

Spirit-Filled Church – Part 1 – Spirit Filled Power

16 June 2019

West Congregation

- Morning everyone. Luke 24 is where we will be.
- If you are new to the faith, or just checking it out, one of the many mysteries that Christians believe is that there is one God who co-exists eternally in the three distinct persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Today we begin our three-week congregation series called – **The Spirit-Filled Church**, in which we hope to spend three weeks asking what it looks like when God pours His Spirit out into a community of people.
- Now ... I know ... That title and concept alone will make some of you super excited, and some of you super nervous. I am both, and so I get it.
- Here is our hope.... **Our deep hope is that we would be a church known for the presence and power of God's indwelling Spirit.** We don't want to get stuck in the weeds of the mechanics of how and how not the Holy Spirit does and doesn't work in our lives. I want to spend three weeks looking at Scripture pointing at things that absolutely every Christian should desire. Every single one of us should want these things from the Spirit of God.

- Hesitation on things of the Spirit...why?
- As you may know, the truth of who the Holy Spirit is and what He does in the world is controversial and difficult in a way that doesn't necessarily apply to the other two persons of the Trinity in the Godhead. Why is this?
 - **Divergent views**
 - Many shades of grey between all of these. But crudely defined.

- **Pentecostalism** – The miraculous gifts are not just ongoing but expected in the life of true believers. Need a second experience baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to experience these things.
- **Cessationism** – The Holy Spirit is active in the world and in the church, but the special pouring out of the miraculous gifts was reserved for the age of the Apostles. Many would say they don't hold this view, but really functionally operate as if they do.
- **Dontworryaboutitism** – Not actually an official position, but one that many adhere to. We don't really know and I am sure it will all be fine in the end.
- **Difficulty with mystery**
 - When Jesus describes salvation in John 3, he refers to the work of the Spirit as mysterious. The wind of the Spirit blows wherever it wants to go. You hear it, you see it moving things around, but you have no idea where it comes from or where it is going.
 - So, there should be an element of mystery, but that doesn't mean we should be content to shrug our shoulders and leave it there. The Scripture doesn't and takes time to explain to us what we need to know. So, we should **ANTICIPATE MYSTERY AND WORK HARD FOR CLARITY and UNDERSTANDING**. We can and must do both things as believers.
- **Distraction and Distortion**
 - Most people spend all of their time speaking about the baptism of the Spirit, or the gifts of the Spirit.
 - Very few spend time thinking about the nature of the Spirit, or the fruit of the Spirit for that matter.
 - And so, distracted by fringe elements of an argument, we turn our backs on the person and work of the Holy Spirit, who is wonderful, and we are poorer for it.
 - In addition, we see much distortion of the work of God by fringe elements in the church today. The last we need is a bunch of fake miracles, and super rich

celebrity pastors gaining traction and platform and riches off of them. Trust me, we don't want or need that.

○ **InDependence**

- Many in Christendom today have individually geared their lives and collectively created their churches without any deep sense of need for the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.
 - We have systems and processes and schedules and objectives that make perfect sense without any sort of felt need that the power of God would have to miraculously bring them to be.
 - I often have people (in contexts like ours) ask me why today we don't regularly see the sorts of things that we saw in the first century of the church. My answer us usually to point them to the fact that we might not be seeing them here, but maybe they should have a chat to some of our goers, or to believers in developing nations, or even to people in similar contexts but who are daring to do truly great things for the Kingdom of God.
 - People who live with a great sense of felt need for God's power tend to experience a greater manifestation of His power in their lives.
- And that is really all I want to press on today. That we would at least be a people who would want all that God has for us, and that we would be a people who dare to live such impactful Kingdom lives that we cannot simply rely on our own abilities to get it done.
- So, let's jump in to a couple of texts this morning to just set the table. The first is in Luke 24, and I love it. This is the resurrected Christ who keeps arriving at meetings unannounced and without any clear point of access, which really freaks people out, and here He roots what is happening in redemptive history for them. Look at what He said, from verse 44.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” ¹

- Luke 24:44-49

- Jesus is saying to them. “This is all according to God’s plan. The Law and the Prophets and the Psalms all spoke of this, and you can now rightly interpret them all in accordance with what you know about me.”
- And then He starts to explain to them, “And now the next part begins! This gospel is going to be proclaimed by ordinary people like you to the nations of the world! It’s starting here in Jerusalem, and it’s going global. You’re gonna take it!”
- Well...how on earth is that going to happen? They must have wondered. I mean they had seen Peter’s boldness under the questioning of a teenaged girl. It wasn’t brilliant.
- And then Jesus reminds them...

I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

- “You’re going to need a power other than you what you ordinarily have. But, don’t worry. I have been promising you that I would send you the promise of the Father, the precious Holy Spirit. So, please, stay in the city till you have received power. Please don’t try to do this alone.”

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 24:44–49.

- Jesus' plan for taking the gospel to the nations is that an ordinary group of people are going to be supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit. That's it.
- Luke was quick to re-emphasize this point and to expand upon what Jesus said in first chapter of the book of Acts, which continues the narrative of Luke.

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."² – Acts 1:4-8

God's Church Needs God's Power to Accomplish God's Purpose

- **You will receive power.** That is the promise of the filling of the Spirit. Power.
- What followed, was Pentecost, the event in which God's power was poured out freely into the church in a remarkable way and it changed them so dramatically.
- But wasn't that a once off thing? Something that was promised long before and then happened once and hasn't happened since?
- Well, while the actual event of Pentecost seems unprecedented and unrepeated, the principle of God breathing His powerful Spirit into believers is something we see right throughout the Scriptures in the New and Old Testaments and has been something that has repeated right throughout church history.
- Just consider some OT examples with me.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ac 1:4–8.

- Joshua – Numbers 27:18 – God tells Moses that He has filled Joshua with the Spirit so he can lead Israel after Moses.
 - Bezalel – Exodus 31:1-5 – God fills Bezalel with His Spirit to empower him as an artist and craftsman.
 - Gideon – Judges 6:34 – The Spirit of God clothed Gideon with power for leadership and military genius.
 - David – 1 Samuel 16:13 – The Spirit rushed upon David at his anointing.
 - Elisha – 2 Kings 2:9 – Elisha pleads that the powerful Spirit that had empowered Elijah would reside in him as well.
 - Samson – Judges 14:6 amongst others – God’s spirit is poured out into a very fallen man on a few occasions in his life to give him supernatural strength and power.
 - Micah – Micah 3:8 – The prophet Micah declares that he is filled with power from the Spirit of the Lord to prophesy to the people.
 - Joseph and Daniel and the ability to interpret dreams. Doesn’t the Spirit of God dwell in him?
 - The 70 elders – Numbers 11. God says that He will take some of the powerful spirit that he has breathed into Moses and share it with the 70 elders to empower them for leadership.
- Incredible. A bunch of ordinary people, but who had been empowered by God to do remarkable things.
 - And then God promised through His prophet Joel that there was going to be a season when He would do it for all of His people. It wouldn’t just be one or two...Joel 2:28

*²⁸ “And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,*

and your young men shall see visions.

²⁹ Even on the male and female servants

in those days I will pour out my Spirit.³

- And then Pentecost comes, and people looking on thought they had lost their minds, but Peter – who is suddenly quite brave – says, “No! This is what Joel promised! It’s finally here! God has promised to be with His people and to empower them from within. It’s here! The season has begun!”
- And then, and I think this is big, God keeps doing it again in the life of the early church. He doesn’t just fill people in one moment and then leave the church to live off of that forever more. Those same people who are at Pentecost – and some others – are filled again and again with the Holy Spirit in special ways.
 - Acts 4. Peter and John get pulled before the council. And the text tells us that Peter stands up to speak and he is filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - Later in Acts 4, Peter and John went to a prayer meeting, and the place they were meeting shook and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - Steven, Acts 7, filled with the Holy Spirit as he bravely testified to the deity of Jesus and paid the ultimate price.
 - Paul, Acts 13, who has previously been filled with the Spirit after conversion, is filled with the Holy Spirit as he powerfully opposes Elymas the magician.
 - Acts 13:52...all the disciples are filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit.
- And then Paul instructs the Ephesians church...

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Joe 2:28–29.

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,⁴

- **It is a present, passive, imperative.** Be ongoingly filled. Paul is saying ... “this is an ongoing thing. You are going to need to be ongoingly filled with the Holy Spirit of God on an ongoing basis.”
- And here is where we get to my concern, or my slight worry...

God’s Church Needs God’s Power to Accomplish God’s Purpose

- And yet, in my own experience of a Christian journey and in my years walking with and in church communities, I wonder how many of us are experiencing the power of God’s Spirit filling us up so that we can do the things He has for us.
- Let me be clear ... I am not worried that we have the Spirit. If you are a believer in here, you have the Spirit, and you are a miracle of His work of rebirth.
- But, the Scriptures tell us to be filled with the Spirit! Why would Paul issue an instruction that was already a given???
- I know from my own life, that you can be a believer and not be experiencing the power and joy of being filled with the Spirit.
- Look at what D.L. Moody said...

“God commands us to be filled with the Spirit; and if we are not filled, it is because we are living beneath our privileges. I think that is the great trouble with Christendom today: we are not living up on the plane where God would have us live.”

- D.L. Moody

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 5:18–19.

- That was my experience. So much of my Christian life was...
 - Smashed with anxiety.
 - Getting totally beaten by sin.
 - Afraid to death to share my faith.
 - Zero desire for the Scriptures.
- And the answers I got in the churches I was in was, “this is the Christian walk. Just keep going.” And of course there is some truth to that, but then I would meet other believers who were beating sin, and experiencing joy and sharing their faith and loving the Word. The difference, when I would speak to them.... “Filled with the Spirit of God.”
- One of my heroes of the faith, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones prophetically protested the posture of churches that said that we get all that we need of the Spirit when we become Christians. He said...

“Got it all? Well, if you have got it all, I simply ask in the name of God why are you as you are? If you have got it all, why are you so unlike New Testament Christians? Got it all? Got it at your conversion? Well where is it, I ask?”

- Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

- Okay, well what do we do?
- We repent – if needed - and we ask God, trusting Him that He will lovingly pour out His Spirit as He promised.
- Look at what Jesus told us in Luke 11...

¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” ⁵

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 11:11–13.

- And so today as I close, I just wanted to lay the table, and my prayer is that our desire for more of the Spirit of God would increase today. That's it. I have learned to set a low bar of sermon outcomes. But that would be a great outcome.
- In response...
 - Sing a prayer.
 - Respond like the early church to Pentecost in baptisms.
 - Will have opportunity for prayer at the end.
 - Maybe commit to praying every day this week – Fill me with your powerful Holy Spirit.