

Hope Christian Church
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Sermon Series: *Jesus Said What?*



You Will Be Baptized with the Holy Spirit - Part 2

(Acts 1:4-5 ESV)

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me;" ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

(Acts 1:8 ESV)

⁸ *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Introduction

Last week we focused our attention on the events of Pentecost, which took place 10 days after Jesus ascended into heaven. We learned that the Holy Spirit was poured out on 120 of Jesus' followers, including the twelve¹ disciples and all of Jesus' family. We also discovered that they were already believers and yet they needed to be clothed with power in order to boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus and the mighty works of God.

This outpouring of the Spirit turned a celebration of wheat harvest into the beginning of a world harvest where 3,000 Jews came to put their faith in Jesus and believed that he was God's chosen messiah. This mighty work of God was sudden and sovereign. Jesus referred to this outpouring of his Spirit as "the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

This morning I want to clarify what this is by asking three questions. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Should we use the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit?" And should we seek a baptism of the Holy Spirit?

My goal this morning is *to increase within you a desire to be filled with all the fullness of God.*² I want God's life to fill your life. You might think that your life is full of God. I promise you it is not. There is always room in your soul for more of the fullness of God, no matter who you are or how long you have known him. Just as there is more room in a balloon for one more breath of air, so there is room in your life for more of the life of God. It is possible for you to know him more, love him more, and delight in him more. He is infinite. You will never find the end of him. You will never tire of enjoying the Lord. *"He makes known to us the path of life; in his presence there is fullness of joy; at his right hand are pleasures forever more"* (Ps 16:11). There will always be more of him to know and rejoice in.

I yearn for every one of you to know and experience the inexpressible joy of being filled with all the fullness of God. And I know that he can do this because *"he is able to do abundantly more than all that we ask or think, according to the power that is at work within us"*³ so that we may give him glory and so that the ends of the earth⁴ may know the way of the Lord and his saving power.⁵

¹ Matthias was chosen to replace Judas (Acts 1:15-26).

² Eph. 3:19.

³ Eph. 3:20.

⁴ Acts 1:8.

⁵ Ps 67:2.

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

There are seven places in the Bible, all of them in the New Testament (NT), where the phrase “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is used. The first four instances are found in the gospels (Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn. 1:33) and all four times are spoken by John the Baptist as he prophetically describes the future ministry of messiah. The only fact we learn about the baptism of the Holy Spirit from these verses is that it happens only through the ministry of Jesus. This, however, does not help us understand exactly what it is.

The next two instances are found in the book of Acts (1:5; 11:16). The first one occurs in Acts 1:5 and this time it’s on the lips of Jesus as he is predicting what would happen on the day of Pentecost. This is the passage which we just read. When used by Jesus here it describes the *first, powerful outpouring of God’s Spirit upon the 120 disciples in order to empower them to boldly proclaim the “mighty works of God” in several languages.*⁶

The second time it occurs in Acts (sixth time in NT) is on the lips of Peter as he was testifying to the church (i.e. Jewish Christians) in Jerusalem and explaining what happened when he preached the gospel to a family of God-fearing Gentiles. God sent Peter to preach the gospel in the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and he and his family believed the gospel and received the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 11:15-16 ESV)

¹⁵ “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

For Peter, the baptism of the Holy Spirit accurately described what happened when the Holy Spirit “fell on them” as they “believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁷ Peter is saying that what happened to him and the other disciples on the day of Pentecost was the same thing that happened to Cornelius and his family on the day they believed the gospel. When the Holy Spirit fell on them, “*they were speaking in tongues and extolling God.*”⁸

“Extolling God” is another way of saying “proclaiming the mighty works of God,” which is what the disciples under the influence of the Holy Spirit were doing on the day of Pentecost.⁹ This happened while Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his family. The Holy Spirit fell on them, and they began speaking in tongues and praising God’s powerful works. As Peter witnessed this, he remembered what Jesus had said to them, “...*you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 1:5) and this helped him understand what was happening right in front of him.

⁶ Acts 2:11.

⁷ Acts 11:17.

⁸ Acts 10:46.

⁹ Acts 2:11.

Cornelius was not a Jew, neither was he a believer in Jesus. He hadn't even heard of Jesus. This is what Peter was in the process of explaining to him when the Holy Spirit fell upon him.¹⁰ So even though the disciples were Jews and already believers in Jesus, what happened to them on the day of Pentecost, Jesus described as "the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Similarly, Peter, when explaining what happened to Cornelius and his family, even though they were Gentiles and previously unbelievers, uses the same phrase, "the baptism with the Holy Spirit."

So in Peter's mind, one way of describing the initial work of the Holy Spirit in the life of an unbeliever is to say that he was "baptized with the Holy Spirit." Just as the Jewish believers were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, so were the Gentiles baptized with the Holy Spirit when they began believing in Jesus.

The Essence of Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Why is the same phrase used to describe the work of the Holy Spirit, first in Jewish believers and then in Gentile unbelievers? We might be tempted to answer, "Because the evidence of his presence was the same in both instances—they spoke in (previously unknown) tongues." This would be the answer of Pentecostals. However, speaking in tongues is not the essence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We know this because if anyone was ever "baptized" with the Holy Spirit, then certainly Jesus was and yet he did not speak in tongues.

On the day when Jesus was baptized with water the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove and remained on him and yet he didn't speak in tongues on that day.¹¹

(John 1:32-33 ESV)

³² And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

Are we to imagine that "he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" did not himself experience the same "baptism" in the Spirit? John tells us that the Father gave the Spirit to Jesus "**without measure**,"¹² meaning there was no limit to the portion of the Holy Spirit that was given to Jesus, and yet Jesus did not speak in tongues. No one has ever been filled with the full power of Holy Spirit¹³ to the degree that Jesus was and yet he never spoke in tongues, so speaking in tongues is not the essence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. What is?

¹⁰ See Acts 10:34-46.

¹¹ Lk 3:21-22.

¹² Jn 3:34.

¹³ See also Lk 4:1, 14 which teaches us that Jesus was "full" of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Beginning of a New & Powerful Work

The essence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is that it indicates the *beginning* of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a person in a new way. One of the chief meanings of the symbol of baptism is that it is **a new beginning**. Baptism with water always took place immediately after a person believed in Jesus. It was symbolic of the beginning of their new life in Christ.

As soon as Cornelius and his family believed in Jesus, the next thing out of Peter's mouth was, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"¹⁴ When the Ethiopian eunuch believed in Jesus he was immediately baptized in the first watering hole to which he came.¹⁵ When the Ephesian jailer believed in Jesus, the first thing that happened was that he was baptized.¹⁶ Baptism is a symbolic of the **initial** work of the Spirit in a person's life.

This has become the secondary definition of the word. If you look up the word in a dictionary you'll find this to be true. The first definition will be the religious rite of pouring or immersion with water and the second will be,

A person's initiation into a particular activity or role, typically one perceived as difficult.

The phrase "baptism with the Holy Spirit" refers to **the initial work of the Holy Spirit in a persons' life**. This is why the phrase can be used to describe his work in the lives of those who already are believers—as in the case of the 120 disciples on the day of Pentecost, as well as his work in those who previously were not believers—which was the case of Cornelius and his family. The Holy Spirit *initiated a new and powerful work* in the lives of the believers on the day of Pentecost (enabling them to boldly proclaim the mighty works of God in languages they didn't previously know) and he *initiated a new and powerful work* in Cornelius' life on the day he believed the gospel by immersing them for the first time into the life of God.

This also describes the way Paul uses the phrase in his letter to the Corinthians, which is the seventh and final instance of the phrase in the NT. Paul writes,

(1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV)

¹³ *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.*

Here Paul is speaking about the initial work of the Holy Spirit that brings all believers—whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free—into one body being united with Christ by faith.¹⁷ Notice that this

¹⁴ Acs 10:47.

¹⁵ Acts 8:34-37.

¹⁶ Acts 16:30-33.

¹⁷ Rom 5:2.

is something the Paul understands to happen to *all* believers. This fact is emphasized by repetition of the word all.

*"We were all baptized by one Spirit...
...and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."*

Our initiation into union with Christ happens by the work of one Spirit, the Holy Spirit. We were *all* made spiritually alive by the work of the one Holy Spirit. Through faith in Jesus we are all made to drink from the same river of "living water" who is the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:37-39). This is in reference to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit who, at the moment of our salvation, the exercise of our faith in Jesus, gives life to our previously dead souls. ***Therefore, for Paul, baptism with the Holy Spirit occurred at the moment of conversion.***

Summary

So, let's summarize. What have we seen so far? When Jesus used the phrase "baptism with the Holy Spirit," it clearly referred to what happened at Pentecost, and involved empowering the disciples of Jesus to boldly proclaim the gospel. When Peter used the phrase it referred to what happened to Cornelius and his family at the moment of their conversion. And when Paul used the phrase, it referred to something that happened to *all* believers at the point of conversion. Beyond this, the phrase appears nowhere else in the NT.

Therefore, what shall we conclude is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? It is the initial, powerful work of the Holy Spirit. It happened uniquely on the day of Pentecost because it marked the beginning of the New Covenant power poured out on believers to begin a great worldwide harvest of human souls through the spread of the gospel. Subsequently, it refers to the powerful work of the Holy Spirit at the point of conversation of new believers.

Should We Use the Phrase "Baptism of the Holy Spirit?"

This leaves us asking the question, "Should we use the phrase 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' today?" Should we say things like, "Let's pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit," or "What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?" Is it a helpful phrase?

Three Reasons We Should Not Use It

Let me offer three reasons that I think we should not use the term. **First, it is divisive.** The phrase is the cornerstone of the Pentecostal church and according to a Pentecostal understanding refers to speaking in tongues as the definitive evidence that one has been baptized with the Holy Spirit. This has caused much division in the church. From the founding of Pentecostalism, division has resulted, not only within its own ranks, but also in the wider Protestant church.

This is primarily because it divides people into two camps—those who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and those who have not. It divides Christians into the haves and the have nots. Those who have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit are the weaker Christians and those who have, are the stronger. Those who preach such a baptism are preaching “the full gospel,” while those of us who do not are preaching a less than full gospel. This division is unhelpful, unfruitful, and unbiblical.

The second reason for not using the term is because it is confusing. It is confusing because it leaves people wondering whether or not they truly are saved and truly are a child of God. Why would God hold back on giving all of his Spirit to his children? This is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

(Romans 8:9 ESV)

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

(Romans 8:14 ESV)

¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

(John 6:63 ESV)

⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

(John 3:6 ESV)

⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

It is impossible to be a believer without receiving the Holy Spirit, which Peter and Paul refer to as being “baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Using the phrase, baptism with the Holy Spirit, can leave many Christians thinking that God does not fully love them since has not yet given them the fullness of this powerful experience of his Spirit. It can also lead to questions about the character of God, for why would God give such an important gift to some of his children and not others.

Or it can cause confusion about the strength of one’s faith. Often those who hold to this understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit explain that the reason you may not have received this powerful experience is simply because you do not have enough faith. “If you had more faith, then God would certainly give you this gift since he wants all his children to have this gift.” This too is confusing since Paul clearly explains that not all believers receive the gift of tongues.

(1 Corinthians 12:30 ESV)

³⁰ Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

The expected answer is “no.” The reason for this is because,

(1 Corinthians 12:11 ESV)

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

The Holy Spirit gives to each of us certain spiritual gifts, but not *all* spiritual gifts. We don't all receive the gift of speaking in tongues, therefore it is confusing to teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit necessarily entails the manifestation of such a gift.

The third reason not to use the phrase is because it does not fit the biblical pattern for how to describe experiences of extraordinary spiritual empowerment that follow conversion.

The overwhelming biblical pattern for how to speak about such experiences is to refer to them as being ***filled with the Spirit***. When Peter was called upon by the Sanhedrin to explain how he had healed a crippled man, we are told this;

(Acts 4:8 ESV)

⁸ *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders...*

Immediately after being released they went to the church to tell them what happened.

(Acts 4:31 ESV)

³¹ *And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.*

We are not told that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, even though the house was shaken, which is similar to what happen on Pentecost, and they “spoke the word of God with boldness,” which, again is very similar to what happened on Pentecost. Instead, we are told that they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

When Stephen had opportunity to preach to the high priest and whole Jewish council, he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55).

When God sent Ananias to Saul, to empower him for his ministry, we are told that he was not baptized with the Holy Spirit, but rather filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 9:17 ESV)

¹⁷ *So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

When Paul's preaching was opposed by a magician under the influence of Satan, what Paul needed at that moment was not a baptism with the Holy Spirit, but to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Acts 13:9-11 ESV)

⁹ But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰ and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord?" ¹¹ And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand.

These examples serve to show us that when we are in need of power for challenging times in our lives and in our ministries, or when we need boldness to proclaim the gospel, we should not say that we need the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but rather that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Should We Seek a "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" After Conversion?

The final question is "Should we seek a 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' after conversion?" The simple answer is no, but we should seek to be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit.

Nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit." Jesus never tells any of his disciples, "Your faith is weak and your witness is timid, what you need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Peter never tells anyone, "If you want to go deeper with God, what you need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit." Paul never says to any of the churches, "You guys will have power over your sins unless you are baptized with the Holy Spirit." We are never commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. However, we are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

(Ephesians 5:18 ESV)

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

The verb Paul uses here is present tense imperative, which means that if this was translated literally, it would say, "be continually being filled with the Spirit."¹⁸ We are commanded to actively seek to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. So we should yearn deeply to consistently experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit. What is it?

It begins with a deep conviction that you can do nothing of any eternal value apart from the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. It flows from persistent prayer, continually calling upon the

¹⁸ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 781.

name of the Lord to manifest his power through you for the glory of God. And then it is a quiet resting in him and trusting in him that he will accomplish his will through you and keep his promises, not because you are righteous but because he is gracious and merciful. Let me close with a personal testimony from D.L. Moody.

I can myself go back almost twelve years and remember two holy women who used to come to my meetings. It was delightful to see them there, for when I began to preach, I could tell from the expression on their faces that they were praying for me.

At the close of the Sabbath service they would say to me, 'We have been praying for you.' I said, 'Why do you not pray for the people?' They answered, 'You need power.' 'I need power?' I said to myself, 'I thought I had power.'

I had a large Sabbath school and a large congregation in Chicago. There were some conversions at the time and I was, in a sense, satisfied. But right along the two godly women kept praying for me and their earnest talk about the anointing for special service set me thinking. I asked them to come and talk to me and we got down on our knees. They poured out their hearts that I might receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost and there came a great hunger into my soul, I knew not what it was. I began to cry as never before, the hunger increased. I really felt that I did not want to live any longer if I could not have this power for service. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day, in the city of New York, oh what a day, I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke to fourteen years. I can only say, God revealed Himself to me and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went out preaching again, the sermons were no different and I did not present any new truths and yet hundreds were converted. I would not be placed back where I was before that blessed experience.¹⁹



Conclusion

Moody yearned to be filled with the Spirit of God. He kept crying out for this all the time. His hunger for all the fullness of God increased. He yearned to be filled with God's Holy Spirit so that the gospel would reach more lost souls. He asked God to anoint his life and his ministry?

Do you have such a yearning within you? Do you hunger to know God more deeply? Then cry out to him to fill you with his Holy Spirit and do not stop crying out to him. We are commanded to "be continually being filled" with his Spirit. If you are already a believer this morning, then

¹⁹ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), 250.

you need to be filled with his Spirit. If you are not yet a believer, then you need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

The same Holy Spirit who was poured out in power on the day of Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit who now dwells within all of God's children. He is the same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, empowered Peter to preach and 3,000 to be saved, Stephen to die, and Paul to take the gospel to all of Asia.²⁰ He is the Holy Spirit of God who dwells within all who are the children of God. He is the same Spirit who turned a celebration of wheat harvest into a celebration of a soul harvest. He has been sent to enable God's children to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. His power is still available to us today. The task is unfinished and his power is undiminished.

May the Lord fill you with all the fullness of God, so that we might glorify him greatly and take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

²⁰ Acts 19:10, 26.