

THE GATEWAY INTO DREAMS AND VISIONS

Dreams and Visions

Part 5

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This is the 5th Sunday night we've been looking at "Dreams and Visions" opening the non-rational side to God. I plan to take one more Sunday evening on this. I have used throughout this series, Dreams and Visions, Peter's quote from the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17-18 "In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophecy, your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams. Even upon my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophecy."

The pouring out of the Spirit involves us in that whole dimension of ministry and activity which goes beyond our rational side and you can't really account for what happens in the growth of the early church except for the fact that the Spirit was poured out in phenomenal ways. We must expect to see in our lives today the same moving of the Spirit.

When Peter uses "dreams and visions" he uses it as a scriptural support for the phenomena that happens on the day of Pentecost and that is the phenomena of speaking in other tongues. That's why I call this evening's message, "The Gateway to Dreams and Visions" because it is this experience that opens the doorway to a whole arena of spiritual activity, a gateway to opening the non-rational side of our personality to God.

Tonight I want to look at four issues in regard to the gateway to dreams and visions. I'm the kind of person who always has to have rational ground underneath me. I simply cannot step out into subjective spiritual experience without objective scriptural truth. There are some people who can do that. I'm very uncomfortable with that however. My left brain has to be somewhat of a support to my right brain. When my left brain tells me the scripture says it's ok then my right brain can step out and enter into experience.

That's where I have some problems with the charismatic renewal today. That it too easily steps out into spiritual experience without sufficient care for scriptural teaching. Whenever we do that we open ourselves up to real heresy and subjective experiences which can actually deceive us, betray us, and leave us very mistrusting to opening our life to God in the spiritual sense again. Always we must have a scriptural floor.

Tonight as we look at the Gateway to Dreams and Visions I want to look especially at that scripture of Acts 2:4 – "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." I want to look at the baptism in the Spirit, speaking with other tongues, steps in receiving the baptism in the spirit (I'm not exactly comfortable with that terminology as though we can reduce that to a formula) and the continual filling of the Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit

There are some in the body of Christ hold that the baptism in the Spirit when it's used in scripture is simply another term for salvation. That Jesus had already breathed his Spirit into converted disciples, in John 20:22 – on the first evening of his resurrection he appeared to them. He breathed on them. Causing them to receive the Spirit, not in the same way of Acts 2, but

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receiving the Spirit in regenerative life. He was no doubt symbolically re-enacting the creation at that moment where God had breathed into lifeless clay the animated breath that made man a human being. Now Jesus coming from the grave with new order life, with resurrection order life, breaths into humanity the breath of eternal life, his own breath, the resurrected breath of the Son of God and breathes spiritual life and vitality into them. No one can be a Christian unless he or she is indwelt, breathed into of the Spirit of God.

But to those very same disciples, who had received that breath of the Spirit, Jesus himself will go on and promise them an additional experience in the Spirit. Acts 1:5 “For John baptized with water. But in a few days you will be baptized with [or in] the Holy Spirit.” It’s proper from looking at the Greek preposition to identify this as either the baptism *with* the Spirit or the baptism *in* the Spirit. When you are baptized *in* water you are baptized *with* water. When you are baptized *with* water, you are baptized *in* water. So when you’re baptized *with* the Spirit you are baptized *in* the Spirit. The preposition can go either way.

Jesus said to these disciples Luke 24:49 “I am going to send you what my Father has promised.” So the promise is this baptism in the Spirit which is coming. Peter in Acts 2:33 referring back to Acts 2:4 it’s the same day he’s preaching the sermon and explaining the conduct of these 120 identifies what has happened as a promise kept. “What you see is the promise of the Father.” In fact he says “What you see and hear...” in other words the promise had auditory qualities and it had visual qualities. Something which was seen and heard.

What was it that was seen and heard? These 120 were seen praising God and heard praising God in languages they had not previously learned. Peter then goes on to tell the convicted inquirers of that day of whom 3000 will respond to repent, to be baptized and promises them that they will receive the gift of the Spirit for he says, “The promise is to you and to your children and to all who are far off.” Verses 39-39.

In other words there is no restriction on this as being simply limited to the apostles or the apostolic age or the original 120 or 3000. But it’s for you, your children and for all those who are far off.

From looking at this term “baptism in the Spirit” and comparing it to what else the scripture teaches about baptism, we can identify very clearly in the New Testament three baptism which are all part of the initiation into the Christian life. The New Testament sees these three baptisms as initiatory events, a cluster of initiatory events.

There is the baptism into the body of Christ which Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 12:13 which occurs at conversion. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

The second baptism is baptism with water. The third baptism is baptism in the Spirit. That the scriptures understood that initiation into the Christian life by a multiplicity of baptisms is seen in Hebrews 6:1-2. “Let us leave the elementary [or basic] teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from Acts that lead to death and a faith in God, instruction about baptisms.” The writer of Hebrews says instruction about *baptisms* – not singular but plural – is part of foundational understanding of Christian doctrine and truth. So we have it on apostolic – we’re not sure who the writer of Hebrews was but it is part of scripture,

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breathed upon by the Spirit – here as scriptural certitude that the early believers themselves understood that initiation in the Christian life brought with it several baptisms.

The difference between these baptisms can I think be identified if we look at an element of each of the baptisms and divide it this way. The agent of the baptism, the element of the baptism, the candidate in the baptism and the time of the baptism.

In water baptism the agent of the baptism is the minister. You come to our baptistery as a candidate for baptism, I am the minister. It is I who will place you in the water. The element then into which you are placed is water. The candidate is me or you – whoever is being baptized and the time is after conversion – repent and be baptized. Hopefully, it's *right* after conversion. Not to be this long period of time between conversion and water baptism.

The second baptism is baptism into the body. 1 Corinthians 12. The agent of the baptism is the Spirit. We're all baptized by one Spirit. He's the agent. In water baptism the agent is the minister. In baptism into the body the agent is the Spirit. The element into which we are baptized is the body of Christ. The candidate again is me or you. And the time is in and with conversion. It happens when we are born again. We are placed into the body.

The baptism in the Spirit the agent is not the minister, the agent is not the Spirit, the agent is Jesus. He is the baptizer. He, scripture says, will baptize you with the Spirit. John the Baptist said that. So he becomes the agent of the baptism. The element into which we are placed is the Spirit. Not the water, not the body of Christ at this point. But the Spirit. The candidate is again me or you. And the time of the baptism is in some cases with conversion and in some cases it is after conversion. At the day of Pentecost it is after conversion. These disciples were already converted. But in Acts 10 at Cornelius it occurs with conversion.

Baptism in the Spirit may also be referred to in the book of Acts as “receiving the Spirit.” Although the word “receiving” has a different contextual meaning in John 20:22 where Jesus breathed on them to receive the Spirit. The word is capable of more than one meaning depending upon its context. We find for example in Acts 18:15-17 the account of the coming of the Spirit at Samaria. The baptism in the Spirit. Already believers had believed and were baptized. When Peter and John arrived they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Who other than Pentecostals or charismatics pray for people to receive the Spirit after they were converted and baptized? So much of the church world simply says, “You get the Holy Spirit at conversion.” But in the New Testament if people did not receive the baptism in the Spirit at conversion somebody came along and prayed that they might receive the Spirit. And that's exactly what happens here with Peter and John. Why do they pray this? Because the Holy Spirit had not come upon them. Had not yet *fallen* upon them. They had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They had the other baptism but had not had this baptism. Then Peter and John placed their hands and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. The process began.

Acts 9:17 “Brother Saul [Ananias tells him] the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you might see again and be filled with the Spirit.” He had already been converted. Now he needed this baptism in the Spirit.

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Acts 10:44-46 “While Peter was still speaking these words the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the gentiles for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” How did they know that the gift had been outpoured? Because they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Paul finds a group of disciples who were aligned with John the Baptist at Ephesus Acts 19:6. When Paul placed his hands upon them they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

Here is scriptural guidelines, instances, where people have an experience – the baptism in the Spirit.

I think we would do well to look at that term as we close that theme – the baptism in the Spirit.

So many people think that the baptism in the Spirit as something they get. Almost like you get something at the grocery store and you get the Holy Spirit. So we frequently say, “I got it!” Actually maybe a better way is to say when we are baptized in the Spirit we are immersed into a level of life, spiritual power and spiritual praise with God that is on somewhat different order than we’ve been accustomed to without that. The two differences that take place from the Acts 2 account is that a person’s praising of God takes on the character of the non-rational side through praising God in other tongues and one’s power or competency, their self-esteem, their ability to witness authentically and with certitude – that is greatly magnified. Those two seem to go part and parcel and wherever you find persons who give themselves to understanding the scripture in this way and really take the scripture seriously there you will see dynamic, alive Christians and bodies of people who are significantly having evangelism breakthrough and growth. The baptism in the Spirit. I’m concerned that I get the spiritual but I’m also concerned that the Spirit get me.

This then brings up a second issue and the matter of the gateway into dream and visions, how we enter into that non-rational side in our spiritual experience. That has to do with speaking with other tongues – a very controversial issue within some elements of the body of Christ. Often a very misunderstood matter.

When a person speaks in tongues if you’re looking at it from an outside viewpoint and you haven’t had that experience you have almost the same reaction that they did on the Day of Pentecost. Something’s wrong! Really speaking in tongues never persuades anybody to believe in Jesus Christ. Peter stands up and preaches Jesus and then they come to believe. They’re convicted in their heart. When they’re done listening to people speak in other tongues they say these people are drunk with new wine. But when you’re done preaching the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ people are cut to the heart. So tongues themselves are never designed to reach an outside world. Paul very clearly lays down guidelines about their use in public when there’s unbelievers present.

But their function is controlled by the intention that God gave for them. The preaching for evangelism was given to the unsaved. But for the edification of the believer, for this aspect of delight, this was a spiritual experience God intended for us to have a new level of relationship and experience with him. And give us confidence to step out in non-rational, faith oriented, institutional oriented side of our personality.

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As you look at the book of Acts and you find that there are three out of five instances where tongues are present, and remember that tongues are a praise to God. Five occasions in the book of Acts where baptism in the Holy Spirit is described, three of those occasions persons are speaking in tongues. The question naturally arises that whether or not we can build a universal truth on the evidence of three occasions out of five? Can we say this is a normal Christian experience? That when you receive in the Spirit you should speak in tongues because after all the five instances where this is recorded in Acts, 3 of the 5 times they clearly speak in tongues. It says so in the text. So everybody ought to do it. Is this strong enough evidence?

I think that's a fair question and our left brain ought to look at it. You can't trust the experience unless our left brain can understand it.

There are some who say no you can't build that sort of deduction from the text. Three basic reasons:

First of all Acts is a narrative passage of scripture and not a teaching passage. The assumption is you cannot build doctrine from narrative historical passages. You build them out of the epistles where you have systematic doctrinal teaching.

Second, you cannot build a doctrine out of passages that do not convey with them clear systematic instruction.

Third, three out of five times is an insufficient percentage to establish universality.

Those are three basic and honest objections. Others say, and I would be one, how can you dismiss Acts from being a source from which we derive doctrine? Does not the scripture say of itself that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for instruction? Does that mean only the epistles are profitable for doctrine and nothing else is profitable for doctrine? If that's the case where do we get the doctrine of the virgin birth because that is not found in the epistles. That's found in the historical portions of scripture. Where do we get the doctrine of the trinity?

That brings us to the fact that there is no systematic teaching in the New Testament on the doctrine of the trinity. Yet if we really have faith in Christ we believe the doctrine of the trinity because it's clearly there. You can read it in the text. You put it all together and it's there!

In regard to the 3 of the 5 instances, there are only two instances in Acts where tongues go unmentioned. I think in those instances we may infer their presence. We know that the Samaritans had received something. Simon Magus the occultic person wanted to buy the power to give it. We know that Philip had gone to Samaria and had cast out demons and healed crippled folk. He was the first one in the charismatic ministry to have a specialized healing ministry. Philip seemed to have a very narrow range of miracle ministry. Some people seem to have only faith for certain kinds of things to happen. But when Peter and John come something else happened. Something that is identifiable. So sufficiently identifiable that Simon Magus wants to buy the gift. You can never tell me that all that happened to the Samaritan believers was a funny look went across their face and they said, "I just received the Holy Spirit." It was

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something of the character that had happened elsewhere. Something identifiable as Peter says in Acts 2 that can be seen and heard.

In the other case when tongues is not mentioned is Paul. It simply notes that Ananias simply told him “Receive the gift of the Spirit.” We do know from Paul’s own testimony in 1 Corinthians that he spoke in tongues made it a frequent practice of his life. In fact it would seem very extraordinary that the apostle Paul who thought his position had been so sovereignly given him by the Lord and he did not come behind in anything that the other apostles had experienced. It would seem very strange that the apostle Paul would be given an experience that would have been different from what the other apostles themselves had known and experienced.

You can understand the 3 mentions out of 5 if you look at Luke’s technique as a writer. He is not concerned always to give a detail. For example in the book of Acts you will find 28 accounts of conversion. Those 28 will consist of individual conversions, family conversion and whole group conversion. Out of the 28 accounts only 11 of them mention water baptism. Is this to say that in the 17 other times where Luke doesn’t mention water baptism that the church didn’t teach it, believe it, or practice it. And that therefore only about 40% of those who believe should be baptized because Luke only says 11 out of 28? No. Not at all. No one would ever make that inference.

In the same I think we can say that the silence of the text cannot be used to support a view that the baptism of the Spirit with speaking in tongues did not occur.

We should note on the 3 occasions where tongues does occur everyone speaks with other tongues. Some do not manifest one gift and others another gift. The scripture never says, And some prophesied and some said I have the gift of healing and others said, I have the gift of interpretation, others said I have the gift of faith, others said I have the gift of knowledge, others said I have the gift of wisdom. Every time when the experience is used, the three times specifically when tongues are mentioned everyone speaks in tongues on that occasion.

In regard to tongues accompanying the baptism of the Spirit, a person might therefore ask should a person expect to speak with other tongues when they receive the baptism in the Spirit? I don’t ever want to argue this question with anybody. But I have to give an answer that sufficiently sanctifies me. My feeling is how do you separate the two? I’d have the same problem if someone asked, When I get baptized will I get wet? Getting wet and being baptized kind of go together. I have the feeling that what the scripture says in regard to the baptism in the Spirit that this release of praise to God and speaking in other tongues with the baptism of the Spirit run together.

I don’t believe that the scripture ever uses a particular crisis spiritual experience for leadership office in the church. When you look at 1 Timothy 3 about qualifications for elder and bishop and deacon and the like, you do not find terms being used, one time did they speak in tongues. It’s assumed that a person in a spiritual place of responsibility will have the Spirit of God working in their life. But the test is not tongues. The test of spiritual leadership is moral and spiritual qualities, which are apparent to all. Unfortunately some people have spoken in tongues but somewhere along the way their spiritual experience with God has grown cold. So speaking in tongues is no guarantee of spirituality.

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The experience however is designed to be a gateway to led individuals and whole bodies of believers into an experience with God which does not duplicate any other experience in grace. But rather adds a dimension of power in the supernatural arena. The Holy Spirit lifts us into a whole new way of praising God in our non-rational side, in our intuitive side.

I've often compared speaking of tongues and baptism of the Spirit to this phenomenon. There's a great deal of difference of communicating with your girlfriend between talking with her and kissing her. Sometimes a kiss will say a whole lot more than a lot of talk.

The same way communicating with God. How do we communicate to God in a non-verbal way? We cannot reach out and hug God. We cannot reach out and shake his hand. See him weep or cry. What the Lord has done since God is Spirit is give to us a spiritual experience, which opens up our inner lives to a non-verbal experience with God. That is, it is a way of touching God. A way of communicating with him that has a timeless quality to it. When you're communicating, communing with God in this fashion you really can lose all concept of time. Just as when you are communicating non-verbally within a romantic relationship you can lose contact with time.

That's sufficient and again I present this humbly and not from an argumentative sense. If you come from another theological persuasion on this matter we're going to share heaven together. I hope what I've had to share with you if you disagree will sharpen your ax, so to speak. I think a discussion of these issues sometimes in the body of Christ will make us more alert and help us. But I present this humbly as someone who has tried to study scripture and put a floor underneath my feet. I had the experience before I had the theology so later I had to have the theology so I could justify the experience.

Now on a practical level, the third level of this message. How do you receive the baptism in the Spirit?

There is no cookie cutter answer from scripture. There's no nice pat formula that I can give you because there is none in scripture. Let me site some things though that I do see in scripture that suggest a number of varieties of patterns that are employed.

First of all there are occasions when believers receive the baptism in the Spirit in the most sovereign and unexpected way. They haven't been seeking it. They don't know what's in store. All of a sudden the Spirit falls upon them. There are two clear occasions in Acts where this occurs. On the day of Pentecost I'm sure the disciples had no idea what was in store when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. What happened was very spontaneous to them. I'm sure that at Cornelius' house Peter had not had time to give instruction on how to receive the baptism in the Spirit. But while he was preaching the good news of Jesus Christ suddenly in the middle of his sermon, actually toward the end of his sermon, when he came to the great conclusion about the resurrection of Jesus the Spirit sovereignly fell on those people. There was nothing said. No pre-expectation. Just God sovereignly and unexpectedly baptized people in the Spirit.

There are some of you in this room that have had that experience. You came to Christ and all in one fell swoop you received all those initiatory events in one moment of time. You were saved, you were filled with the Spirit, maybe you were even water baptized right away. In the book of Acts, things could happen so quick as happened at Cornelius' house. They were inwardly converted, received the baptism of the Spirit, then looked around for some water to be baptized

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in. Sometimes the order can get just a little jumbled. But those three things are initiatory events. Sovereign and unexpected.

Another pattern in the scripture is the giving of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. There are two out of the five occasions in Acts where the laying on of hands are explicitly used in connection with the receiving of this gift.

I think we ought to take a moment on the significance of laying on of hands and what it means. It really comes from the concept of sacrifice. When an animal was offered in sacrifice it was being substituted for you and its death was mandated because of your sin. The Old Testament taught the worshipper to lay his hands upon the animal. Thereby transferring his/her sin and uncleanness to the animal and being therefore rid of the uncleanness because there was an act of transfer. However as the laying on of hands continues in scriptural practice in the New Testament it is not the transfer of uncleanness to something that is innocent. What is transferred is in effect spiritual power, spiritual health, the life of Christ. That's why the scriptures say let the elders of the church anoint with oil. Let them lay hands upon the sick because it is not a transfer of the weakness from the elder to the person who's come. It's a flow of strength into the weak. It's a flow of health into the sick. It's a flow of the Spirit into those who do not have the Spirit. So the laying on of hands is again associated symbolically with the aspect of transfer. Not that there's anything magic with the laying on of hands. In fact cults practice laying on of hands. There are duplications in the spiritual realm for spiritual experience.

As a kid growing up, I saw Tibetan demon worshipers speak in tongues. Everything God has there's a counterfeit. The difference is does it exalt Jesus Christ. The form is never exalted of the thing that's doing it. The form is simply a means that the Spirit at that moment is using to build people's faith or help them visually see what God himself is doing. Then the praise and the glory goes back to the Lord.

Another pattern in scripture is 4 out of 5 of the experiences of receiving the baptism on the book of Acts there is a corporate experience. Everybody receives all at once. In my growing up years you received kind of one at a time. But here 4 out of 5 times in the book of Acts corporate experience. Day of Pentecost, Acts 2, Samaria Acts 8, Cornelius Acts 10, Ephesus Acts 19, the whole group receives – everybody together. I believe we ought to expect that to happen when we're gathered together. Everyone together baptized in the Spirit.

Another thing we could say about the baptism of the Spirit is we have an open invitation to ask. True the Spirit does fall sovereignly and unexpectedly. But also he will function and do this work in our life as we ask him. Jesus in referring to this in Luke 11:13 "If you then being 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. [That is taught within a passage that teaches repetitive prayer and perseverance in prayer, go on asking, go on seeking, go on knocking.] How much more if you do this will your Father gift the Spirit to those who ask him?" So we may ask. We have an open invitation to ask.

Another kind of step or pattern from the book of Acts is that this baptism in the Spirit is meant to be a part of initial Christian experience. It's not meant to be a long delay between the receiving of Christ and the receiving of the Spirit – you be good and serve your time for a few years and then you become qualified to experience this gift. It's all kind of meant in an initial way.

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Sometimes there's a delay and there's solid reasons for that. Perhaps a faith, a lack of teaching or lack of understanding in our life.

Another pattern – there is a variety of ways people receive the Spirit – tarrying may be in order. Tarrying means waiting upon the Lord. It means praying. It means opening your life before God. This is how the Spirit was initially experienced on the day of Pentecost. The persons had waited ten days in the Lord's presence. I think probably a lot of unfinished business had been cleared up in their lives while they did that.

Don't be frustrated by delay. God can be doing very special things. In my own life God was doing a lot of sanctification in my life during that time. Continually causing me to look at motives, to want to bring my life as a clean instrument before the Lord to use. We shouldn't get in the microwave theology of the Holy Spirit. That always press the button and things happen and you're completely cooked. There's a place for the other, that to get everything fixed as it should it may involve some time of waiting and opening ourselves up before the Lord. Nothing is lost in this period of time. Nothing at all. God is doing special work in our life as we wait upon him.

One other thing I think should be noted as guidance to receiving the baptism in the Spirit is that when the Spirit begins to prompt you to utter go ahead and speak. Go ahead and release that which the Spirit is causing to happen within you.

I somehow had this idea in mind that when you finally received the baptism of the Spirit and spoke in other tongues you would be in a state of trance or semi on subconscious or unconscious condition. You'd wake up when it was all over and somebody would poke you and say, "You just received the baptism of the Spirit." It's only later of course that I realized that out of being experiences were not part and parcel of this experience of the baptism of the Spirit. No where in the scripture is speaking in tongues every identified as an ecstatic experience. It's not. It's not an out of being, out of body experience. Paul would go on in 1 Corinthians 14 and say the spirits of the prophets – and he's talking about both tongues and prophecy – is subject to the prophets. We have control over it. We have control to shut it down. When the Spirit is causing us to utter we have control to go ahead and speak it forth.

One of the important things you need to do in developing your spiritual and devotional life is to begin to obey those inner prompting of the Spirit and not dismiss them as fantasies. But go ahead and begin stepping out and inching into deeper waters in your spirituality.

God's put it there in your prayer to be a blessing to you and to exalt his name, to identify you and to help you intercede for things. I realize when I'm praying personally in tongues I realize that at that moment I'm praying beyond myself about situations I have no insight and pray for persons sometimes that I have no knowledge of. But the Spirit at that time is using me as a vessel to pray through. I don't know why God does that. He's chosen to use mortal human beings to participate in his plan and purpose. I know that this spiritual experience is what psychologists would call I think a very cathartic experience. Very cleansing. Edifying. There is a release of the personality. When a person receives the gift of the Spirit in this fashion and exercises this spiritual gift in their life on an ongoing basis there is a powerful inward release of life to God. A cleaning, a wholeness, a well-beingness. I find when I consciously sin, fail the Lord, before I can be released I have to take care of that because this is not the kind of thing you just plug into

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like you'd just plug a thing into a socket. The Spirit won't give you to utter unless your heart is really in tune with the Lord.

There are people who still today come along and try to rotate your jaws and give you words to say. I have real problems with that because I think the scripture term is "as the Spirit gave them to utter."

What often keeps us from speaking is not that the Spirit fails to give us utterance but we're simply failing to speak. I would encourage you to speak.

The continual filling of the Spirit, I think we must move away from the idea of "I've got it." The experience of the baptism of the Spirit is akin to a wedding ceremony. It is an initiation into a way of life. Your marriage isn't going to work very well if, after about 15 years, the only thing you can refer to is the thing that makes us married is one day we stood up in front of an altar and there hasn't been anything that happened since. Marriage takes relationship. You work on it. Same way with the coming of the Spirit. There are no meaner people on the face of the earth than Pentecostals who thought that the Spirit was something they got a long time ago. Some of the meanest nastiest people you'll ever meet. An operational walk with the Spirit will produce the evidence of Ephesians 5:18-6:9 – speaking of one another praise, thanksgiving, proper relationships. The real motivation for the baptism in the Spirit is not to belong to an in group or an elite club or a Christian Gnostic group. But it is to give us power to do the work of God and be witnesses and open our life up to deeper level of praise to the Lord.

I mentioned that 4 out of the 5 cases in the book of Acts where the experience of the baptism was received everyone simultaneously began to praise the Lord together in other tongues. I periodically see that happen in meetings. While we balance the scripture that if a non-believer comes in and hears you all speaking in tongues he'll think you mad so therefore you need to speak in words that are understood. We recognize that that is the common rule and order for worship service. Everybody coming together all the time and speaking together in other tongues is not fitting. It must be watched very carefully to not become the badge of what we regard as spirituality or moving of the Spirit in the service. While that's not to be necessarily the common order that worship services are to be dominated by this we recognize on the other hand from instances in Acts that there are occasions when everyone when the Spirit moves upon them, causes them to utter and everyone together begins praising God in another language. In that case where everyone is praying and praising God together it is not an occasion for interpretation. But it is occasion of genuine exaltation by the whole body and ministry to the Lord. If there are unbelievers like on the day of Pentecost their attention will be peaked and they'll want to know why is it they're doing this, and there will then follow a clear witness of who Jesus Christ is. But they will not go away talking about tongues. But talking about and receiving Jesus. Then experiencing the promise of the Spirit in their own life.

I covet and treasure for you that you experience God and that you experience this baptism in the Spirit which God intends to be an inward release of your life before him and which he knows you need in order to have competency in your witnessing and in your relationships in life. It will move you out. It will move the borders of your life so you can become filled with the Spirit and become more capable, more vibrant and powerful believer.

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Our Father, we come to you now and we thank you for the gift of the Spirit. For the person of the Spirit. Lord, in an audience this size we recognize that there are many levels of experience with you. Perhaps it is, Lord, that there are some within this audience who sometime ago in their own life received a glorious experience of the baptism of the Spirit. But over the years that experience has kind of fallen by the board and now it's only sort of an historical moment to look back to. It's "I received the Spirit." But the emphasis is no longer on "I am presently filled with the Spirit." Lord we pray for each one who may find themselves in that category. Revive us again. Lord, let us have a present day experience. We treasure the experiences of the past. We thank you for what you did a year ago, five years ago, fifty years ago. But we treasure now. And there's a present hunger in our hearts for you. Would you restore to us Lord our sense of wonder in your presence? Would you restore to us that sense of tenderness before you? That openness to you. That childlike simplicity. That earnestness. Would you take away the spiritual callousness that we may have had built up in our heart. Make us again, Lord, really open to you. There are persons in this body who have never received the baptism in the Spirit. Some have not done so because they've not been aware of the opportunity. Others because they have had serious doctrinal and biblical questions. We know that you will reveal yourself. That your Spirit will never go where the scripture does not go. We pray for each one of them. That you will give them a revelation of yourself. And that deep within their inner being there would flow forth rivers of living waters of praise and adoration and worship to you. We pray for others who perhaps have not had this experience, no doctrinal reservations. Just have never had this experience of being baptized in the Spirit. As we pray we ask that you would come upon them and give them this gateway to dreams and visions in their life. The gateway to special operation of your Spirit in their lives. Give them experience that they can begin to build upon. A treasure of relationship with the Holy Spirit. Then, Lord, for all of us, renew our walk. Renew our commitment. Renew our devotion. We seek again not the gift but the giver. We seek the Lord who will reveal himself to us. He will not turn any hungry or thirsty person away. But will indeed fill all. We thank you that your gifts are without discrimination. That you promise us that indeed your promise is for all who are far off. We thank you for that. Holy Spirit descend upon us and come upon us.