



SESSION 6: How to be filled with the Holy Spirit

How much does It cost?

It cost Jesus everything but is free for the asking to us. Every gift of God flows to us from the cross, and when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, then the Holy Spirit begins the amazing work of the new birth in our hearts. That's why, on the first Day of Pentecost, in Acts chapter two, Peter told the people that they needed to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.' (Acts 2:38-9.)

That final part of the statement in which Peter said *'For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call'* must surely include us today who are far-off in terms of time and distance from those first-century followers of Jesus. In hearing and believing the gospel we are those whom the Lord our God has called.

The act of repenting – turning away from our sins – and receiving Jesus as Lord, which is symbolised by being baptised in water, is key to receiving the free gift of all that the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives. But, once we do know Jesus and are following him, we soon become aware of the need for more power in our lives, power to be witnesses for the Lord, and that's where the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes in.

'And it's not just power for miracles. It's so that the power-charged atmosphere of Heaven can rest upon a person, which forces a shift in the atmosphere over a home, business, or city. This baptism (in the Holy Spirit) is to make us living witnesses and examples of the resurrection of Jesus – the ultimate display of Heaven's power'.

Bill Johnson ⁴

⁴ Bill Johnson, *Hosting the Presence*, (Destiny Image Publishers, Shippensburg PA, 2012) 107.

How can I get hold of this power?

1. **Make Jesus Lord of your life.** Here is a prayer you might pray: *'Lord Jesus Christ, I am sorry for the things that I have done wrong in my life' – maybe take a few moments here just to ask for His forgiveness of anything that you really become aware of – 'Please forgive me. I now turn away from anything that I know to be wrong, against You or Your way for my life. Thank you that You died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free. Please come into my life and reign over my heart from this day on. Thank you, Lord, for saving me. Amen'*
2. **'Get hungry and thirsty'.** Jesus said that we need to get hungry and thirsty for more from God. He made this really clear in John 7:37 when he went to Jerusalem to be part of the Festival of Tabernacles. During this harvest thanksgiving feast for the Jewish people there would be a moment when water would be poured out by the High Priest as an act of worship. Just then, *'on the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink". the responsibility is on us to hear God's Word, get thirsty and come to Jesus to be filled with the living water of His Spirit.* The responsibility is on us to hear God's Word, get thirsty and come to Jesus to be filled with the living water of His Spirit.
3. **'Come to Jesus and drink!'** This means pray – ask Jesus for the baptism in the Holy Spirit! Seek him on your own or with others or ask someone who has received the baptism in the Holy Spirit to pray with you and for you. It really is that simple.
4. **'Ask, seek and knock'.** In Luke's gospel Jesus said, *'ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?'* And then here's the crunch line *'If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'* (Luke 11:9-13).

Dealing with doubt

We need to humble ourselves and choose to believe God's Word and the promises of Jesus more than we believe our own doubts! This is true of every step that a Christian will take in their discipleship. Our whole way of life in Christ is a choice to believe God's promises and stand on his Word. There is no other way for the follower of Christ to function. Doubts will always be there while we are in these bodies, and live in an unbelieving community, just as the early Christians did. Receiving the power of the Holy Spirit is just another step of faith in the life of faith.

The problem of fear

Some are just afraid of the Holy Spirit or their own emotions, but Jesus asks us to trust his amazing love for his children. If we ask for a fish, he would not give us a snake! *‘Every gift God freely gives us is good and perfect, streaming down from the Father of lights, who shines from the heavens with no hidden shadow or darkness and is never subject to change’* (James 1:17 The Passion Translation). The gift of the Holy Spirit is definitely a good gift.

The issue of inadequacy

We need to know who we truly are in Christ and that he longs to bless us and give us his best gifts. In Luke 11:12 God delights to give the Holy Spirit to “those who ask for him” not to those who deserve him! In a sense, none of us deserve anything at all from God, but through his amazing grace we have been saved, through faith, and really that means he waits for us to ‘ask him’! God’s answer to our sense of inadequacy is that he has made us adequate in Christ.

For discussion, further study and reflection

- Take time to read again these relevant Bible passages relating to the Spirit: Joel 2:28-32, Luke 3:16, 11:9-13, Acts 1:4-8, Acts 2:1-4, Ephesians 5:18-20.
- What do you think are the main hindrances to being filled with the Holy Spirit today?
- Look at Joel 2:28 and ask yourself ‘how old does someone have to be to be filled with the Spirit’?
- How would you answer the suggestion that the miraculous is not for today?
- Find someone you can trust to share your own experience of the Lord with. (Romans 10:9)