book, be filled with the Spirit, be being filled. And this means that being filled with the Spirit isn't the same thing necessarily as simply possessing the Holy Spirit.

There is water in this glass. It is fairly full. I haven't drunk from it yet.

It's less full now. But there's still water in the glass. A person can have the Holy Spirit and not be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Just like this glass can have water in it without being filled with water. And there is a difference between receiving the Spirit at conversion and possessing Him as an abiding reality in your life. He dwells in you.

The difference between that and being filled with the Spirit. Just like the Bible talks sometimes about the enemies of Christ, they became filled with wrath. Well, obviously, a person can be a little angry without being filled with wrath.

It's a matter of degree. You can be a spiritual person in some degree, but it's possibly more spiritual. You can be more filled than you are with the Holy Spirit.

Apparently, because Paul is writing to people who acknowledge, he acknowledges they have the Holy Spirit, but he says you need to be being filled with the Spirit. It would appear that being filled with the Spirit is our responsibility, and that's why we're told to do it. Possessing the Holy Spirit is something God did when we were born again, and we didn't necessarily separately have to do anything besides get saved to be sealed with the Spirit, to possess the Spirit.

But now that we walk with God, we are told in various places to walk in the Spirit and to be filled with the Spirit and so forth. And this is something that it cannot be certain that you are doing just because you're a Christian. Apparently, there are Christians who are, and Christians who need to be filled with the Spirit.

And Paul, of course, exhorts Ephesians to be in the first category, being actually filled with the Spirit. Now, what does filling in the Spirit refer to? And why do we need to be filled with the Spirit? Well, let me just say, the reason that the Church has to be filled

with the Spirit is because the Church is to do God's work, and no one can do God's work but God. Man can't do God's work.

God's work cannot be done by human flesh. And unless we're filled with the Spirit, we've got little else but our fleshly capacities, our genius as human beings, our talents as human beings, our ingenuity, but that's human. God's work is not done by human ingenuity.

Man can't build the Church. Man can participate, but only God can build the Church. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 16, upon this rock, I will build my Church.

Only He can do it. When Paul's talking about his activities in Corinth, when he planted the Church, in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, he said that the work that he and Apollos had done was like members of a crew working on somebody else's project. He compared the Church with God's field and God's building.

In 1 Corinthians 3, he says you are God's field, you are God's building, the Church is. But in that context, he gives two illustrations, the field and the building. When he talks about the field, he says I planted and Apollos watered, but he says God gave the increase.

We are workmen on the crew, he says we're laborers together with God. But it's God who makes it happen. He switches to the idea of a building.

He says I laid the foundation, another comes and builds on the foundation. Now he could have gone on and said, but it's God who makes the building really grow. He didn't say that because he went off to make other points about the building.

But the point is the Church is built like a building or grows like a field. And there are workers in it. There are men that God gifts like Paul and Apollos to plant and to cultivate and to water.

But still, men can't build the Church, only God gives the increase. And Jesus told a story like that in Mark chapter 4. He said the kingdom of God is like when a man sows seed in his field. And he sleeps and he wakes.

And the seed grows by itself, he doesn't know how. He says. Because he says the earth itself produces the fruit.

First the blade, then the head, then the full grain in the head, he says. But this is a work of God. The workman sows the seed, but he can sleep and it's still growing.

It doesn't take, I mean it does take involvement by human agents. But the actual growth, the actual miracle of it is done by God. And so the spreading of the kingdom of God, the building of the Church, the saving of souls, the maturing of the saints.

All the work that God is involved in is the work of God. And although we participate,

unless we're filled with the Spirit, operating through the power that the Spirit gives, we're just building a human institution. Now, I don't want to name any names because I'm not in a position to know of the existing leaders of the churches, who's filled with the Spirit and who's not.

But I will just say, in general, it's entirely possible for a very talented man, with a very eloquent speaking gift, to build a large congregation, a big organization. And have many campuses to his church. Because he draws so many people in.

Because he's entertaining. Because he's eloquent. Because he says things that scratch where people are itching.

And people like that. And he gets a big church. But like the church of Sardis that Jesus addresses, you have a name that you live, but you're dead.

A church can have a reputation for being a great church. But as far as Jesus is concerned, there's no life there at all. It's not a living phenomenon.

It's not even a living body. It's dead. But it has a reputation of being living.

It's possible to mistake the work of man for the work of God. But how do you know the difference? Here's what I understand to be the case. Since the work of God is spiritual, an unspiritual person cannot perform it.

You have to be filled with the Spirit and gifted by the Spirit. And I think of, again, teaching is one of the ways that the church is built up. If it's done through the Holy Spirit's power.

Let's just say a man is a gifted orator or communicator. He's a college professor. He wins awards for being the most effective teacher in the United States.

Because he's got this tremendous success in communicating concepts and so forth to students. And yet, if he's not a Christian, not filled with the Spirit, and not gifted, he's passing on information. He's not passing on life.

He's not passing on spiritual benefit. Even if he is a Christian, but his gift isn't in teaching, his natural ability to teach isn't going to produce spiritual fruit. He may make a living as a teacher.

But if he's not anointed by the Holy Spirit to teach, he could even make a living as a pastor. He could have a big congregation and say, boy, we sure learned a lot from this man. And maybe they do.

And maybe some of the things they learn are worth learning. But are they growing? Is there spiritual growth? Is there spiritual life being imparted? Not unless the Holy Spirit is in it. Natural abilities are different than gifts of the Spirit.

Some of the gifts of the Spirit overlap with some of the activities of natural abilities. But unless the Holy Spirit's anointing it, there's no spiritual result. Only Jesus can build his church, not flesh.

And there are people who in the flesh have tremendous gifts and abilities, which sometimes get pressed into service in church work. And sometimes have results that are impressive to the onlooker because of the size of the work they do. But if you look at the spiritual maturity of the people who are sitting under that ministry, you do not find anything to impress you.

You don't get the impression that, boy, that's the kind of Christian I want to be. In fact, you wonder sometimes if they're Christians at all, even though they go to church every Sunday. Because apparently, something is attracting the church.

There's some skill, some talent that the preacher has, or the musicians, or something. But spiritual life is not being imparted because they're not growing. Spiritual food is not being imparted because they're not maturing and becoming strong.

I want to give a little bit of my testimony. I can't talk about this subject without thinking of my own experience. Because I was a Christian, but not filled with the Spirit for many years.

I was raised in a Christian home. I actually came to Christ when I was a child. I think I really genuinely came to Christ.

Some people might doubt it when they hear this testimony. They might say, no, I think you became a Christian later on. But I was not very spiritual.

I wasn't disciplined. I haven't been taught very much about the things of the Spirit. I went to a denominational church that was evangelical.

I heard the gospel. I believed the gospel. I served in the church.

I was a leader in the youth ministry in the church in my early teens. Even before that, I was involved in trying to lead people to Christ. I was defending the Bible to my second grade teacher.

I was in junior high teaching against evolution and for creation. I took speech classes in my freshman year of high school so that I could have an opportunity to give sermons to my classmates so that I could win them for Christ. I wanted to be an evangelist from the time I was probably 11 or 12.

I'm not an evangelist. I just wanted to serve God. At the time, I just felt like evangelism was exciting.

I like to see people get saved. I gave sermons. I did well in school, by the way.

I did well in speech class. I didn't do very well in getting anyone saved. I would have to say, looking back, I never sensed the power of God in any way operating through anything I was saying.

I did put together some good presentations. I got good grades on them. But good presentations don't necessarily produce good fruit because I was not a spirit-filled person.

I had the Holy Spirit because I was a Christian. I felt the Spirit at times, even though we were in a non-charismatic church, we had traveling evangelists who would come in once in a while and do a week-long or two weeks-long of meetings every night. I'd be there every night.

When I saw people go forward, I just felt so thrilled. When we'd sing the hymns of invitation, I almost wanted to go forward again because I was so excited. I just felt the presence of God at those times.

When the evangelists would leave and our pastor was back in the pulpit, not so much. But the thing is I didn't have this continuing fullness of the Spirit. I remember we'd go to church camps in the summer or whatever for a week.

They'd have some inspiring speaker there who was lifting up Jesus Christ, and we're in a Christian environment in the woods. I'd just feel really close to God. I'd really feel like I could sense, I would say, I could feel the Holy Spirit.

And I'd be determined, when I go back home, I'm going to keep this going on. I'm going to stay on fire for God like this. But no sooner had I gone home than, and I was back in my old environment, it just kind of dried up.

I didn't have any kind of consistency. The Spirit was certainly in me. I was certainly a believer.

I was even determined to serve God, and I enjoyed nothing more than seeing people get saved, though they didn't get saved through me, though I tried. I loved Billy Graham crusades. I actually wanted to be like Billy Graham because he got to see people saved all the time, and I couldn't think of anything more thrilling than seeing people really get saved.

Very rarely, our pastor would actually see a response to the altar calls he gave. And someone would come forward, and I'd be all excited. Wow, someone just got saved.

A lot of times he'd announce that after he came forward and whispered in his ear that they were just changing churches, they weren't saved. I mean, they were getting saved at that moment, so it was a little let down. But whenever I thought someone's really getting saved, it was tremendous.

I was so thrilled. And I wanted to be used of God that way. And I was actively evangelizing stuff.

But that might make it sound like I was really a spiritual person. I guess maybe compared to some of the kids in the youth group you'd say I was, by the standards I would think now of spirituality, I certainly was not. Mostly my thoughts were on carnal things a lot of the time.

But there were lots of ways I was living and thinking that I didn't feel convicted of that I would if I was doing that now. I didn't get involved in scandals because I was a Christian. But I was selfish, worldly in my orientation in many respects.

It wasn't until I was 16 that my family moved to Orange County, California where the Jesus movement was just getting started in a church called Calvary Chapel. And I visited that church because a friend at school took me there. And I was so thrilled because there was a revival there.

And I walked in and it was like going to those evangelistic meetings that rarely happen in my church. It was like people were getting saved like crazy every night. Every night they had meetings.

And every night no less than 50 people would go for it. The church baptized a thousand new converts a month for a long time. It was the influx of all the hippies getting saved, coming to Jesus people at the very beginning of the Jesus movement.

I just happened to be fortunate to be there. And I remember when I came there I thought, why isn't our church I came from like this? And how come I'm not like these people? I could appreciate what they had. In fact, I envied them.

I wanted to be like them. I thought, what do they have that I don't have? It turned out they were talking about things once in a while. Like they talked about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Spirit.

Frankly, I didn't know the term. I read the Bible a lot, but the word baptism of the Spirit isn't found very often in the Bible, just really twice. John the Baptist used it once and Jesus used it once.

And I apparently read over it and not thought much about it. And when these people would say they were baptized in the Spirit, I thought, well, I'm not sure what that means. But I was a biblicist.

All those years that I was younger, I read the Bible and I was determined to follow the Bible, but I just hadn't heard about this. So this exposure caused me to go on a journey of exploration, researching in the Bible everything I could find about this subject. And although the term baptism of the Spirit is only found in a couple of places, the idea of it

is certainly found.

It dominates the book of Acts, certainly. And it certainly is alluded to in various places in the epistles. And I became convinced that I needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit like these people were.

And so I went back to Calvary Chapel one night and approached one of the pastors there afterward and went into a side room and he laid hands on me and prayed for me to be filled with the Spirit. And I asked God to fill me with the Spirit. Now, I have to say that in the research I had done leading up to that, I had come to think that certain phenomena might occur.

Speaking in tongues would be one thing. I saw that in the book of Acts and thought, well, I expect I'll probably speak in tongues. Other people who had been baptized in the Spirit had told me other things.

They said they felt like warm honey had been poured over their whole body. I thought, well, I wonder if that's going to happen. Or some people fell down.

Other people had experiences that I thought, well, I wonder what's going to happen. I thought some phenomenon would occur. The truth is no phenomenon occurred.

Nothing appeared to happen at all. And this caused me to wonder if maybe what they had didn't happen to me. But I was a good Baptist.

And Baptists tell you, they basically condition you to be satisfied with very little experience. In fact, they get a little suspicious if you have too much experience with God. So you're supposed to just walk by faith.

And so my good Baptist conditioning served me well on that occasion because I had my hands in the air like he told me to. He had his hands on me. And he was praying and I was praying.

And none of the things were happening that I thought were supposed to happen that other people had told me happened in their case. But as a good Baptist, I said, you know, Jesus, this is what I was thinking in my head. Jesus said, if you earthly fathers being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? I thought, well, that's simple enough.

I've asked Him. And there's a promise of God here. The Father will give His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

So if God said it, I believe it. That settles it, you know. I'll tell you, it helped me being a Baptist because I was willing to accept the truthfulness of God's Word without the charismatic phenomena that other people had testified to and which I actually expected

to happen.

They didn't happen. But I was changed. I will say this.

Some of those phenomena, not the honey part or the falling down part, but some things that I thought would happen, it happened later in my life. I mean, those things, some of them happened later on. But actually, things I didn't know were going to happen did happen.

Like, from that moment on, I was 16 then. I'm 64 now. This has been the case.

God has been real to me from that night to this present in a way that He had never been real, not consistently anyway. Like I said, there were moments earlier where I felt the presence of God in church meetings and evangelistic meetings and stuff and camp. But that phenomenon of His presence with me has stayed with me from that night on.

Some people think it's emotional, but I don't remember being very emotional. I'm not an extremely emotional person. God met me where I am, I guess, and it wasn't an emotional experience.

All I can call it is an awareness, a consciousness of God's presence. He was real in a new way. I read the Bible, of course, much before, but it was like reading ancient history.

It was like reading the Iliad or the Odyssey, you know, the miracles. They seem surreal. The leading of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles, and even in Jesus' mystery, I thought, I know that happened, but that sure seems like a different world than this world that I'm in.

But no longer. When I read it now, it seemed like the world I was in. It really did.

I felt like I was reading things that I might see any day in the revival that we were in. We did see some of that kind of thing, although the Jesus movement was not primarily a focus on miracles and signs and wonders by any means. Some in the Jesus movement later branched off into that way.

But the Jesus movement at Calvary Chapel was strictly a Bible-centered movement. But there was a belief in miracles and signs and gifts of the Spirit, and those things were sometimes seen. But I'm saying that there's a phenomenon that I can't describe as emotional, and it certainly was not sensate.

It wasn't like honeybees were poured over my body. I didn't fall down, didn't speak in tongues, didn't do those things. But God became real in a different way than ever before.

And therefore, praying was a totally different experience. Instead of just saying prayers, I was talking to somebody as if he was really there. It seemed like he was.

When I read the Bible, it's like I was reading something communicating to me, not just reading information that's theological in nature that I should try to know if I'm going to be a Christian. When you're a Christian, you feel like I learned what the Bible teaches. And I had spent much of my earlier life learning what the Bible teaches.

That served me in good stead eventually, because that's how I became a teacher to the other Jesus people, because I knew something they didn't, because they just got saved, and I've been saved all my life. And I've been reading the Bible all my life, so I had something I could offer, and they asked me to offer it, so I became a teacher. But reading the Bible is like reading a message written to me.

It was a reality. It wasn't foreign to me. And I had a sense of love for people like I'd never had before.

I mean, I'd always wanted people to be saved. I guess that's a loving attitude. But I actually was... I felt more patient with people.

I felt like I could remember easily getting angry in my earlier life, small provocations. I didn't get angry again for years after I got filled with the Spirit. It's not automatically you don't get angry anymore, but the presence of God in me was such that I just naturally loved people instead of being irritated by them.

And I don't know what to say more than this, except that my spiritual life was enhanced. I would say there was fruit of the Spirit in my life. And it's like the Holy Spirit really began to teach me things, attitudes more than anything else.

I just had this instinct that being humble before God is just necessary. I mean, God gives grace to the humble, and He resists the proud. And it became a high priority.

I need to make sure that I don't offend God by being ever proud. I need to be humble. And I hated phoniness in religion.

I hated affectation or pretense. I mean, these are just attitudes that just suddenly became part of my life. For me, a relationship with God was something that was a reality that was... Well, for example, I was in drama in high school when this happened.

And I enjoyed drama in the earlier years of my high school. And I wasn't too bad at it, but I mean, I was no... I wasn't great, but I did well. But after I was fruit of the Spirit, I just couldn't... I couldn't put myself in character, because it felt hypocritical.

I just felt like I couldn't put on any affectation. I didn't want to pretend to be anything that I'm not. Even though there's nothing wrong with it, I'm sure, but I just felt convicted about that.

There was a sense which God was convicting me, interacting with me, teaching me,

changing me. And I wouldn't... I don't know what I would be today if I had not had that experience at that time, or at least sometime subsequently. If I had become a Baptist pastor or evangelist, I would have probably been very frustrated.

Probably would have burned out by now. A lot of pastors do burn out, because they are striving to manage a bunch of wayward sheep and a big organization with all kinds of political nonsense going on. That's what churches do.

And I would have had... I would have got sick of it long ago, of ministry. I probably would have gone into something else. But the Holy Spirit made Christianity and ministry natural.

It's like a new environment that I was in, filled with the Spirit. Now, I'm using the word filled with the Spirit somewhat synonymously with being baptized in the Spirit. Now, not everyone will do that.

There's some controversy about the expression baptized in the Holy Spirit. Because baptism in the Spirit is not mentioned much in the Bible. But certainly the Bible says in a number of places that all Christians have the Holy Spirit.

And based on this, there is one camp that says all Christians are baptized in the Holy Spirit. Because they have the Holy Spirit, they are all baptized in the Holy Spirit. I don't want to be a stickler for words and terminology and so forth, but I think that the expression means something else.

I think baptism in the Spirit means being filled with the Spirit. And the reason I say that is because of Acts chapter 1. The only time Jesus ever used the expression, and he was more or less quoting John who had used it. John the Baptist had said, I baptize in water, he who comes after me will baptize in the Holy Spirit, in fire.

Now, that's the only person before Jesus who used that expression. Now Jesus used it one time in Acts 1-5. More or less quoting John.

He said, for John baptized with water, that you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. And then three verses later he says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And then what actually happened, it's described in Acts 2-4, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

These terms seem to be used interchangeably. They were filled with the Spirit, that's when the Holy Spirit came upon them and they received power. That's when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

All these terms are used of the same experience in this place. And since we don't have any other places that even use the expression baptized in the Holy Spirit, I feel like this is the best way to understand the term. Now, are all Christians baptized in the Spirit? I

don't think so.

As I said, I believe all Christians have the Holy Spirit. But being baptized in the Spirit is equated with the Spirit coming upon you in power. And I would say, my own personal Christian life crossed over a significant threshold when I was 16 years old and I prayed to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I believe I was baptized in the Spirit and there was one big difference I didn't mention, is whereas I talked to people about Jesus a lot before I had this experience, I don't remember anyone ever getting saved by my witnessing before that. But after that, people got saved a lot when I talked to them. And I seem to be, although God moved me more and more out of evangelism into teaching as a gift, even that was different because I had been giving presentations of biblical truth before when I was younger.

But there was something different now. I'll tell you, after I got baptized in the Spirit, the Baptist church I was raised in invited me. I was in a Christian band.

They invited us to come take a Sunday night service at the church. This was before there were Christian albums even, contemporary Christian music. We were one of the early Christian bands, kind of rock bands, country rock more.

But it was evangelistic music. And so, because I was known at that church, I had been a youth leader there before. We had moved away, but they invited me back with my band to do a Sunday night service.

And so, it's funny, I was pretty naive as a person new in these things of the Holy Spirit. I thought when Jesus said, don't premeditate what you're going to say, because the Spirit of your Father in you will give you words to speak at that time. So I thought it was wrong to premeditate or to plan what I was going to say.

And I knew that our band was going to play music, but I was going to give a bit of a sermon and an altar call afterwards. And I remember I knew for a month in advance that we were going to have this Sunday night service. I kept being tempted to plan something and say, no, I'm not supposed to think of what I'm going to say in advance.

Now, I don't see it that way. When Jesus said that, he's talking about when you're on trial before, you know, synagogues and so forth like that don't premeditate what you're going to say. So he's not saying when you're going to teach or preach necessarily.

Although I do believe, obviously on the radio I teach spontaneously. I can't premeditate what I'm going to say there, because I don't know what I'm going to be asked. But still, I prepared this series so that it would be somewhat organized.

And I didn't prepare anything. And we went that Sunday night, and this was just only a few months after I was baptized in the Spirit. And I had preached on Sunday nights in

that church before.

Never seen any fruit or results. But after the band played, I just kind of opened the Bible at random and looked down to see what verse was before me. And I preached on it for a few minutes, 10 minutes or something like that.

I gave an invitation, and man, the Spirit of God was really present there. And lots of people came forward. There were more than 40 people came forward that night.

And I don't think any time, I've been in that church for over 11 years when I was younger, I don't think I'd ever seen that many people come forward in one night. And I thought, wow, this is really different. I thought, wow, I'm going to be an evangelist.

But God then eventually moved me in another direction. But it was amazing. People were coming forward, weeping and stuff.

It's not what you see in that Baptist church very often. I mean, it's what we like to see there every Sunday, but it was amazing to me. I thought, well, it's so different than the other times before.

Because I didn't do anything different, except, I mean, I just talked. But I felt like God had anointed me to speak, and therefore God did something. God did something, not me.

And being filled with the Spirit allows God to do His work through you. And likewise, the same church had me come back and speak to their college group on another Sunday night. Again, these college kids were all my age.

I had left the church a couple of years earlier to go to Calvary Chapel, and I was invited back to speak to the college careers group that was my contemporaries. I grew up within that church. And we were meeting in the home of one of the girls there.

And her father was overseeing the meeting, and they had me give a talk. I don't remember what I talked about. I think I talked about something in the book of Hebrews.

I'm not sure. I hardly knew anything in those days, honestly. I hardly knew anything in those days.

I was just a teenager compared to what I would say now. But while I don't know what I said, afterward, the father of the girl whose house it was in, he came up to me and said, Steve, he'd known me since I was young. He said, Steve, where'd you get your Bible knowledge? I said, well, I was raised in this church.

He said, you didn't get it here. And I said, well, then I don't know where I got it. I honestly don't know where I got it.

I have no idea where that came from. But it was, I now would say, looking back, it's a gift. I read and studied the Bible before I was filled with the Spirit.

But what I would teach afterward, Scriptures would come to mind that I wasn't even aware that I knew. I mean, apparently I had heard them when I was younger or something, but I wasn't, I wouldn't have thought to bring them up. And this is how I believe the Holy Spirit works through us when we're filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's really God doing something supernatural. I've never raised the dead or done much in the way of healing the sick or anything like that. That's not what I do.

But you don't have to have those kinds of miracles. Whatever you do, even if it's not teaching, even if it's not public ministry, whatever you do, God can do through you. And therefore, whatever you do, in word or in deed, you do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says in Colossians 3:17.

And then, of course, it's God doing His work. And there's a lot of work that needs to be done. That's why there's different kinds of gifts.

And I want to talk about the gifts of the Spirit. I also want to talk more about the baptism of the Spirit as the Bible uses it and tells about it. But we need to take another break at this point.