

Powerful Christian Living

Chapter Twelve

The Holy Spirit

Did you ever play with a pin-wheel? When you blow upon it the pin-wheel begins to spin. This is because air is pushing up against the blades forcing it to spin. Air can be very forceful. It can move a sailing ship across the water. And if you contain air in hoses and put enough pressure behind it you can move just about any object. Or you can stop an object like a freight train with air brakes. The mechanical process for this power is called pneumatics. Even though air is invisible it can be a force with incredible power.

In the Christian life the potential for power is all wrapped up in the gift of the holy Spirit. This gift, though invisible like air, is powerful. In fact it is the most dynamic force in the universe. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we have the very first occurrence of the word "Spirit." And as I mentioned in an earlier chapter the first time that a word or phrase is used in the Bible is generally indicative of its meaning. So let's look at Genesis 1:1-3.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light

In verse two we can see that the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the deep. In other words it was moving intensely and purposefully over the cosmos in order to facilitate God's divine design of creation. The Hebrew word for "Spirit" is ruach. In the New Testament the Greek word is pneuma from which we get our English word "pneumatics. The root idea running through both ruach and pneuma is an invisible power like wind. The holy Spirit or the Spirit of God is His invisible life force, His essence, His power in action. It is the empowering presence of God. Let's look at a couple of Scriptures so that we can understand this idea.

He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up the storm.
¹³ By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
(Job 26:12, 13a)

It was by God's Spirit, His ruach that the heavens were adorned by stars, planets and so on.

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
(Psalm 33:6)

In this verse from Psalm 33 the word *ruach* is translated as “breath.” This is a figure of speech indicating the empowering presence of God; His power in action.

God performs all of His mighty works through His Spirit. It is His very life force, essence and power. In fact all of the wonderful things that Jesus Christ did as he ministered in Israel was through the power of God’s holy Spirit that was upon him. Below is a prophecy from Isaiah telling us that the Messiah, Jesus, would have the Spirit of God upon him.

Behold! My Servant whom I uphold,
My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights!
I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice,
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And smoking flax He will not quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
And the coastlands shall wait for His law.
(Isaiah 42:1-4)

When Jesus began his ministry we are told that it was in and through the power of the Spirit.

So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

¹⁹ *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

(Luke 4:14-21)

It was the Spirit of God upon Jesus that empowered him to teach with authority, to heal and to perform miracles. We are told this truth again in Acts by the apostle Peter.

how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
(Acts 10:38)

The holy Spirit is the very power of God as I have said. But to clearly understand this truth let us examine a few more Scriptures. Our first reference is where the angel tells Mary that she will conceive a child who will be the Son of God.

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

29 But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you;** therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

(Luke 1:26-35) [my emphasis]

Mary is told that she will conceive a child but not by the normal means of physical procreation. She is told in verse 35 that "Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you." These are not two distinct things. The phrase "the power of the Highest" defines what "Holy Spirit" is. It is the empowering presence of God. This same spiritual power is promised to believers. At the end of the book of Luke, Jesus says to his disciples

Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things.

49 Behold, I send the **Promise of My Father**¹ upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are **endued with power** from on high.”
(Luke 24:46-49) [my emphasis]

This promised power is clearly defined by the Lord Jesus in the book of Acts.

And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now.” 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 **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 1:4-8) [my emphasis]

Putting all of this together the “promise of the Father” plus being “endued with power from on high” equals to be “baptized with the Holy Spirit” which is our receiving “power” the empowering presence of God.

The Greek word translated “power” is *dunamis*. This is inherent, recharging power. We get our English words dynamo, dynamic and dynamite from this Greek word. This power that we receive in the gift of the Spirit is more than a confident feeling; it is a supernatural ability, an infusion of divine life. God’s Spirit within us is a new life force, a new nature² that enables us to be and to do all that God has called us to be and do as His children. It gives us power over our old sin nature. It is the power to not sin but to be bold, loving, compassionate, joyful, peaceful, and faithful. The gift of the Spirit is what regenerates us giving us the new birth.

But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
(Titus 3:4-6)

¹ This “promise of the Father,” which is a promise of power, is the promise of the Spirit of God that would come with the inauguration of the new covenant – Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

² 2 Peter 1:4

In the Old Testament the Spirit was upon certain people like Moses, Joshua, David or the prophets. But the average Old Testament believer did not have the gift of the Spirit. This Spirit of God was promised to come to every believer after the new covenant was inaugurated. Jesus inaugurated this new covenant with his death and resurrection. And on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Passover, after Jesus had ascended to heaven he poured out the gift of the Spirit.³ And now this Spirit is given to and within each and every person who comes to God through faith in Jesus Christ. The gift of the Spirit regenerates us producing the new birth.

Also in verse 6 the word “whom” referring to the gift of the Spirit, is a neuter pronoun in Greek and should be translated as “it.” The Spirit is not a person. It is God’s power in action; His empowering presence. Some Christians think that God is a Trinity of persons. But the Bible is clear that there is only one person who is God and that person is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the following verses of Scripture show.

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
(John 17:3)

Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know
that an idol is nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God
but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or
on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 6 yet for us *there is*
one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one
Lord Jesus Christ,
(1 Corinthians 8:4-6)

For *there is one* God and one Mediator between God and men, the
Man Christ Jesus
(1 Timothy 2:5)

The gift of the Spirit of God, the holy Spirit, is His power in us enabling us to overcome
fear.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and
of a sound mind.
(2 Timothy 1:7)

Through the power of the Spirit working within us we can evidence the fruit of the Spirit.

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the
flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against
the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not

³ Acts 2:1-4

do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

(Galatians 5:16-23)

Here is one of the dividing lines that separate Christianity from every other religion. Most religions and philosophies teach that there is a spark of the divine or some good thing within every one. All we need to do is educate people and show them how to harness this good will within them and then all will be well. But the Bible teaches that man is a fallen sinner and there is no good thing that dwells within us.⁴ In effect we are morally powerless to not sin or to always do good. But when we are saved and born again by faith in Jesus Christ we receive power to do what is good and right through the gift of the Spirit. And our lives can show forth the wonderful fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

The holy Spirit is a wonderful gift that God has given to us! It is given to every believer; to everyone called of God.

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”
(Acts 2:38, 39)

⁴ Romans 7:18