



Better Off with the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-7)

'You will be better off with the Holy Spirit within than My physical presence among you.' Did they believe these words of Jesus? No. They did not want another helper. They wanted Jesus to stay! This is why Jesus said, '...because I have said these things sorrow has filled your heart.' But Jesus again said we would be much better off with the spiritual presence of the Holy Spirit within us than to have the physical presence of Jesus among us. How can this be?

- a) The physical limitation of Jesus' presence was overcome. The Spirit can be given to everyone at the same time!
- b) Unlimited intimacy with Jesus from within became possible. Jesus appearing in different forms after His resurrection was to train His disciples to exercise their spiritual senses to recognise Jesus' presence instead of depending on physical senses. Only when the Holy Spirit was poured out from heaven, the fullness of God could come right inside and dwell within us – the hope of glory.

1. Confidence & Boldness

The Holy Spirit's coming resulted in supernatural boldness in the disciples - from hiding behind the closed doors to fearless witnesses for the Lord. From being fearful to being bold and confident.

To live our lives to their full potential, we must lose fear. 'Fear not' is stated 366 times in the Bible. There are so many things to fear naturally. The cost of living, surging inflation, covid, cancer, unknown future, getting old, etc. *'God has not given us a spirit of fear, but love, power and sound mind.'* (1 Tim 3:7)

Fear is the opposite of love, power, and a sound mind. How could they suddenly have this unshakable confidence from being so afraid just a few days before? The Holy Spirit bore witness within their spirit that they are the sons of God (Rom 8:16). These Christians knew who they were in Christ. They had a strong sense of their identity in Christ because they were receiving the inner witness of the Holy Spirit.

2. Love of God

The love of God became so real to the disciples because the love of God was directly poured out in their hearts by the Spirit (Rom 5:5). They were so overwhelmed with the love of God that they were even willing to die for Jesus. They were filled with joy when they were persecuted! (Acts 5:41-42)

This love of God in their hearts overflowed as love for one another resulting in deep sharing of life - 'koinonia' (Acts 4:31-32) *'I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.'* (John 17:23) The love for the lost is a supernatural work of God in our hearts.

3. Revelation

Deep things of God were revealed to the disciples by the indwelling Spirit. Their understanding of God's will became profound after the Pentecost. It takes the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to know the will of God. *'...Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him...'* (Eph 1:17-18) They went from being 'C' students to 'A' students overnight (1 Cor 2:12). *'This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel...And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh...'* (Acts 2:16)

4. Guidance

The Holy Spirit began to direct these apostles personally and specifically. Peter would never have gone into Cornelius' house in the natural. He was directed by the Holy Spirit to go and preach the word to this man's household in a vision. This opened the door to the Gentile mission – a watershed moment in history they never could have imagined (Acts 10:9-16, 28).

'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.' (Rom 8:14). *'The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'* (John 3:8)

There is always an element of surprise. The way the Holy Spirit moves and directs is not in our control.

5. Purity

John the Baptist came preaching repentance and baptizing people in the Jordan River. John's baptism dealt with people's sins of the past, but he could do no more than that. It takes the baptism of the Spirit to deal with sins of the future – to have the power to live a holy life. It is the indwelling work of the Spirit which produces fruits in our character when we walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25). Note the joyful singing in the midst of suffering in prison (Acts 16:25-26).

6. Unity

Gentiles and Jews could never come together in unity, apart from receiving the same Spirit to drink. The law separated them, but the drinking of the same Spirit brought them together.

'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' (Acts 10:47)

'...endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace....until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God...' (Eph 4:3, 13)

'For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.' (1 Cor 12:13)

The baptism in the Spirit made them members of the body of Christ with a function and a role. Until you are contributing to the life of the Body with your gifts and anointing, you will not know the unity of the Body. If you are only receiving but not contributing, where is unity, where is growth? The New Testament church membership is not a ROLL, but a ROLE. The anointing of the Holy Spirit empowers and releases your gifts on two levels: natural gifts - serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, showing mercy (Rom 12:6-8) AND supernatural gifts (1 Cor 12:8-10).

7. Power

The gifts of the Spirit were distributed among the early church so they could do the works of Jesus and even 'greater works' and become powerful witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (John 14:12).

'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' (Acts 1:8)

'...and have tasted the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...' (Heb 6:4-5)

'...who [Holy Spirit] is the guarantee [down payment] of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...' (Eph 1:14)

When the Holy Spirit came, they did not lose Jesus. The Holy Spirit brought Jesus so much closer to them than ever. The Holy Spirit does this for us also. It depends on how close we want to be to Jesus.

8. Jesus' Challenge to the Disciples

- a. *Luke 11:9-13 – '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 [keep on] ask Him!'*

Eph 5:18-19 – 'And do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation but be filled [continue to be filled] with the Spirit speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.'

We drink with our mouth, so it takes our heart and mouth to be filled with the Spirit. The book of Acts records that when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke – tongues (x3), magnified God (x1), and prophesied (x1). (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6)

- b. *'He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with Him.'* (John 14:21-23)