

Appropriating the Power

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible. Comments are by Fr. Ben Torrey.

The Baptism with (in or into) the Holy Spirit

John answered and said to them all, "As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16)

John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, *but* among you stands One whom you do not know. *It is* He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ... John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'" (John 1:26-27, 32-33)

It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men. (Acts 19:1-7)

Baptism, meaning "immersion", signifies an initiation, a beginning. It is also a specific objective act performed at a time and place. Wrapped up in the meaning, tradition and theology of baptism are matters of transformation, death, new life, resurrection.

We speak of two baptisms:

- That into Jesus Christ for salvation ("We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins."), the cleansing away of original sin, birth into the Family of God, death and resurrection with Christ and inheritance of the covenant of God with His people
- That into the Holy Spirit that we might receive power to do the works of God

With the baptism of salvation, as we receive and enter into Christ, we do receive the Holy Spirit for He is the life breath of our new life. (See John 3:5-8 and Romans 6:3-5.) This is "the Holy Spirit within." However, this does not necessarily mean that we have received the power of the Holy Spirit to do the works of God — "the Holy Spirit upon." This is a second and distinct work that God does in/to/for us. It is not for our own

sake, not for our salvation, not for our enjoyment, but that we might be God's instruments in the world.

When there is an understanding of all these things and openness to this work of God, it is not unusual to see the empowerment of the Holy Spirit ("the Spirit upon") come along with the grace of salvation and "the Spirit within." It is also very common to see it lead the individual into a deeper walk with Christ, a thirst for the Word and a passionate love for Jesus. This is the wonderful way that the Holy Spirit works – doing many things at once. Yet, we know these various things to be distinct.

A quote from R.A. Torrey:

The steps by which one ordinarily receives the Baptism with the Holy Spirit are of such a character, and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit makes God so real, that this Baptism is in most cases accompanied by a great moral uplift, or even a radical transformation, but the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not in itself either an eradication of the carnal nature or cleansing from an impure heart. It is an impartation of supernatural power or gifts in service...

What the Bible Teaches, pg. 273

How to Receive the Empowerment of the Holy Spirit

The following steps are derived from the teachings of R.A. Torrey with a slight addition by Brad Long and Doug McMurry. The information is taken from Receiving the Power, Zeb Bradford Long and Douglas McMurry, Chosen Books 1997.

1. Accept Jesus Christ as personal savior.

Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

[Jesus said,] "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

"For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect." (Matthew 24:24)

2. Repent from all known sins.

Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)

[Jesus said,] “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.” (John 16:7-11)

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:5-10)

3. Make an open, public confession of faith in Christ.

“For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:36-38)

[I]f you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” (Romans 10:9-11)

4. Surrender your life fully to Christ as Lord and live a life of obedience.

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 5:31-32)

5. Earnestly desire the baptism with the Holy Spirit as empowerment for witness and service.

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water. (Psalm 63:1)

Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

6. Pray definitely for it.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:13)

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and *began* to speak the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)

7. Accept it by faith, regardless of "initial signs."

And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be *granted* him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you." (Mark 11:22-24)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Galatians 3:13-14)

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (I John 5:14-15)

8. Step out in obedience to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

“And we are witnesses of these things; and *so is* the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.” (Acts 5:32)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

[I]f you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart... (Romans 10:9)

Just as the verbal testimony is important for sealing what is in the heart – putting it all on the line, so to speak – it is just as important to take positive steps to work in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a testimony to God, man and one’s self of having received the Holy Spirit by faith. It is, I believe, much the same as God’s testing of Abraham in the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22). This testing was not so much that God would know Abraham’s heart (He already did) but so that Abraham would know the quality of his own faith. After stepping out to do that which everything in him resisted, he knew that his faith and obedience had stood the supreme test. No longer was he assailed by doubt or fear.

As we step out in the power of the Holy Spirit, regardless of what we feel and may have or have not experienced initially, we discover that He truly does work through us in power. However, we are to take such steps with all humility, knowing that we have much to learn, that pride can undo us and that power is power – dangerous when used without knowledge or abused.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are tools that we often use clumsily at first but, through prayer, study, practice and experience come to understand and use with skill. Just as a tool in the hands of a master carpenter becomes an extension of himself so much as to almost disappear, so too, the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the mature, experienced man or woman of God – powerful tools to enable the workman to do his work, but not drawing attention to themselves. What stands after the use of the tool is not the tool (it is hung up on the wall, tossed into a drawer, laid on the bench or put away into the closet). What stands is the creative work accomplished with the use of the tool. This is the work of the Holy Spirit through the master craftsman obedient to the Spirit’s inspiration, the work that bears eternal consequences for the Kingdom of God. The tools no longer draw any attention to themselves, in fact, they are likely to be darkened with age, scratched and well worn – yet they will be kept as sharp and square as can be.