

The Spirit Filled and Enabled Life Acts 2: 22-24, 36-41
*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. **Acts 2:4***

If you have watched the pre and post service slideshow in recent weeks you should recognise this quote of AW Tozer,
“The Spirit-filled life is not a special, deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for His people.”

I believe the Holy Spirit’s relationship with a Follower of Christ is like the water poured out of this Jug representing God, into a glass representing the believer’s life, filled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, represented by the water filling and enabling the believer to live out God’s plan and purpose for their life. The Holy Spirit, being, the Promised Gift that keeps on giving from generation to generation, of Christians. It is no wonder that Luke presents the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the church’s birthday. Complete with the fire to set the candles on the cake alight...

Over the previous nearly five centuries before this Pentecost Day the Holy Spirit had not been active. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came upon individuals at particular times to enable them to speak out prophetic utterances. But due to the inactivity of God’s Spirit over the centuries between the Old and New Testament, within Judaism there arose a belief that with the passing of the last of the writing prophets, Malachi, the spirit of Prophecy had ceased in Israel. But the Jews also expected that with the Coming of the Messiah and his age there would be a special outpouring of God’s Spirit, in fulfilment of Ezekiel 37, the valley of the dry bones where by the Word of God, the bones of the dead were reformed and made into complete bodies once again. Then the breathe of God’s entered each of these bodies and they came to life, filled, enabled and given life by God’s Spirit so that prophecy would once again flourish in Israel. Which is exactly what took place at Pentecost among Jesus’ 120 followers.

Speaking in tongues, whether it be a known language, modern or ancient, or a heavenly language of the angels, this is a sign and manifestation of the Holy Spirit filling someone and enabling them to prophesy. Now, such a public prophecy, as in our Pentecost story this morning, if it is of God will always be interpreted by someone who either knows the language, or has the gift of interpretation of tongues.

The point of prophecy is that God's truth is revealed to his people. It comes as an encouragement that is to build up the church, the body of Christ. I want to make the point clear that such a gift or even the private prayer language in tongues is not a requirement for your salvation or needed to prove that you are a born again or a spirit filled Christian. It is merely one manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life or the life of the church. Some receive the gift and/or the private prayer language of tongues, and some don't.

More important to salvation is Repentance. Repentance is the requirement. Just as the people came to it that day, when Peter continued to preach his sermon, the presence of the Holy spirit in his anointed word brought about the much needed inner conviction whereby the people were cut to the heart, because they were now fully aware of their sin, in having Jesus put to death, amongst other things. Their repentance included acknowledging their sin along with the need of a Saviour, Jesus their Messiah, confessing their sin in order to receive forgiveness. What happened was that as each person repented, confessing their own need for forgiveness from sin, they were baptised for the forgiveness of their sins. The end result was that each one of 3000 people received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit.

My point here is that forgiveness by God requires repentance in first instance. Both are inseparably united in applying what Christ did on the cross for the believer to receive the blessing. As the Holy Spirit comes first to bring an unbeliever new birth, to be born again with an eternal deposit within you, so that you know that you know that you know that you are saved, because you have forgiveness for sin through the blood of Jesus shed for you on the cross where died her in your place, for your sin.

The Holy Spirit also baptises us by the one Spirit into Christ's Church universal, Church with a BIG ' C'. And as the Spirit does this you receive at least one Spiritual gift, probably more out of a list of about 30 or so. Everything from Prophecy, to Public Tongues and Interpretation, preaching, teaching, evangelism, Apostle, Miracle worker, healer, Faith, Pastor-Shepherd, Word of Knowledge, Wisdom, Discernment of Spirits, Exorcist, Intercession, Mercy and Music to Giving, Leadership, Hospitality, Administration, helps, service, Craftsman, Creative Arts, ... even Celibacy, Voluntary Poverty, Missionary and Martyrdom.

However, unlike the gift that keeps on giving, martyrdom is the gift you only use once and is exercised almost weekly by our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ, for instance, at least 8 Christians died last Sunday, with many more injured in suicide attacks in Surabaya, Indonesia, when their churches were attacked by ISIS suicide bombers. These are believers who had got up in the morning and gone to worship, not knowing what was about to happen to them. That is why it is so important that we repent everyday of our sins, confess and receive God's gift of grace, undeserved, unmerited forgiveness from our sins that separate us from him, and from exercising the gifts. That is why I say to you today – keep short accounts with God. Deal with it this morning! Be reconciled with others if that's what's required because you don't know when the call from up yonder is going to come, and in what way. Just be ready for it. And as we each await that call in its own God appointed time, we get to live for Christ in this life being filled with his Spirit. We are so be blessed in this way, but only so that we might be a blessing to others.

The Spirit 'fills' (v4)

This filling of the Holy Spirit was never meant as a once off thing in the sense of filling an empty vessel to full like I did with the glass of water because it over flows and empties or evaporates as you give out in life living for Christ by ministering to others. Which is why the filling of the spirit is never a one off event.

The Apostle Paul helps us to understand this when he wrote...

“Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit” **Ephesians 5:18**

'Filled' is a verb in the Present continuous tense.

So the filling is not a one off event. No matter what gift of God's grace you've been given we are to be full of the Spirit. For instance in Acts 6:3 when the 12 Apostles decided that they had to focus on Prayer and the preaching ministry of the Word they got the church to choose Men known to be 'full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom' as Deacons or managers to serve by running the practical side of the ministry in the church. So the Spirit fills/refills you time and time again, as the circumstances of you life require the Spirit's empowering for worship, even here this morning, for service and witnessing... The Spirit fills and as the Disciples discovered...

The Spirit Enables [or gives utterance] v4

On Pentecost it was the Spirit resting on and filling the Disciples that enabled them to speak in previously unknown languages proclaiming God's glory to all. Neither Jesus' ministry nor the mission of the early church would have been possible apart from the Spirit's empowering. Which is why the disciples had been commanded by Jesus to stay in Jerusalem and wait until they were empowered from on high to become his witnesses. You can't do it without me- without my Spirit, the promised gift of the Father!

1. The Spirit decides and apportions to Christians good gifts and enables each believer to use them. We have the example of the prophetic gift this morning already including tongues, a prophecy in an unknown language. There are many more gifts of God's grace that the Spirit distributed and empowers believers to use, including those which I have already shared with you this morning. The enabling to use them comes from the Holy Spirit filling us. From within us, as we use or exercise the Spiritual gifts it is important that we do so out of a heart filled with the virtues that produce Christian character.
2. To be filled and empowered to live and walk in the spirit, to not grieve, or heaven forbid, blaspheme the Holy Spirit. We are to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The virtues of Christian character listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience which is long suffering or forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

As a Christian have you accepted and received the filling and enabling empowerment of the Holy Spirit? As Christians, just as the Israelites, we can harbour the tendency to through the baby out with the bath water. Just as the Israelites believed that the Spirit had gone with the death of the last of the writing prophets in the Old Testament and would not return until the Messiah came, some Christians believe that the Holy Spirit as far as filling, enabling and empowering Christ's disciples to manifest and operate in the spiritual gifts. Some believe that ended when the original disciples who were alive when Jesus was here all died. Such a thing cannot happen now until Jesus returns. This belief is incorrect. Or perhaps due to the extremes and sometimes failings of the Charismatic movement witnessed in the church back in the 70's, 80's and 90's you were put off and want nothing to do with

the Holy Spirit filling and enabling you. It may have been that you were even put down as a second class Christian because you didn't speak or pray in tongue or worship in a charismatic style.

I would like to put this to you. Since the time of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has manifested itself in a number of different ways, that are not all recorded in the Bible but were genuine outpouring of God's grace. Today we can each pray and believe to receive the Filling of the Holy Spirit so that we might each then have to share the blessing with others in a way that you know it is God. Let us always be open to the Spirit coming in new ways in order to encourage us Christians out of our silo or club mentality and into the world to witness in word and deed.

We will know it is the Holy Spirit filling and enabling us because we will know God's presence in us and people will respond to our witness favourably or even unfavourably – when God is present in us and working through us we will get a reaction, one way or the other. And we will know that it is the Holy Spirit because flowing from our hearts as a foundation of our faith in Christ will be the *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...* Manifest as we live and walk with the spirit bringing glory to God and building up the church as we use the gifts of grace given to us as enabled by the Holy Spirit. Let us do this in the fear of God, the beginning of all wisdom.

There is a personal prayer for Pentecost by Jeff Krantz in the Bulletin this month that I will finish with now. I invite you to join me in praying it out aloud...

Lord Consume My Life!

I acknowledge the Holy Spirit Who lives and dwells in me and I ask that the Lord Jesus consume my life for His purposes. I pray that everything I do be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit to produce much fruit that glorifies the Father. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen