

Cherishing the Gift of God's Holy Spirit

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by Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

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Summary: God loves to give gifts and He gives many. Pentecost is the anniversary of the giving of the Holy Spirit as God's gift. It's easy to ignore gifts or not use them. This gift is so precious and powerful, we must be certain we have received it and are using it to the full. Are you confident you have received God's Holy Spirit? How would you know? Do you value and cherish it? Would you like to have more of it? Is it growing inside you? Is it a rushing river of life – or a stagnant pond? We'll cover all that plus an overview of the Day of Pentecost. You'll better appreciate and value the gift of God's Holy Spirit with this sermon.

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Hello all of you who are called or being called into the House of the one living Eternal God – our great Abba, our God Most High. Welcome to our totally free, no-charge website -- Light on the Rock. This is Philip Shields from Orlando, FL with another message that will help you walk closer with our great heavenly daddy (Abba) and our Savior Yeshua.

All of us – with a few seconds to think about it – can think of many examples where we were given a valuable gift, or we gave a valuable gift to a child or friend – only to see the gift not be used. Sometimes it's misplaced and then even forgotten. Someone can gift you a beautiful Steinway piano, but if we don't understand the gift, or its value, what happens? It can sit there and sit there, just gathering dust, until finally we sell it to someone. I was looking at guitars on Craig's list recently and several had messages like “no time to play it” – and so they were trying to sell it.

We can end up doing the same thing with the gifts the Creator is willing to give us. We don't recognize the value of the gift or even know we have the gift – so it sits there, doing nothing. In this season of Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, there are so many gifts our Maker has given us, but I fear too many of us take them for granted and don't even understand or use or develop them.

- **The Feast itself is a gift** – the appointed time with our Maker. Shavuot, Feast of Weeks, also called the Feast of Pentecost, which means “count 50”. We've counted up to the 50th day. I like to call these feast days, these appointed times, “our date” with our Husband-to-Be, Yeshua the Messiah.
- **The Meaning of this Feast is a gift.** More and more of us feel it's going to be on *this* day when the King of Kings Yeshua will marry His Bride in heaven itself. What a gift, especially if you've been called to be part of the Bride of Christ. FEW are being called today to be part of the family, but the time is coming with the whole world will be part of the called ones. But so far, it's just a few, the first fruits of His Spirit. If you want to learn more about this Feast and the Marriage of the Lamb, probably on **THIS** day – **listen to my sermon on “I Go Prepare a Place for you” given in June 2011.** Just write in the Search bar on the top left of the website “Prepare a Place” and it will pop up. There was also an excellent sermon by my friend Jeff Niccum on the topic but somehow it's been lost on the website, and we have to put it back in there. He did a great job with it.

- **The Gift of the Holy Spirit**, given on this day. This sermon should not be just a knowledge-type sermon or a “head thing” – but a thing of the heart. Being given THIS gift is so precious, so valuable, so staggering if we could see it for what it is.

Today I want to talk about the Holy Spirit again.

- First we'll review quickly some of the hi-lites of this day
- We'll discuss the Holy Spirit. DO you have it? How do you know if you do or not?
- Some points on what the Spirit does for us
- How to activate the Spirit so it flows more strongly within us.

I have given other sermons also that you could listen to –there are over 120 sermons on www.Lightontherock.org. Don't just be looking for the new sermons, but go back and review the many sermons on the holydays, on marriage, on living by faith, on what it means to be in Christ, and on and on. Truth does not have an expiration date. And remember I recommend you print the notes and then with the notes in hand, listen to the audio. The notes do not have everything said in the transcript, and vice-versa, though they're close.

First, a Quick OVERVIEW of the Day of Pentecost

On Shavuot, Pentecost – **the book of Ruth** is traditionally read, as the story revolves around the spring barley harvest after Passover that ends with the beginning of the wheat harvest at Pentecost. It was about the fact that God is calling a small group of people first, and later he will open the door to the billions of other people – pictured by autumn harvest. The Fall harvest pictures the HUGE harvest of everything else – the fruits, the vegetables, the olives, the big harvest in Israel is now due.

I have a full sermon on “**Ruth and Pentecost**” – **March 2013** if you wish to explore it more.

It was also on this day that God Most High sent his Spirit as we can read in Acts 2. If the early believers were not gathered together on the holyday, they would not have been there to experience this historic and wonderful event. They WERE there, keeping God's holyday. And likewise, we should be also. **It was the BIRTHDAY, if you will, of the New Covenant *ekklesia***, the called-out ones. Fiery tongues appeared to set above and on the gathered 120 disciples and they all spoke in other languages. Those from the provinces heard the gospel being spoken to them in their own tongue or dialect. Three thousand were baptized – or immersed – in water that day as they repented of their sins and accepted Yeshua (Jesus) as their Savior and Master. Upon the laying on of the hands of God's apostles, those just baptized also were now **BAPTIZED, immersed into the Holy Spirit** – which is called God's spirit, and also called The Spirit of Christ” – Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11. But it's all one and the same spirit as there is only one Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:3-4).

It was also on this day that the Torah, God's laws and commandments, were given to Israel at Mt. Sinai. But at the end of that event, 3,000 died! In the New Covenant, 3,000 were given eternal *life* when they received the Holy Spirit. **As John 1:17** says, the law was given through and by Moses, and grace and truth came through Yeshua the Messiah.

And when Yeshua brought us grace, John describes it as “of his FULLNESS we have received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16), or “grace upon grace” – like waves at the sea, grace upon grace, one gift or blessing after another, never ending.

The WEDDING of God to Israel at Mt. Sinai occurred on this day. I explain all that in detail in other Pentecost sermons. Just write in “Pentecost” in the search bar on the home page and you’ll find lots of sermons. ***So many of us also believe the heavenly wedding of the Son of God to the Bride of Christ, the ekklesia of called-out ones from all nations – not just Israel this time – will also occur on this day in a soon-coming year.***

On our website is a sermon by Jeff Niccum that goes into detail on this.

Remember God is calling Jews *and* Gentiles today – and ALL who are being called have to be grafted in to the spiritual Olive Tree called “The Israel of God”, made up of those who have accepted and received Yeshua as their personal Savior – Jews and Gentiles alike. *It’s no longer enough to just be born a Jew or Israelite to be in God’s covenant peoples.* No – now it’s those who receive Yeshua as their Master and Savior, whether you’re Jew or Gentile. (Read carefully Romans 11:19-27).

Romans 9:6-8

“But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. **For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham;** but, “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” 8 That is, ***those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed.***”

It doesn’t get any clearer than that. “The children of the PROMISE”, those who accept Christ as their Savior – *these are the ones counted as the seed of Abraham and inheritors of the promises.* Paul says so again at the end of Galatians 3:26-29—if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and inheritors of the promise – REGARDLESS of your race, color, ethnic origin or anything like that.

So the Wedding of the Son of God this time will be with representatives of all mankind, of all races, of many nations, including Israel but not limited to Israel. Hallelujah and praise his name.

IMMERSED by God’s Spirit into the Body of Christ by the GIFT of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one of God’s GIFTS. On this day, almost 2000 years ago, Peter told the thousands who came around to witness the outpouring of the Spirit, that if they repented and were baptized in Jesus’ name for the remission of their sins, that they SHALL receive the GIFT of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38; 10:45). It’s a GIFT.

We can’t earn gifts. It’s a *gift*. Like so many gifts, we may not understand the gift or its value. Maybe we put the gift on a shelf and don’t know what to do with it. And like some gifts, we wonder at times where it even IS, where did it go? And like some gifts, if we don’t see its evidence, we start wondering if we ever were given it in the first place.

When we repent, are baptized (immersed) in water, and have hands laid on us by ordained ministers of God (that was always the example in scripture) – then we are immersed, or baptized into the Holy Spirit and are put INTO Christ by that immersion.

We're not put into the Body by immersion of water – but by the immersion of the SPIRIT. That's what makes you a part of the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13-14

*“For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body** — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”*

The one body we are baptized into is Christ himself. We become a part of *Him*. The “church” is His body (**Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:24**). He is the Head of the church, his wife, and He is the Savior of the body (Ephesians 5:23).

Romans 6:3-4 says we were baptized INTO *Christ Jesus* – and HIS death. Our baptism symbolized our burial with Him into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, “even so *WE should walk in newness of life.*”

So the body of Christ is his Church but remember we are also directly somehow a part of Yeshua himself in baptism. We join His church not just by attending with some organized group – though you can – but **by being immersed into His spirit**. Now the one true church therefore is made up of scattered individuals who have God's spirit, wherever they may attend, and period. The one true church is not an organization incorporated by man. No. *The one true church is made up of anyone and everyone around the world who has been given and is following the lead of the Holy Spirit.* So don't LIMIT where the Spirit is working. Peter had to learn this also.

Remember how the early believers had to be shocked into realizing God's spirit was working with Gentiles too!?

Acts 10:44-48

*“While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.** And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the GIFT of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.*

Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

God had to give Cornelius and his family the gift of speaking in tongues, BEFORE they were baptized, to convince Peter that now God was calling gentiles too! **All that is in Acts 10.**

In the same way, please get this - don't be shocked to realize God's spirit may be working, IS working, in groups and people you would NEVER have supposed before could have God's spirit! Don't judge a book by its cover. Who would have ever guessed God was working with the prostitute **Rahab**, for example? But He was – and in fact invited her to be part of the lineage of Christ! Would you have ever thought Rahab would have been picked?

Notice Cornelius' water baptism in this case came after receiving the baptism of the spirit, as it was such a momentous event to see Gentiles being called into God's family.

In Acts 10:44, where it says the Holy Spirit “**fell upon all**” – **the Greek implies something like the Holy Spirit gave them all a group hug!** It’s the same word used to EMBRACE, to throw oneself upon. Same as Acts 8: 16-17. God’s spirit was eager to embrace these new family members into the family of God. Who were they? Cornelius was a Gentile, yes – but worse: a Roman centurion, representing the hated class of people who had conquered and dominated the Jews. But God was calling them as well. You might hate a class of people – maybe ISIS or something like that. But glory to God: what if He started calling and choosing to work with some of their leaders? Would you believe that and accept them?

ACCEPTED

In Ephesians 1, which says SO much about the many things it means to be “in Him” by His Spirit – ends by saying this:

Ephesians 1:5-6

“...having predestined us to adoption as sons *by Jesus Christ to Himself*, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the *glory of His grace*, by which **He made us accepted in the Beloved.**”

Once we are in Christ, no matter what our past was – and glory be to God for this – we are **ACCEPTED in the Beloved**. **Accepted by God**. It doesn’t matter if *people* want to see you hang for your past sins, if you are in Christ by God’s Spirit, you are ACCEPTED by God, because of Christ. In Christ. Hallelujah. Praise be to Yah.

Whenever I’m feeling left out – or shunned, or not welcomed – I come back to this verse and say: “It doesn’t matter what man does or thinks. **I am accepted in the Beloved.**” (And don’t forget, Christ was of David, whose name means “beloved”.) And it’s wonderful too, that our Savior knows what it means to be rejected. In HIS case, without any cause for that rejection. But nonetheless, he knows what it feels like.

Don’t reject people because of who they WERE, or because of their past sins, or because of what they did in the past that was bad. God’s blood covers ALL sin (1 John 1:9). Yes, even for the worst of the worst sinners you can imagine, if they repent and accept Yeshua, are immersed in water and then they receive the baptism of His Holy Spirit – they are part of the family of God now. Washed, new, a new creation in Christ – and filled with His spirit.

DON’T insist that God’s Spirit can’t change certain criminal or immoral patterns of anyone’s past! *Don’t REJECT someone with whom God is clearly working just because of sins of the past that they’ve repented of.* Hey – Peter denied Christ with profanity and swearing, 3x. And look how God used him. David killed a top commander loyal to him to hide his adultery. But God continued to use David too. Ditto Samson – and really, every human being, as imperfect as we are.

Remember we are put into Christ, and therefore into His Body, by being baptized/immersed in the *Holy Spirit*.

So you repented, you were baptized, you accepted Yeshua as your king, you had hands of a minister laid on your head and you received the Holy Spirit as God’s gift – which placed you into the body of Christ, accepted, beloved, forgiven, redeemed, enlightened, and In him you were given an inheritance (Ephesians 1:11-12).

The GIFT of the Holy Spirit

So we're talking about **The Holy Spirit** -- One of God's greatest gifts. **It IS a gift (Acts 2:38)**. God has given us many gifts and this is one of His best.

The best gift (I think) is His Son who died for us and lives for us... so we can receive another gift: The gift of ETERNAL LIFE (**Romans 6:23**). God so loved you and the world – that he GAVE a gift – his only begotten son that whomsoever believes in him would not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). Wow, what a gift. He gifted us with His own son so that if we believe in him, we will live forever.

Salvation is called the “gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). We're saved through faith, NOT of yourselves. It's God's gift. ***I can't save myself.*** Some of you still don't get this. You love the verse in Phil 2:12 that says “work out your OWN salvation” but you quit reading the rest of the sentence: “For it is GOD who works in you both to will and to do according to HIS good pleasure.” ***I can't save myself. If I could, why would I need a Savior?*** Being saved is a GIFT. It's not something I can do or earn or even qualify for – or else it wouldn't be a gift.

I can ACCEPT that gift and love that gift, but I can never claim I was saved because of anything I did. I will be REWARDED by what I do, but salvation and eternal life are GIFTS. I can only save myself by accepting the gift being offered to me. (Check out my sermon on “How well do you receive?”)

He also gave us the **gift of His righteousness (Phil 3:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:21)** – and so many who believe in obeying God, as I do, have trouble accepting that gift (Romans 5:16-17, etc.).

ALL of those gifts are possible only THROUGH the other gift – **the gift of His Holy Spirit. Our father loves to give gifts.** Yeshua told the woman at the well in **John 4:10** that if she could see the identity of the One to whom she was speaking, she would ask for the gift of God and he would give her living waters! That's what we're talking about.

On top of all that, the Holy Spirit also gives gifts – called “Gifts of the Spirit”. *Those are abilities we DIDN'T have before.* A GIFT of the spirit is not the same as a natural talent you had before you received the spirit. How could it be a gift then? You can read about the GIFTS of the spirit in **Romans 12:4-8** – where it lists some of the gifts like ability to prophesy, or to serve (ministering), or teaching, or giving encouragement, or in leading and so on.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 gives another list of gifts of the Spirit – and the key is to realize that we don't get all the gifts of the spirit. God gifts each of us with something, but not everyone has all the gifts. Some are given several gifts. **These gifts include:** word of wisdom, word of knowledge, some are given great faith (v. 9), others gifts of healings, or working miracles, or prophecy, discerning spirits, ability to speak in tongues, or ability to interpret those tongues.

And NOTE that NOT everyone is given the gift of tongues. If you were part of the Assemblies of God or Pentecostals, many of them feel bad if they don't speak in tongues because they feel they have not seen the evidence of the Spirit if they don't speak in tongues. But NOT everyone is given that gift. You may have another gift. At the end of 1 Cor. 12, he actually lists speaking in tongues

and interpreting tongues LAST, in the gifts (1 Cor. 12:30). And in 1 Cor. 14:1, he says it's greater to have the gift of preaching/prophesying than the gift of tongues.

Paul in fact goes on to say that **the greatest gift of all is to receive and give LOVE (1 Cor. 13:13)**. He says someone with the gift of tongues of men and angels, who doesn't have love, is just an annoying NOISY clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1).

The GIFTS of God and the gifts of the spirit are for the edification of the church. But in Corinth they were beginning to use them like circus acts, and it made them smug (1 Cor. 14:12).

Yeshua said we know how we love to give gifts, and how much more will our heavenly father give gifts to those who ask him (Matthew 7:11).

Luke 11:13

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your **heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ASK Him!**"

ASK. ASK. ASK. Have I said it yet? WHEN did you last ASK for the Holy Spirit? Or for more of it?

But like I said earlier, most of us probably haven't asked for more of His Spirit lately. How much more of the Holy Spirit could you have today and tomorrow – if you'd just ASK? Most of us aren't even beginning to use fully whatever amount of Holy Spirit He's given us! Including me!

How do you KNOW that you have God's Holy Spirit?

In the early church, we read how various ones were FILLED with the Spirit. The Spirit was not poured out to *masses* of people until Acts 2, but there were several who – long before Acts 2 – were also filled with God's spirit and USED it. They SPOKE by the Holy Spirit.

"Filled with the SPIRIT":

- John the baptizer would be filled with the spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15)
- Luke 1:41- Elizabeth, his mom, was filled with the Holy Spirit as she blessed Mary (Miriam)
- Her husband Zacharias was also filled with the spirit Luke 1:67 – and prophesied
- Of course Yeshua was filled with the spirit (Luke 4:1)
- The early believers in Acts 2:4 were "all FILLED with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- The early group of other believers were also described as being FILLED with the Holy Spirit and spoke God's word BOLDLY (Acts 4:31).
- Paul was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17; 13:9)
- Paul invites all believers to "be filled with the spirit, speaking to one another in psalms etc." "Ephesians 5:18

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be part of a group of people –all of whom are *filled* with God's spirit? And it's obvious to all? And because of that we're doing great things that bring glory to God? Remember, "these signs shall *surely* follow... you shall cast out demons in my name, lay hands on the sick and the sick shall be made well" and so on?

I wonder if we have that same level of being “filled” with God’s spirit as they had back then. And yet prophecies are clear: in the last days, God would once more POUR OUT His spirit and it will be very evident. Peter thought it was being fulfilled in HIS day, but frankly – the scriptures in Joel 2 and others really pertain to the end of days, OUR time.

Are YOU filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you sure? Or in fact, do we not sometimes wonder? So how would you KNOW that YOU have God’s spirit, or someone else does?

IF you feel Less than FILLED with God’s Spirit....

Let me first start with this if you feel somewhat empty of God’s spirit: it’s very possible you have let the Gift of God’s spirit lie dormant in your life. Instead of rushing flowing waters, it has become a stagnant pond that is drying up.

- Or perhaps you have come into a time of unrepented sin in your life, and as David pleaded in Psalm 51, after his murder of Uriah – “Take not your spirit from me” (Psalm 51:10-11). David even asked God to RENEW His spirit in him.
- Remember scripture is clear: we can “GRIEVE” the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:25-30; Isaiah 63:10) and also “resist the Holy Spirit” (Acts 7:51). If we read Ephesians 4:25-30, the context of what comes before and after the statement about grieving God’s spirit, is a bunch of sin going on. Duh. *There are times in our lives when God speaks to us through His spirit and we don’t heed. The result: we are grieving and resisting God and the Spirit stops flowing mightily in our lives.* That calls for some drastic action to repent and seek God diligently.

Another way we be damming up the flow of God’s spirit is letting a lot of stuff that crowds out the things of God in our lives.

- **How much time do you spend praying/studying and meditating with your Abba in heaven – compared to Facebook time?** Or TV? Come on, be honest now. I’ve had to cut out FB except for once a week I go on to catch up with people or post a few pictures, but I found it was just using up hours of my time. HOURS. Brothers and sisters: time is too short for that. Who do seek more – FB, or Abba and Yeshua? If it’s Facebook, you know what you’re putting first. We are to diligently seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness. FIRST. (Matthew 6:33).

Maybe we need to **set aside a day of fasting and prayer** and ask God to show you how to STIR UP the spirit in you, to unblock the dams of its moving in your life, and to reveal himself through His Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

“Therefore I remind you to STIR UP the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

When WAS the last time you FASTED and spent the day seeking after God? Maybe we just need a good spiritual tune-up where we spend the day with our Creator asking for Him to wake us up, to rekindle His Spirit’s “fire” in us and to help us wake up to the urgency of the times and so on.

Use the day to ask God to let the Holy Spirit **FLOW LIKE RIVERS** of moving, living, rushing waters that Yeshua spoke about in John 7:37-39. Imagine that? We need this kind of Spirit in us!

It is God's Spirit that also prods us to obey Him!

Ezekiel 36:27

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."

I think a lot of us from time to time wonder if we – or someone else – has God's spirit. How can you tell? What does scripture say about that? Let's take a look at a few teachings from scripture.

"Do I even have God's Spirit?"

1. **The Holy Spirit in the new covenant is given after repentance, water immersion/baptism and laying on of hands by an ordained true minister of God.**

God allowed non-ordained people to baptize, but every example I can see of laying on of hands was by ordained ministers (Acts 8:14-17; Acts 19:1-6; 2 Tim.1:6 for a few examples.) If you have NOT truly repented and changed your life as a consequence of that repentance, and have not been immersed in water by God's representative, then you should do that first. (Acts 2:38).

2. **We cannot have SPIRITUALLY ACCURATE understanding without God's spirit.**

If you read the Bible and understand it, you have to have God's spirit. Read **1 Cor. 2:9-12** on your own. It says clearly there that the things of God cannot be seen except by God's spirit. But when we have God's spirit, we DO see spiritual things. So take heart, if this sermon and the Bible itself make sense to you – you probably DO have God's spirit.

In fact, remember that Yeshua had promised the disciples in John 16:12-15 that the Spirit of Truth will "guide you into all truth".

3. **The amount of God's spirit given in the beginning may be small compared to what you may have 10 years later.** If you want more of the SPIRIT, ASK! MORE shall be given, happily, to you. We wouldn't be told to ASK for more of God's spirit if the supply was unlimitedly given to us at the outset. Remember Luke 11:13 – ASK for more and you'll be given more.

John 3:34 – where it says God does not give his spirit by measure – the context is about the Son of God. Yeshua was a living well of living waters of God's spirit. HE was given the fullness of the Spirit. Some read John 3:34 and assume all of us have the spirit without measure, but if we read it in context, the whole passage is about Yeshua. HE was given the Spirit without measure. The rest of us will be given more as we value and use what we have first been given.

SO, **John 3:34** – "For whom God has sent [that's Yeshua] speaks the words of God, for God does not give the spirit by measure. V. 35 – the Father loves the Son..." etc.

4. If you have God's spirit, the old sinful ways are being overcome and becoming a thing of the past, one by one.

Earlier we talked about Romans 6:3-4 and how it ends by saying that when we come back up in baptism, that symbolizes our resurrection in Christ – and then it says, “even so WE also should walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE.”

There needs to be a new walk! A new life. A life of changing and overcoming and becoming more like God – BY God's Spirit, by the way. Not just by our own efforts, as you shall see. OUR effort is to stay attached to Christ, to stay close, to follow the lead of the Spirit.

Titus 3:3-8

“For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 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.

8 This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”

1 Peter 1:1-2

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, ***in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience*** and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

When Christ comes live inside us by His Spirit, we will live more and more like HE lived. He will live in US as he lived before: obediently. And God sees HIS righteousness, not ours. But if we're following the lead of Christ by His spirit, we *will* be changing. Our sanctification—v. 2 above – is done by the Holy spirit. It's God's spirit that sets us apart for holy use and perfects us. Also 2 Thess 2:13. Galatians 5:5 clearly states that “we through the Spirit eagerly wait for ***the hope of righteousness*** by FAITH.” Perfect righteous living is in Christ. We are in him and there is no condemnation to those in Christ (Romans 8:1) who covers us with Himself, His perfection. But we must *remain* in Him, abide in Him, stick close to Him, and let Him become more and more dominant in our life “until Christ is formed in you” as it says in Galatians also. As we abide in him, we'll find ourselves less and less interested in things of the flesh and in sin – and more fixated on the Kingdom of God.

Romans 8:13

“If you live according to the flesh you will die; but ***if by the spirit*** you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

1 Peter 1:22-24

“Since you have ***purified your souls in OBEYING the truth through the Spirit*** in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again,

not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...”

1 John 3:24

“Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”

5. **Someone with God’s spirit will eventually evidence the FRUIT of God’s spirit.** You know that tree over there is an apple tree if eventually you see apples growing on it. You KNOW someone has God’s spirit when you see the evidence. *First we see GROWTH, then FRUIT.* Fruit comes in its season (Psalm 1:3). I’ll be giving a sermon soon about Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit – so won’t say much more now. If you don’t see any evidence of fruit, perhaps we need to ask why and whether we should start from the beginning – repent, maybe even be re-baptized, and ask God to produce fruit in our lives. It’s the fruit of His SPIRIT – not the fruit of YOUR efforts.

God’s SPIRIT CHANGES people. If you’re not changing at all, maybe start over and ask for God’s spirit. David – in Psalm 51:10-11 says “RENEW ... let’s read it:

Psalms 51:10-11

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence,

And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

If you know you are not the man or woman you were when you were first baptized, but have changed to be more like God, then you have God’s spirit. God’s spirit in you will give you the POWER to overcome the sins in your life. We already read Ezekiel 36:27.

In **Galatians 5:19-21**, Paul says those who still practice the works of the flesh will NOT inherit the kingdom of God. We have to change. We *have* to overcome, and even that is done by God’s spirit working in us. Then he lists the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Someone with God’s spirit is growing in Godly love, and has a real joy even in times of trial. They’re growing in ability to have peace, for example, in serious times. You may not have all the fruit yet – but we should be moving in that direction.

Galatians 5:22-24

But the fruit of the Spirit is [not “are”] love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

6. **If you have God’s spirit, you will be experiencing God “speaking” to you through the Spirit.** As you follow the LEAD of the Spirit, surely Father will send MORE of His spirit. God’s spirit will sometimes open doors for you and sometimes SHUT doors.

When you pray, take some time to shut up and *listen*. Prayer should be a 2-way conversation. I go with a pen and pad in hand when I pray. Sometimes honestly – I don’t get

anything back. But many times, when I pray, when I get quiet and invite God to speak to me, some very meaningful directions have been given. Or thoughts to call someone, do something, watch out for something/someone... and in so many cases, they clearly were examples of God's spirit speaking to me. It's all through the Bible. You'll also notice that these times of profound revelation came in times of intense prayer and at times, fasting.

Acts 13:1-3

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 **As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said,** "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 10:19-20

While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Acts 16:6-7

Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they **were forbidden by the Holy Spirit** to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

How did they know? How was that communicated? They certainly were receptive and perceptive to God's leading. There's no reason we can't be experiencing the same today.

Acts 21:9-12—Agabus announced that the Holy Spirit said such and such. He was perceptive to how God's Spirit was leading and speaking.

WE should be having the same connection to the Spirit as all that. God doesn't change.

7. YOU will feel connected to God when you have His Spirit. Without it, you may feel no connection.

In the Bible, the phrase is used about "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20). And in Romans 8 it says:

Romans 8:26-27

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, **but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us** with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, **because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**"

If you're not experiencing this, maybe you need to start over with repentance, be baptized correctly and have hands laid on you by an ordained faithful minister. We must have God's spirit, or we are not His. It clearly states that in Romans 8. I trust most of you hearing this have God's spirit.

I recommend you hear the sermon I gave last year and reposted this year – 22 things the Holy Spirit does.

Let's get excited about the Holy Spirit. It should be far more dominant in our lives than I fear it has been.

Besides everything I've already said, God's spirit ...

- **We have God's seed in us 2 Peter 1:2-4 – allowing us to be “partakers of the divine nature”**
- **We are washed by the spirit (1 Cor 6:11) and by the word (Eph 5:26)**
- **We are sealed for the day when Christ returns**
- **We are declared children of God and can cry out “Abba, Father” – Rom. 8:15-17; Gal. 4:4-7**
- **We receive God's divine power – Acts 1:5-8; 2 Tim. 1:6-7. It even gives us power to put to death the deeds of the body – Romans 8:12-13.**
- **We have an anointing, an unction, that makes us holy**
- **We become the temple, that “houses” the Spirit of God in us 2 Cor 6:16**
- **We get to understand spiritual things 1 Cor. 2:9-12**
- **We can have access to God – “by one spirit to the Father” Eph 2:18**
- **The holy spirit even intercedes for us and prays for and with us when we mostly just want to sob or are unclear – Romans 8:26-27**
- **God's spirit comforts us – Acts 9:31**
- **God's spirit provides us with Gifts we didn't have before and also the FRUIT of God's spirit. We use these to serve God and his people more effectively.**

I'll leave it with that and hope you praise and thank God for His wonderful spirit. MOST of all – ask our FATHER to HELP you VALUE this wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. Be sure you have it. Use it. Stir it up. Pray for more of it. Ask Abba to help you realize when you're being spoken to and led by the Spirit. Fast and pray and put God first in your life once more. Time is short ... we must be getting our priorities right and value this awesome gift.

Until next time, this is Philip Shields hoping you seek more of the flowing of God's spirit in your life to the glory of God the Father and Yeshua our Savior.

Don't keep this website a secret. If it has blessed you, tell others about it also.