

Baptizing

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

Romans 12:13

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. John the Baptist prophesied that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit. *“I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit”* (Mark 1:8). John was the one who was sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. He baptized with water. This was an immersion into the water, which was a common practice in Judaism. For the early Church, baptism by water became a rite of initiation into the people of God—the followers of the Way. It was this that brought the understanding of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit happens at once at the moment of salvation. It is the baptism in the Holy Spirit that immerses a person into the body of Christ—into the unity of the fellowship of the body of Christ. Titus 3:4-7: *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* Romans 5:5 reveals that this is the pouring out of God’s love into the heart of a believer. This happens through the Holy Spirit. This is what it means to be washed, renewed, refreshed, and to drink of the Holy Spirit. The regeneration of the Holy Spirit allows the baptism to take place. There is not a need to pursue a new baptism since the baptism is permanent as is the indwelling. We do need to seek the constant filling. What significance is there to knowing that the Holy Spirit has sealed your eternity by baptizing you into the body of Christ?



Saturday, October 17, 2020

Empowering

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1:8

These were the last words that Jesus spoke before he ascended into heaven. He promised the power of the Holy Spirit. It would not be long before they would understand what Jesus meant. They would receive the power that was promised, and it would change the world. The power of the Holy Spirit would embolden them to become powerful witnesses for Christ. That is the intention of the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings glory to Jesus (John 16:14). The Holy Spirit’s power is what gives boldness and clarity to the believer so that the name of Jesus may be declared, and the gospel can be made known. We are to be witnesses—and the Holy Spirit’s power indwelling us and bringing clarity to the meaning of the Bible and to the unity of believers is what makes the message known to the world. Imagine that you are in the kitchen and it is time to make a smoothie. You load up the blender with all the necessary ingredients. Ice, fruit, almond milk, honey, and a touch of maple syrup. Then you pick up the blender and start to shake it until all the ingredients are smooth and delicious. You would be shaking the blender a very long time and it would never get smooth. The blender has a cord that plugs it into the power source to blend those ingredients to their perfect consistency. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is that power for the Church. Yet too many times the various parts of the body will try to do things in their own power. All the ingredients are there, but the power is missing. It is why the Church is not changing the world today. We have forgotten the source of our power. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and we have seen that that happens at the moment of your miraculous conversion by God, when you’re born again. Your spiritual gift is the tool that Jesus uses to build you and his church. The power of the Holy Spirit is what gives that gift its power. So, are you plugged in to the power of the Holy Spirit or are you still trying to work in your own power?

Pastor Chuck
Pastor Chuck Cervenka

Celebrating Unity in Diversity!

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Romans 12:6-8

Monday, October 12, 2020

Holy Spirit

All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apports to each one individually as he wills. 1 Corinthians 12:11

Spiritual gifts are actually grace gifts that are granted by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the gifts can be misunderstood. In part, that can be because the Holy Spirit—and his role and work in the life of the believer—is misunderstood. This week we will look at the Holy Spirit, who He is and what his role is in the life of the believer and in the church. That will help to bring greater clarity to the gifts that are given, how they are manifested, and what is the purpose of the gifts. Remember that each follower of Jesus has come to be saved by grace, through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), not by works. Yet, each of us has been saved so that we could live within the unique design God has for us as we realize that we are his workmanship created to do good works that he prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in granting us gifts empowers us to do those things God has prepared. And we do them in community with the other members of the body, so that Christ may be known and God may be glorified. So, who is the Holy Spirit? What do you know about him? What do you know about his role in your life?

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Who

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

S. D. Gordon, a speaker and author from the early 20th Century, has said, “Power is a Person.” That Person is the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? Notice that the question is not, “What is the Holy Spirit?” It is important to realize that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He is not an impersonal force or *something*. He is *someone*. He is one of the Persons of the Trinity. The Trinity can be one of the hardest things to understand as a follower of Jesus. The Bible teaches that there is one God and only one God. *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one* (Deut. 6:4). The Bible also teaches that God exists as three Persons in One. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all* (2 Corinthians 13:14). The verse speaks to some of the roles within the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who brings the power of God into the life of a follower of Jesus, in fellowship with all other followers of Jesus. The fellowship is the oneness that all followers of Jesus share in the one body of Christ. It is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Each follower of Jesus has the Holy Spirit within them and that unites us! Consider today that every believer you meet (and all those you haven't) have the same Spirit of God within them!

Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Indwelling

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:16-17, 26

The Holy Spirit has many roles in the life of a genuine believer. He lives in the believer. On the night Jesus was betrayed, as he was speaking to his disciples, he let them know that he would be leaving, but that he would send the Holy Spirit to be in them—not just with them, but in them. This is what is known as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He is permanently in the life of each believer. Consider for a moment what it means that if you have trusted in Christ alone for your salvation, you have the power of God, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, living within you. In his book, *Not a Fan*, Kyle Idleman puts this in great perspective: “*Sometimes, I hear people talk about the different men and women of the Old Testament, and there is a hint of jealousy. They may say it, or just insinuate it, but here's what they communicate... 'What would it have been like to hear God's voice and see him move in such powerful ways? I wish it was the same for us as it was for those whose stories we read about in scripture. When I get to heaven I can't wait to ask David, Elijah, or Moses what it was like.' But I think it will be just the opposite in heaven. Before we can ask David what it was like to slay a giant, to win the battles, he'll say, 'Tell me what it was like on earth to have the Holy Spirit inside of you, giving you strength when you were weak.' We might say to Elijah, 'What was it like to call down fire from heaven before the prophets of Baal and to raise that boy from the dead?' And I think Elijah might say, 'Yeah, he actually ended up dying again. You tell me what it's like to have God living inside of you. What was it like to live life on earth with the Holy Spirit giving you joy when you're depressed or giving you the power to overcome that sin in your life?' We might say to Moses, 'What was it like to follow the cloud by day and the fire by night? What was it like to meet with God on that Mountain?' And Moses might say, 'I had to climb that mountain to meet with God. You tell me what it was like to have him dwell in you everyday. What was it like to have the Holy Spirit giving you directions when you didn't know what to do or where to go?'” Today, consider the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your life!*

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Filling

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

Ephesians 5:18

The filling of the Holy Spirit is the day to day relinquishing to his power. While indwelling is a permanent situation, filling is an ongoing work of the Spirit in the life of a believer. There are several illustrations that can help us to understand this. One is that of a pitcher of clear water, which signifies the complete fullness of the Spirit at the time of salvation. Then dirt is added to that pitcher, which represents the sin that comes back into our lives. Then another pitcher of clear water is poured into that first pitcher washing away all the sin and making it clean again. This illustration reminds us that the Holy Spirit is constantly filling the life of the believer. Another illustration is that of a clear container filled with cotton. Then there are stones added that squish the cotton down. When the stones are removed, the cotton rises back up and fills the container. This illustrates the verse above. We can choose to be filled by the Holy Spirit. He is indwelling us fully, which the cotton represents. We can allow ourselves to be filled in that way or we can choose to fill ourselves with sin. That is what the rocks represent. Sin will not allow us to be filled by the Spirit. It will cause us to try to fill our lives with those things that are opposed to God. With his help, and by his power, we can remove those rocks and once again the Spirit will fill us. Both illustrations show the negative impact sin has on the power of the Spirit and the illustrations combined reveal that it is the work of the Spirit and the work of the believer to remove sin. The verse above reveals that this is a command and a choice. Choose instead to be filled with the Spirit! How will you choose to have the Spirit fill you today? What are the stones that need to be removed from your life? Ask God to give you the power you need to remove them today!