

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Let's review very briefly the various ways the Holy Spirit ministers to us. It's important that we understand how the Spirit *works with us*, *comes in us* and *comes upon us*, before we can understand how He daily fills us and manifests His Love and His Mind through us.

Before we belong to God, before we ask Him into our hearts, the Spirit of the Lord comes along side of us and works with us (*para*), leading and guiding us to Christ. He convicts us of sin and reveals Christ as the "answer".

The moment we ask Jesus Christ to be our Savior, the Holy Spirit then comes "IN" (*en*) to our hearts to dwell permanently. This is the time that God's Spirit becomes the indwelling power source, energy source or light source of our lives.

After the Spirit of God indwells us, there needs to be an *initial time* when the Spirit is released from our hearts, to come out upon (*epi*) our lives (*our souls*) for the sake of empowering us. In Acts 2, it speaks about God's Spirit coming "upon" them, so they might have power to become genuine witnesses of Him.

I believe God intended these last two ministries of the Holy Spirit, the *indwelling* of the Spirit (where He comes in us) and the *empowering* of the Spirit (where He comes upon us) to happen simultaneously. However, for many of us, this was not the case; the empowering occurred many years later.

If we are "born again"* but not sure that God's Spirit has come *upon us*, we simply need to ask God by faith for this empowering in our lives. Scripture promises us, "how much more shall (your) heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

The visible *sign* that we have been empowered by the Spirit is not necessarily tongues, but God's *Agape* Love overflowing our lives. No one should ever need to ask us if we are "spirit-filled" or not. Our life actions should be so loving and so full of wisdom and power that they don't have to ask. They can just see. God tells us *to be* a witness with our lives, not just witness with our mouths.

"The fruit of the Spirit is Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:22-25).

Finally, once the Spirit has been released out upon our souls, there should be a constant, re-filling (*pleroo*) of the Spirit every day, all day long. The Greek word *pleroo* means to fill up a hollow or to be made complete. God's Holy Spirit desires to continually re-fill us as cleansed and empty vessels, thereby making us complete. Ephesians 5:18 tells us that we are to, "...be (being continuously) filled with the Spirit." In other words, it's a continual on-going process.

Now, this *indwelling* of the Spirit and the *empowering* by the Spirit are gifts from God and are free for the asking. However, this continual *re-filling* in our souls by the Holy Spirit depends upon our own moment-by-moment choices. In other words, it's our own responsibility to remain that open, cleansed and yielded vessel so that God's Spirit from our hearts can continually fill us up.

Confusion:

The indwelling, empowering and re-filling by the Holy Spirit has become a very confusing and divisive subject for many Christians.

Much confusion occurs because of a misunderstanding in terminology. So, in review, God, the Holy Spirit:

Works with us (*para*) to lead us to Christ.

Comes in us (*en*) to indwell us permanently.

Comes upon us (*epi*) for a supernatural empowering to be His witnesses.

Continually re-fills us (*pleroo*) so that God's Life can continue to flow from our hearts into our lives.

Therefore, the terms:

Born again means receiving the Spirit of God in our hearts – it's the indwelling of the Spirit.

Baptism of the Spirit means the initial, in-filling of our souls with the Spirit of God for empowering in order that we might be true witnesses of Christ.

Re-filling means the daily filling of our cleansed souls with God's Life from our hearts: His Love, His Wisdom and His Power. This is the "fullness of Christ", experiencing His Life in place of our own.

Anointing means a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit for a specific task.

* Other valid translations of this term are "born from above" or "born anew", added for clarification.

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