

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER

Life and Ministry of Jesus Saturated with the Presence and the Power of the Holy Spirit



As we continue our study of The Holy Spirit and the Believer, you may be wondering why today's focus is on Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The words of the old hymn, More About Jesus explain it best: More about Jesus let me learn, More of His holy will discern; Spirit of God, my teacher be, Showing the things of Christ to me.

A. Torrey said, "Jesus Christ Himself is the one perfect manifestation in history of the complete work of the Holy Spirit in man." When we feel disappointed with our own spiritual life and growth, it may be because we are not relying on the Holy Spirit's power that is available to us. It seems we are so often struggling to 'make it on our own'.

Jesus lived His earthly life conquering sin and winning victories for God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Those of us who have put our faith and trust in Jesus have the privilege of relying upon that same Holy Spirit Power.

In the Old Testament. Isaiah in His Servant Song prophesied of the wonders and character of the coming Messiah who would come as a Servant who possessed the Spirit of God.

Read Isaiah 42:1 (ESV) ¹ *Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.*

Isaiah 42 gives a remarkable picture of the Servant of the LORD and the great work that God intended Him to accomplish. Jesus at a certain point in His ministry concealed that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy because of His need to finish the work the Father had called Him to do. After Jesus had finished His work on earth, Matthew made it clear in his gospel that Isaiah's prophesy of the Servant was fulfilled in Jesus.

Matthew 12:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ *"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.*

We too are called to be servants of the Lord. **Mark 9:35 (ESV)** ³⁵ *And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."* True leadership is servanthood, and the greatest leader of all time is Jesus Christ. That is the way we are to serve – through the Power of the Spirit. Not because someone has guilted us into serving – not for thanks or for show – not because it will serve our own purposes – but because our love for the Lord opens our hearts to be led by the Spirit's Power.

Jesus was Led by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit made a divine appearance at the baptism of Jesus. Let's read how John the Baptist described what he saw.

Read John 1:32-34 (ESV) ³² *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus marked the beginning of His ministry. When we accept Christ as Savior, we like Jesus must be led by the Spirit for the purpose of making Christ Lord of our life. The outgrowth of making Jesus Lord of our life will help us love and serve others as we walk in the Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit is just that—Spirit—He is not visible to us. On this occasion, however, the Spirit took on a visible appearance – a dove which is a symbol of purity and innocence reminding us that Jesus would be God’s perfect innocent sacrifice for the sins of the world. We can never be pure or innocent on our own. **Isaiah 64:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.* However, when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we are immediately covered with the blood of the Son of God and the Father sees us as He sees His Son – righteous!

After Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at His baptism, He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

Read Luke 4:1-2 (ESV) ¹ *And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.*

We like to think of being full of the Holy Spirit as a peaceful time where we just rest and enjoy the Presence of God but as we see in the life of Jesus that is not always what happens. Jesus after His mountaintop experience of baptism was immediately led into the valley of the wilderness to be tempted by Satan.

The Father allowed Jesus to be tempted as living proof that through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, He would be able to resist temptation. Because of the Spirit’s Power, Jesus could withstand even the Devil himself. Jesus said in **John 8:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him."*

Those who have accepted Jesus possess the same Spirit’s Power that Jesus possessed. As we face the trials and temptations of life we are wise to remember that we are NOT alone. When Jesus knew the time had come for Him to leave this earth, He wanted to prepare His disciples. The thought of Him leaving made them anxious to the point of their refusing to believe that it was going to happen. As Jesus spoke of the Helper (the Holy Spirit), He would send, He said to them in **John 14:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* Rest assured, the Holy Spirit will never leave members of God’s family alone! He is our Comforter, our Counselor, our ever present Helper— no matter how alone we may think we ‘feel’ He is with us.

After 40 days and nights of experiencing the Devil’s attempts to sway Jesus to follow him, Jesus resisted and was still found to be walking in the Spirit.

Read Luke 4:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.*

Luke repeatedly reminds his readers that Jesus lived in constant dependence on God through the Holy Spirit. Even immediately after a time of testing and physical weakness, Jesus continued His ministry through the power of the Spirit.

This is a good time to remind ourselves that we conduct our ministry for the Lord under the power of the Holy Spirit. We are not helpless in the face of adversity or resistance to the ministry of Jesus that we are carrying out. **Philippians 4:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* These words are not some pie in the sky quote. They are the Truth of the Word of God. Yes, we know that sometimes the Lord changes our ministry or closes a door but until that happens we are to stand firm. **Ephesians 6:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

Read Luke 4:18-19 (ESV) ¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,”* ¹⁹ *to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

Jesus was baptized, tempted in the wilderness and then returned to Galilee in the Power of the Spirit. He read the above words in a synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth. It was our Lord’s custom to attend public worship. He might have argued that the ‘religious system’ was corrupt, or that He didn’t need the instruction; but instead, He made His way on the Sabbath to the place of prayer. After reading this passage, Jesus said:

Read Luke 4:21 (ESV) ²¹ *And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

When the people in the synagogue that day looked at Jesus, they saw only the carpenter’s son not the Messiah. As they looked upon Him disbelieving, He spoke of two Gentiles who lived outside of the land of Israel – the widow of Sarepta and Naaman of Syria -- in whose lives God worked miraculously. He is trying to show them that the Israelites were apt to miss seeing their Messiah because they would not accept who He was.

Today, the Holy Spirit ‘woos’ us to the Messiah. For example: **John 6:44 (ESV)** ⁴⁴ *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.* OR: **Romans 8:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.* The wooing of the Holy Spirit is like a sweet fellowship with a best friend, you have someone you can totally and completely rely on. It will be a lifetime journey, walking in the Spirit being led by the One who dwells within us.

Charles Stanley speaks concerning what it means to be led by the Spirit. He writes, “Several years ago during a photographic trip, my group had been traveling up a trail for almost three hours, and I began to have a funny feeling that we were going in the wrong direction. I asked the guide about it, and he assured me that everything was fine. Not wanting to be presumptuous, I kept walking. After a few minutes, I noticed that my sense of uneasiness persisted; in fact, it was growing stronger. I pulled out my compass and looked at the map. Sure

enough, we were headed away from our intended destination. It took us close to an hour and a half to return to where we had taken the incorrect turn off the trail. Sadly, this meant that by the time we got to the site, our window for taking photographs was cut short. The event helped me to realize two valuable lessons. First, when we sense an internal witness encouraging us to take a certain course of action, we should listen. Second, when you and I choose people to guide us, we must be certain they know the path ahead better than we do.”

Read Galatians 5:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

The Holy Spirit empowers us to resist sin and obey God. But He does so much more! He helps us to understand Scripture, guides us to do His will, enables us to fellowship with the Lord and with others. He will never advise us to do anything that contradicts Scripture. **Zechariah 4:6 (ESV)** ⁶ ... *“This is the word of the LORD...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.*

Read Romans 8:26-27 (ESV) ²⁶ *Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.* ²⁷ *And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

When we are feeling weak and discouraged, it is time to depend on the Spirit’s power. We have no power on our own. I am certain that we have all experienced times (maybe even recently) when we have not known how or what to pray. Those are the times to pray, “Lord, I don’t know what to ask for. I don’t know what to say. But I’m coming to You as Your child. And I am asking for Your will to be done.” OR, we may just ‘sit’ before the Lord in silence with a broken heart and tears. Because He knows all about troubles, we can trust that the Helper who Jesus sent us is interceding for us with groans that are too deep for words.

We most often think of Jesus directing the major steps in our lives such as in marriage or employment, or illness. But being led by His Spirit should permeate every aspect of our daily walk with Him. But, how can we do such a thing when our finite minds see only present circumstances? We have the tendency to want what we want and we want it now.

Consider this: During the time Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the people thought that the Messiah would usher in the Kingdom of God immediately. They missed the fact that even though Jesus was the Messiah, He would suffer horribly and die for their sins like their scriptures taught. But, they wanted Him as their new king NOW, on THEIR terms, one who would conform to THEIR image, THEIR plans. THEIR IDEA of a king destroying the oppressive yoke of Rome was not why Jesus had come. His kingdom was for the purpose of providing salvation from sin and its consequences. Their idea of God’s plan was inaccurate.

If we rely on the flesh, our interpretation of life can become inaccurate. This is the reason we must constantly yield to the Spirit’s leading so that we are walking in God’s Spirit-filled ways like Jesus did and not our own ways. As John the Baptist said of Jesus in **John 3:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ *He must increase, but I must decrease.*”