



Talk 10 – Weekend Talk 2 – What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

Duration 44 Minutes
HTB Transcripts

Key:

Personal Story / Testimony that Nicky Gumbel tells in the classic Alpha talk. These may be replaced with a live speaker's personal story or the speaker may tell the story about Nicky in the same way Nicky tells stories about others.

Story that Nicky tells about someone else (about a friend or a story he heard or read about).

Quotes are key to the talk to emphasise a point and to enable guests to engage and relate to a point made. There is now a way that people can seek permission to omit or replace quotes used in the original talks. A quote should be replaced with something equally effective to maintain the balance of teaching, story, and references to other information sources.

Key Quotes will need approval to change (these will be identified by a comment in the left column). Please email publications@alpha.org with your request.

Key Bible Passages are identified and you may wish to display these visually for your guests.

Red type identifies a part of the key teaching text that may be removed or altered for contextualisation.

Text left untouched is the standard key message content of the Alpha talk.

NOTE: Key elements of this script are: personal stories, humour and reference to media / popular culture to draw the guests in to engage with the talk.

Parts of the talk may need to be contextualised for other contexts or cultures but make sure you maintain the key elements of humour and personal testimony. Notice how quotes, and stories are used throughout to add emphasis to the main points of the talk (theology and testimony).

NOTE: Testimony, humour and solid biblical teaching are key to the Holy Spirit sessions. Some of the humour and testimony in this script are quite culturally specific so you may choose to adapt them to work in your context, or replace with your own stories, or remove them. However, before removing any stories please consider that the biblical content is key to the talk and the stories you choose should help to draw the guests in to this key teaching as well as to help bring the scriptures alive to them. Well, welcome back! Would you like to turn to John, chapter 3 and verses 3–8? This is Jesus

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talking to Nicodemus:

'In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born again."

"How can anyone be born in old age?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

[You may wish to reword this example if this is not applicable to your context.]

The expression 'born again' has become a bit of a cliché and it's even been used to advertise cars —a 'born again' whatever! And it's popularised maybe in the United States too — people talk about 'born-again Christians' and it sounds like quite a daunting expression.

But actually Jesus was the first person to use that expression! And what Jesus is saying is that, just as when a man and a woman come together in an act of love that produces a physical baby, so it is when the Spirit of God and the spirit of a man or a woman come together in an act of love: a new spiritual birth takes place. A person is born anew, they're born again, they begin a new spiritual life.

I went into a church in Brighton one time, and the Sunday School teacher was explaining to the congregation what had happened in her Sunday School the previous week, where she'd been trying to explain to this group of children the difference between physical birth and spiritual birth — she'd been talking on John, chapter 3. And in trying to draw out this

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distinction she asked the children, 'Are you born a Christian?' And one little boy replied, 'No, Miss, you're born normal.'

And Jesus is saying as well as physical birth we need a new spiritual birth. Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living within them. And until we come to Christ, of course the Spirit created us, the Spirit is convincing us about our sin, our need for Jesus; but there is a different type of relationship that we have with the Holy Spirit when he comes to live within us. It's qualitatively different.

[Try to personalise this example.]

When I first 'gave my life to Christ/became a Christian/my faith first came alive' — whatever expression you like to use, and there are many, many different expressions for it in the New Testament — but when that happened to me, I thought I'd arrived. I thought this was it! You know, I'd been thinking about it, I'd been struggling with it, and now I had become a Christian, that was it!

And someone had to explain to me that that was just the beginning. It's like a baby being born — that's not the end! I mean, it's great when a baby's born, but we don't say, 'Well, that's it, fantastic!' The baby has to grow.

And so it is when we come to Christ, when the Spirit of God comes to live within us — that's not the end, that's the beginning.

And what I want to look at in this session is what happens when the Spirit of God comes to live within a man or a woman. What is the impact of that? What's the effect?



Talk Point 1

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD

Here's the first thing: We become sons and daughters of God.

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Would you like to turn to Romans, chapter 8, verse 1? Romans, chapter 8 is one of the most magnificent chapters in the entire New Testament. It's kind of like the Himalayas of the New Testament. It's a high point. And in Romans 8, verses 1 and 2, St Paul writes this:

'Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.'

Jesus on the cross took all our sins — past, present, future. And he takes all of our sins and he buries them 'in the very depths of the sea', as the prophet Micah puts it. And that's where they're to stay. The slate is wiped completely clean the moment we come to Christ.

And then something even more amazing happens: we become in this relationship with God — all of us are created by God but not everybody is living in this relationship like a son or a daughter with a parent. And this happens not by birth but by spiritual birth.

And in chapter 8, verse 14-17 — if chapter 8 is the Himalayas, this is like Mount Everest! He says this — chapter 8, verse 14:

'... because those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we're God's children. And if we're children, then we're heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.'

Here's the first thing: being a son or a daughter of God is the highest privilege that we can ever have: 'those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption.'

You are adopted into God's family. Under Roman law, which is probably what was in Paul's mind, adoption was just the highest privilege. You could have no higher status than being adopted into a Roman family.

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And still today. I heard of one little boy who had been adopted, and he was being teased in the playground about the fact that he was adopted. And he turned round to the people who were teasing him, and he said this: 'Look,' he said, 'my parents chose me! Your parents got lumped with you!'

[You may reword text in red and use this story or you might replace it with a similar story about someone you know.]

A few months ago we were doing a conference in Hungary. And I met there a woman called Ildika Papp. This was an Alpha conference, and she told me her story — how 18 months earlier she had been a homeless alcoholic. She was living out on the streets in a town near Budapest, and somebody invited her on Alpha, and on that course she gave her life to Christ and she experienced the love of Jesus. And she was set free from alcoholism.

She got a job; she started life anew. And at the conference I interviewed her, and one of the questions I asked her was: 'What difference has Jesus made to your life?' and this was her reply. She said, 'He's changed me from being a beggar to a princess.' That's what he's done for all of us. He's made us sons and daughters of the King. So we're princes and princesses.

People are looking for status — there's no higher status than being a son or a daughter of God.

Secondly, it's the closest possible intimacy. It goes on in that verse to say: 'But by him we cry, "Abba, Father."'

Abba is a very interesting word because it's an Aramaic word, and the translators haven't even bothered to try and translate it because it's so hard to translate. They've left it as it is. It's one of the most important words in the New Testament.

[Delete the text in red if it is not applicable to your context.]

It's the word that would have been used by a child to their father; but not just when they were a child, but all the way through their life. So it's almost like 'Dad' or 'Daddy' **but it doesn't**

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have the childish connotations that those words might have in our society.

But it's a word of a very close intimacy of relationship. It's a word that was distinctive to Jesus. Nowhere in the Old Testament is God referred to as *Abba*, but Jesus used it of his relationship with God, and then he said, 'You can have the same relationship. God can be your father, with the same word being used as I use in my relationship with the Father, *Abba*.'

[This is a key example to illustrate how we can come to God as an intimate 'daddy', even though he is the magnificent, almighty Creator. If Prince Charles is not well known in your context you may replace with an equivalent example.]

I came across some of Prince Charles' titles. Prince Charles has a lot of titles. He's His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. He's the Duke of Cornwall, he's Knight of the Garter, he's Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Regiment of Wales, he's the Duke of Rothesay, he's the Knight of the Thistle, he's the Rear Admiral of the Royal Navy, he's Great Master of the Order of Bath, he's the Earl of Chester, he's the Earl of Carrick, he's the Baron of Renfrew, Lord of the Isles, Great Steward of Scotland. And if — certainly if I were to write a letter I'd have to sign it 'Your Royal Highness' most humble and obedient servant'.

But to William and Harry he's Dad. An amazing thing is that Jesus is saying we can have this kind of intimacy in our relationship with God. *Abba*.

And then it's the deepest experience. People are looking, aren't they, for spirituality. They're looking for spiritual experiences and they look in all kinds of ways. Here is the deepest spiritual experience you can ever have — verse 16:

'The Spirit himself' — that's the Holy Spirit — 'testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.'

I remember the very first moment in my life when I experienced that, when I suddenly realised that I was a child of God, that God loved me!

Not just the whole world — he loves the whole world — but he loves me! Like a parent loves their child, only far, far more than any parent loves their child.

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But from time to time a parent will take a child in their arms and give them a hug and say ‘I love you’. And they’re testifying to them that they’re children and loved. And from time to time the Spirit of God takes us in his arms and he gives us a hug. The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. The deepest experience.

And then it’s the greatest security — verse 17:

‘Now, if we’re children, then we’re heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his suffering in order that we may also share in his glory.’

Under Roman law an adopted son would be just like any other son. He would inherit when the father died. We as Christians inherit not on the death of our Father, so to speak; but on our own death we inherit, we become inheritors with Christ — if, St Paul goes on — this is not a condition, it’s an observation — but if we identify with Christ, which may mean rejection and opposition, but that is nothing compared to the inheritance that we receive. We are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

Again, people are looking for security. There is no greater security than being an heir of God, a co-heir with Christ.



Talk Point 2

DEVELOPING THE RELATIONSHIP

So the first effect of the Spirit of God coming to live within a person is that they become a son or a daughter of God. The second thing is that the Spirit then helps us to develop that relationship. And relationships grow by communication. So the Spirit of God helps us to pray, to speak to God.

We looked at a verse earlier in the course, Ephesians 2, verse 18, which says that ‘through him [through Jesus] we both [Jews and Gentiles] have access to the Father by the Spirit.’

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The Spirit gives us access to God as we pray. We're able to come, through the death of Jesus for us, through Jesus we're able to come into the presence of God.

'Access' again is a wonderful word in the New Testament — the fact that we have access to God. There's nothing, if you like, between us and God. There's no barrier between us. And often I think we feel that there is a barrier — a much greater barrier than there really is.

[You might try to think of your own story to illustrate the point that the barrier between God and us is much smaller than we might think.]

When I was at university, my four closest friends were all called Nicky. There were five of us Nicky's! And all of us came to faith at roughly the same time. And often we used to have these kind of lunch parties which were the five Nicky's and then there was — then we were all male Nicky's, but we managed to find some female Nicky's as well to join us! And then we found some honorary Nicky's. And we used to meet in these rooms, which are S1 and S2 Hewell's Court, which was on the high street just above Barclays Bank.

And some of these lunch parties, we had quite a lot of people there, they used to get quite rowdy. And one time we were having a discussion about just how thick the ceiling was between us and Barclays Bank.

(A) we were interested in whether they could hear us down in the bank, and the other thing — not me that raised this, but one of my friends raised this! — whether we could rob the bank! Whether we could kind of, you know, if it was just floorboards there and you could just get through, maybe in the night we could get down into the bank and see what was in there.

So we decided we would conduct an experiment and try and find out just how thick this floor was. And what we decided to do was to send one of the — it was actually an honorary Nicky that we sent down into the bank, her name was Kay. She went down into the bank and we would gradually build up the noise.

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So we would start with one person jumping, then two, then three, then four, and we'd build it up until ten people were all jumping together. Then we'd have one person off a chair, two off a chair, three off a chair, up to ten off chairs. And then off the table — one off the table, two off the table, until we had eventually ten off the table.

And we wondered at what stage in this process Kay would be able to hear us down in the bank. It turned out that the ceiling was much thinner than anyone had anticipated. It was a busy lunchtime, one o'clock, when everyone was going into the bank, and Kay could hear immediately the first person who jumped.

But she was standing in a queue waiting for — she felt she ought to go and stand in a queue, she didn't want to look as if she was part of what was happening. And then it occurred to her: 'There's quite a long way to go in this process!' And the noise started to build. But she thought she'd kind of tough it out, she'd just stay there.

But she realised after a bit that it sounded like there was a thunderstorm. Everybody stopped what they were doing. The bank clerks were just stopping, everybody was staring at the ceiling like this. And she thought, 'I can't go now, because they'll think that I'm a party to this!' So she decided to stay.

And what started to happen was bits of the ceiling — this is literally true — bits of the ceiling started to come off. I thought it was a polystyrene ceiling; in fact I discovered afterwards it wasn't, but bits of the ceiling started to come down into the bank. So she did eventually come back up to tell us that we could be heard down in the bank.

Someone heard me telling this story on video, actually, and they wrote to me, and they said they were interested in my reference to S1 and S2 Hewell's Court. He said: 'Because I was the College Clerk of Works at the time.' He said, 'The problem of sound penetration between S1 and S2 and Barclays Bank was reported to me, but until now I did not know who it was who had caused it.'

'It was not polystyrene tiles that fell from the bank, but part of the suspended ceiling. Have no fear — there will not be any recrimination.'

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[Link this red text to your own story above or delete if you do not use a story.]

The point of that story — and there is a point! — is that the barrier was much smaller than we thought.

And I think in terms of prayer that the barrier between us and God is much less than many people think. In fact, it's non-existent. We have access by the Spirit.

St Paul writes later in Romans 8, he says: 'the Spirit helps us in our weakness' because we don't know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.

So he helps us in the relationship, he helps us to pray, and then also he helps us to understand God's word. Paul prays in Ephesians that we would have 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we might know God better'. He prays that 'the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened' in order that we can understand — this book, for example.

[‘This book’ – the Bible. Use the Bible as a prop.]

You know, I remember before I was a Christian I heard **this book** read in services — I don't know, the marriage service or a funeral service I went to, or whatever — but I didn't understand it. It was only when I took a step of faith that some of the intellectual objections — I suddenly realised how they were completely false. I understood things I'd never understood before. It was almost until the Spirit of God came in, I couldn't understand.

One of the great theologians and philosophers of the eleventh century, Anselm of Canterbury, said this: `Credo ut intelligam' — which means 'I believe in order that I might understand.' He said: 'I do not seek to understand in order to believe; but I believe in order to understand.'

[You may use this example or replace with another illustration of a leap of faith.]

I don't know whether any of you have seen the film *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade*, but I saw it recently and Harrison Ford plays Indiana Jones, and he's in search of the Holy

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Grail in order to, among other things, save his father's life. His father's played by Sean Connery.

And one of the things that he has to do in order to find the Holy Grail is to take a leap from the Lion's Head to prove his worth. And the Lion's Head is a kind of rock-face with a huge great ravine underneath. And you see him appearing through this rock-face, and he looks down at this just chasm beneath. And what he's told to do is to take a leap of faith — and you can see him saying 'It's a leap of faith!' as he looks out.

And then he sticks his foot out like that, and really there's absolutely nothing beneath him. And then he puts it down, and as he does so, it lands on a bridge — which he couldn't have seen until he landed on it. And that takes him across to his destination.

And I think for some people it seems like it's a leap of faith. It isn't actually a leap of faith; it's a step of faith. But it's only as we take the step that we understand that actually it's true — that we're not leaping into the unknown, we're on solid ground.

And it's the Holy Spirit who brings that understanding and helps us then to develop the relationship with God.



Talk Point 3

THE FAMILY LIKENESS

Third, the Holy Spirit brings the family likeness. It's obvious, isn't it, that children very often look like their parents. The amazing thing is that they so often look like both parents, even if the parents look quite different from each other. But it's not just even a genetic thing; it's partly a genetic thing, but it's also, I think, spending time together.

Isn't it amazing how husbands and wives often grow to look like each other!

I even saw this programme about owners and their dogs! It was uncanny — these people

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came on and they looked exactly like their dogs! They'd spent too long with them!

But St Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:18, 'we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.'

So he's saying when the Spirit of God comes to live within a person, he will bring about this family likeness, becoming more like God, becoming more like Jesus.

How does this happen? Galatians, chapter 5 — would you like to turn to Galatians, chapter 5, verse 22 and 23? St Paul writes:

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'

This is the Spirit of Jesus coming to make us more like Jesus. So what are the characteristics the Spirit wants to bring to us? The first, and most important, is love.

When we experience God's love for us, the love of God being poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that should flow out in love for God and love for other people.

[You may use this story or replace this with a different story that illustrates the same point.]

Recently I met a remarkable woman called Chiara Lubich. And I read a little bit about her story. When she was 19 years old she was living in Northern Italy. It was 1939 and the bombs were falling. And she and her friends asked this question: was there an ideal that the bombs could not destroy? And the answer that they came up with was: yes — love.

They had experienced the love of God being poured into their hearts and they wanted to share it. So they started to go around, these teenagers going around helping those around them in need — sharing what little food they had, finding clothing for people, comforting the bereaved.

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And such a kind of warmth emanated from them that they were given a nickname, *Focalari*, which means 'fireplace, hearth'. That movement now has two million members in 182 countries. And it's based on a very simple command of Jesus: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' Mutual love, the readiness to give their lives for one another. Their rule of life 24 hours a day is living the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule, as Jesus said: 'Do to others what you would have them do to you.'

Chiara says this: 'Love the other person as yourself — not with words, but with deeds. Imagine how the world would be if the Golden Rule was put into practice, not only between individuals but also between ethnic groups, peoples and nations. If everyone loved the other country as their own.'

Love and joy. Malcolm Muggeridge, who was an atheist for much of his life, said: 'Joy is the most characteristic and uplifting of the manifestations of conversion. It's rapture, an inexpressible joy which suffuses our whole being, making our fears dissolve into nothing and our expectations all rise heavenwards.'

Joy is very different from happiness. Nowhere are we guaranteed happiness as Christians. Some people have very difficult lives, many struggles that they have to cope with. But what the New Testament promises us is joy, which is far deeper.

Richard Wurmbrand, who was imprisoned for many years in a former Communist country and tortured, sometimes on an almost daily basis, for his faith, he wrote this: 'Alone in my cell, cold, hungry and in rags, I danced for joy every night. Sometimes I was so filled with joy that I felt I would burst if I did not give it expression.'

Peace. Again, this is not a superficial peace but peace in the midst of trouble, anxiety, struggle. It's a peace which 'passes understanding'. It's like a kind of deep ocean current. There might be a storm on the surface — wind and waves; but deep down an inner peace which comes from having peace with God. And it flows out in wanting to bring peace to others.

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So Francis of Assisi — at least, attributed to Francis of Assisi — said: ‘Make me a channel, make me an instrument of your peace. Make me a peacemaker, help me to bring peace to this troubled world.’

And then all the other wonderful characteristics: patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. That’s the family likeness.



Next, unity. The Spirit wants us to be united with one another. We’re meant to be an example to a troubled and divided world. Jesus prayed for the unity of the church. And the amazing thing is that we have a unity, because we are sons and daughters of God. That makes us brothers and sisters. We all have a relationship with Jesus Christ. And we all have the Holy Spirit living within us as Christians.

So St Paul writes in Ephesians 4, verse 3: ‘Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to one hope when you were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all.’

The Spirit of God lives in every Christian regardless of background, colour, race, culture — and denomination. The Spirit of God lives within Catholics and Protestants, within Orthodox and Pentecostal.

And that’s what makes the divisions in the church such a tragedy. And the great thing is I think people are beginning to recognise that now. And they’re recognising that what unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us. And that’s why the denominational barriers are coming down.

And most people now recognise that we’re not the only Christians; there are lots of Christians

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in different parts of the church. And it's quite rare now that you get this sort of rather bigoted and arrogant attitude that 'We are the only Christians'.

[You may delete this story if this doesn't work in your context. Or, you may replace it with your own example of how, sometimes, as Christians we can think that our particular way of expressing our faith is the 'only way'.]

I did hear of one man like that, and he happened to be a Baptist — and please don't be offended by that if you are a Baptist ... or if you're watching this on video and you are a Baptist! I love the Baptists!

And the Baptists are wonderful people, but this — it could easily have been an Anglican, but it happened to be a Baptist. And this man was a very arrogant man and a very bigoted man, and he believed that only Baptists were true Christians.

And one time he went to preach at a church and it was a kind of — it was the Week for Christian Unity. Slightly odd choice for the Week for Christian Unity, but nevertheless he went to speak there.

And he wanted to make a point. So when he stood up to speak he said, 'How many of you here are Baptists?' Well, pretty well all the non-Baptists had stayed away, knowing that he was coming to preach, so practically every hand went up.

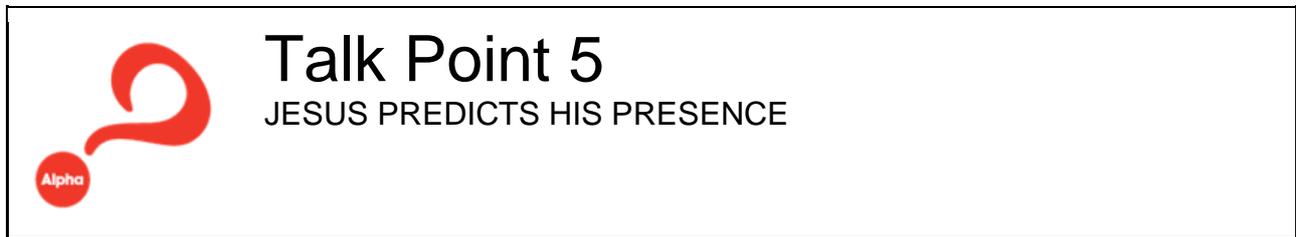
And then he said, 'Is there anybody here who is not a Baptist?' This one little old lady near the front, she very bravely put up her hand. So he said, 'Well, what are you?' She said, 'Well, I'm a Methodist.' He said, 'A what?' She said, 'I'm a Methodist.' He said, 'Why are you a Methodist?' She said, 'Well, my father was a Methodist, my grandfather was a Methodist, and I guess that's why I'm a Methodist.'

'Ha,' he thought, 'we'll make some fun of her.' So he said, 'Well, supposing your father was a moron and your grandfather was a moron, what would that make you?' She thought for a moment and she said, 'I suppose it would make me a Baptist.' Please don't be offended if you're a Baptist! It was really an Anglican, actually!

But the point of that story is it's so absurd, it's so ridiculous, because the Holy Spirit lives in all

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of us. And what unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us. And we should be, rather than sort of seeing other parts of the church as a threat, there are ways in which we can be enriched.



Which brings me on to the fifth thing that the Holy Spirit brings, and that is gifts for all the children.

Would you like to turn to 1 Corinthians 12:4–11? St Paul writes this.

And we'll study this passage more closely in the small groups in a few moments.

'There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in everyone.'

'Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.'

This is not an exhaustive list — in other lists of the Spirit we get gifts of service, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, showing mercy, evangelists, pastors — all kinds of gifts.

But the point is that we need all of them. Paul's using the analogy of a body: the nose can't

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say 'I'm more important than the eye'. We need every different part of the body of Christ.

And some of these gifts more obviously demonstrate the unusual acts of God in the world — the gift of speaking in tongues, or miracles. But it also includes natural talents, which can be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

The German theologian Jurgen Moltman put it like this: 'In principle, every human potentiality and capacity can become a gift of the Spirit through a person's call if only they're used in Christ.'

The church is not meant to be a kind of one-man show. Too often churches have become a sort of one-man show — the pastor does everything, or the vicar does everything, or the priest does everything.

And the people are not doing anything! Someone's likened the church sometimes to being like a kind of football match in which you have '22,000 people desperately in need of exercise watching 22 people desperately in need of a rest!' **And the church can become like that, with a vicar doing everything.**

[This joke works well but may not be applicable in all contexts. If this doesn't work for your context, you may delete or replace with another humorous example.]

One vicar received a letter like this: 'Dear Vicar, there are 566 people in our church. 100 are frail and elderly — that leaves 466 to do all the work. But 80 are young people at school or at college, and that leaves 386 to do all the work. But 150 of these are tired businesspeople — that leaves 236 to do all the work.

150 of these are busy with children, which leaves 86 to do all the work. But 15 live too far away to come here regularly, and that leaves 71 to do all the work. And 69 say they've already done their bit for the church. And that leaves you and me. But I'm exhausted, so good luck to you.'

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Talk Point 6

THE GROWING FAMILY

So everybody's meant to be involved, because God has given gifts to all the children. And sixth, this family into which we are born, the family of God, is meant to be a growing family.

One of the verses we looked at earlier was Acts 1, verse 8, where Jesus says that when the Spirit comes 'You will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses.' In other words, 'other people will find out about me through what you do and what you say.'

Now, I know this terrifies some people — the thought of having to speak about our faith, having to talk about Jesus to other people!

I heard of one young man like that. He was absolutely petrified of the thought of having to speak to his friends or his family about Jesus. And actually it stopped him becoming a Christian. He just thought it was such a horrendous idea that he wasn't going to become a Christian.

And he went to see a wise older Christian, and this man said to him, 'Look,' he said, 'in your case God's made an exception. You don't have to tell anybody. It can just be a little private thing between you and God.'

He went, 'Ooh, that's good!' So he went home and he went up to his bedroom and he knelt down by his bed and he gave his life to Jesus. And the moment he did that, the Holy Spirit came upon him and filled him, flooded his whole being. And he was just filled with an overflowing joy.

And he rushed downstairs, and there in the kitchen were his family and five of his friends. And he said, 'Do you know,' — breathless with excitement — he said, 'Do you know, it's amazing — you can become a Christian and you don't have to tell anybody!'

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When the Spirit of God fills us, it's not an effort to tell people — it's an overflow, it's something that we're longing to do, because it's such wonderful news. And the church begins to grow.

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living within them. Paul writes: 'If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ.'

Yet not every Christian is filled with the Spirit. Because Paul writes to people who are already Christians and he gives them a command: 'Be filled with the Spirit' — in present continuous tense: it means, 'Go on being filled, over and over and over again with the Holy Spirit.'

How? How can we be filled with the Spirit? Well, we started with Genesis 1, verse 1 and I want to end by looking at Revelation, chapter 22, verse 17 — right at the end of the Bible.

'The Spirit [that's the Holy Spirit] and the bride [that's the bride of Christ, which is the church] — The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let all who hear say, "Come!" Let those who are thirsty come; let all who wish take the free gift of the water of life.'

Some of you here may say, 'That's what I'm longing for. I'm really thirsty for this free gift of the water of life.' Here's the promise: if you come, you'll receive.

Some of you may say, 'Well, to be honest, I couldn't say I feel like that. I don't really feel any thirst.' God takes us as we are. And we can pray. We can say, 'Lord, I don't have a thirst, but would you give me a thirst.'

And then he'll give you a thirst. And then his promise is: if anyone thirsts and asks, he will give you the free gift of the water of life.

May we pray.

Lord, we thank you for these amazing, wonderful transformations that the Holy Spirit wants to bring to each of our lives. And Lord, we ask today for each person here, Lord, if we are thirsty, then you say 'Come. Those of you who are thirsty, let them come; let all who wish take the free gift of the water of life.'

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For those maybe who don't yet feel that thirst, would you give us a thirst and then again come and satisfy it with the free gift of the water of life. In Jesus' name, amen.

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10) Weekend Talk 2 – What Does the Holy Spirit Do? - Nicky Gumbel - HTB Alpha - 16/02/2009



Talk 10 – Weekend Talk 2 – What Does the Holy Spirit Do?

Duration 44 Minutes
HTB Transcripts

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