

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT
The Holy Spirit
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This will be the last Sunday night I will speak on the ministry of the Spirit in charismatic empowerment. We may return in some later months. But for now this is going to be sort of a conclusion of the series.

There are essentially four things I want to share with you this evening of the experience of the Spirit in Pentecost empowerment.

One of the things that I have sought to address as we have been in this series together is to answer on an intellectual or rational or a thinking level those objections that have been raised by our brothers and sisters in the Lord that stand outside of Pentecost theology, the Pentecost experience.

One of the frequent objections that I have encountered in my experience in evangelical circles has been that “You Pentecosts place so much weight on experience. If you would just go to the Bible and get your doctrine then have your experience. But you’re all the time talking about an experience.” The objection seems to be that when we have an encounter with the Spirit we then begin to base our theology upon experience rather than scripture. I grant this can be very, very dangerous. When people begin founding what they’re living by upon simply their experience how can you separate truth from error. In this world there are millions and millions of experiences. As many as there are people. Somewhere we must have a sure anchor.

I have a deep-seated conviction from the scripture that river of experience that we have in the Spirit flows down the channel which is provided in the word of God. Where that river of experience seeks to leap out of the channel of doctrine and of scripture it becomes something dangerous and heretical and to be denied.

It’s important that our experience be founded in the scripture. I would like to note in passing that there are occasions where we may have an experience before we understand it. We may have an experience before we get the theology of the experience. A lot of you perhaps have been baptized in the Spirit and didn’t know all the scriptures that went with it but you had the experience.

I stumbled across this with Peter as the Lord was preparing him to go to Cornelius’ house. He is in Joppa. At noon he has gone up to the rooftop to pray and while there waiting to eat, he falls into a trance. For a moment he is just in another world. He’s caught up in the Spirit. He has this vision which is provided him of a sheet descending from heaven with all kinds of unclean animals in it. Things that you and I would not eat ourselves. The voice says to him, “Rise, kill and eat.” And he says “No Lord for I’ve never eaten anything unclean. Never touched that which is forbidden in your law.” Again the vision comes and Peter responds.

That’s by the way quite a testimony. Here is a person who although he was not trained as a Pharisee or Rabbinic Jew or anything like that. Nevertheless as a common ordinary man that had gone to the synagogue and keep the teaching which he had been given, he had kept consistently in his life from eating those things which would have ceremonially defiled him.

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

The third time the vision comes and the Lord speaking. He learns from that experience that the Lord is calling nothing unclean. And that God is not going to be a respecter of persons. Out of that vision Peter is to get the understanding that God has accepted the Gentiles.

I think it is significant and where Peter's eating habits begin to break down because one of the critical reasons for that vision is in the early church there were people who had been brought up with a kosher diet for whom it was greatly offensive to set down with table fellowship with someone like a gentile who he thinks unclean. This proved to be a real barrier against fellowship in the early church.

Somehow Peter had to leap over his limitations. So the Lord give him an experience.

As I look at Acts 10 is where was Peter in Mark 7 when the Lord specifically taught doctrinally that all foods are clean. It's not what goes into a man that defiles a man, Jesus said. But what goes out of a man that defiles him and then Mark has the great statement, "By this he declared all foods to be clean." In other words Jesus had established the doctrine but Peter's experience had not been sympathetic, had not been in agreement with the doctrine. It took Peter's experience with the sheet to transform him. When he had the experience then he could say, "That's what the Lord taught!"

The critical thing is that sometimes in the wisdom and the plan of the Lord a person in their encounter with the Lord has an experience for which there is not an immediate doctrinal understanding of the experience. There is nothing wrong with that. As long as subsequently that experience can be validated as being scriptural. Scripture can be pointed to and it can be said from the scripture "What I experienced is in agreement with the scripture." If you cannot find that agreement in the scripture with your experience I would suggest that you chuck the experience. And chalk it up to something other than the Spirit of God.

A second thing though we want to share few a moments with is, is there a pattern in Acts regarding being baptized with the Spirit. Some weeks ago we looked at in the book of Acts there seemed to be five terms that are used synonymously in regard to the baptism of the Spirit. Terms like receiving the Spirit, being baptized with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit, the Spirit being poured forth upon us. The promise of the Father. All of these are terms, which are inter-linked.

We have sought as we have looked in Acts and compared it to John 20 to indicate that there is the coming of the Spirit in our lives when we are saved. The breath of the Spirit in regeneration which all Christians possess.

There is also an experience where Jesus baptized us into the Spirit. He himself refers to this in Acts 1:5. And Peter again quotes the Lord in Acts 11 where Jesus baptizes us in the Spirit. There are five such examples of Spirit baptism in the book of Acts. Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19. I'd like to look at some features of these in regard to Spirit baptism. As to the persons involved.

Acts 2, 120 persons were involved. This included all the apostles and it included all the leadership of the early church.

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

In Acts 8 the persons that were involved were Samaritans. We're not told how many there were but they constituted the first non-Jewish branch of the church.

Acts 9, a single individual is described as having hands laid upon him to receive the Spirit. That is of course Paul.

In Acts 10-11, the experience is with Cornelius, a gentile, a centurion, a Roman centurion and his whole household.

Acts 19, the experience is with an Ephesian group of 12 persons.

The Acts 19 experience happens roughly about 25-28 years after the Acts 2 experience. So there's almost a three-decade interval of time involved. That's very critical. It shows us into the third decade of the church the apostles were still practicing what had begun on the day of Pentecost. They had and not seen the Pentecostal experience of Acts 2 as something which was unique and not to be repeated. But already three decades into the church, this experience was still being proclaimed and experienced.

When we look at the Spirit baptism we say were persons before being baptized in the Spirit is there specific mention of their being previously regenerated. Or previously saved. In Acts 2 the experience of 120 these are already believers. They have confessed Jesus as Lord. They have seen him in resurrection power. Jesus has breathed upon them, Acts 20. And in a regenerative sense they've received the Spirit. The persons in Acts 2 who received the Spirit in Spirit baptism are already saved.

What about Acts 8? The Samaritans. Are they already saved before Peter and John come down and lay hands upon them to receive the Spirit? Yes they are. They believe the word which Phillip the evangelist preached and not only do they believe the word and have repented but they are also baptized in water. Here are saved, water baptized believers, who are described as not have received the gift of the Spirit.

Then there's the Acts 9 experience. Saul on the road to Damascus is brought to a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Three days later Ananias comes to him and says, Brother Saul receive the Spirit. He lays his hands upon him to receive the Spirit.

There will be some who look at Acts 9 and say Paul really was not regenerated until Ananias laid hands upon him and that marks his salvation moment. I don't dispute that point but it seems to me highly unlikely. It seems from any kind of reading of Paul's later testimony in Acts 22 and 26 and his letters that that moment of meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus was the turning moment and he believing moment. Subsequent to that three days later there as an encounter with the Spirit.

As for Acts 10-11 Cornelius household at Caesaria regeneration and the Spirit baptism comes simultaneously. In fact there's never any thing said about they believed, then were baptized, then were filled with the Spirit. But rather while Peter was preaching the Spirit fell. So profound was the Spirit's fall that one has to assume that the moment of salvation and the moment of Spirit baptism came inter-linked, fused. They couldn't have received the Spirit

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

unless they had believed but on the other hand the Spirit had come. So somehow these two are coming together. In one moment they believed and are Spirit baptized.

As for the Ephesians 12 in Acts 19, there's a question mark as to prior regeneration. Same debate as to whether they were really disciples before Paul ever came. Most probably they were really not what we would call born again. They had some kind of prophetic knowledge of Jesus in the ministry of John the Baptist but they do not appear to really have been in the faith. As subsequent events show when Paul was with them.

In most of the instances in Acts I would submit that it seems that conversion occurs prior to Spirit baptism. Sometimes it is a matter of several days as with Saul. Sometimes a matter of several weeks as with the Samaritans. Sometimes a matter of the delay of ten days between the ascension of Jesus and the Day of Pentecost.

Sometimes it is right all in one moment. A person is saved, filled with the Spirit in one great act of God's grace.

What about a person being baptized in water before experiencing Spirit baptism? The people in Acts 2, the 120 I'm sure had already been baptized in water. We know from John 4:1 that there were more people being baptized and becoming followers of Jesus than were followers of John. In fact the Pharisees said that Jesus is baptizing more disciples than is John. John the apostle specifically noted that Jesus himself did not baptize but his disciples did.

Since the Lord gave the commandment in Matthew 28 that the apostles should go everywhere baptizing persons it seems logical to infer at some point in their following Christ they'd already been baptized.

In Acts 8 the Samaritans had already been baptized before they experience Spirit baptism. In Acts 9 it appears that Paul receives the Spirit and then is baptized. Hands are laid upon him by Ananias that he might receive the Spirit. Then the next thing that happens, the scales fall off his eyes, he goes out and he's baptized.

In Cornelius' household they receive the Spirit before they are baptized. The Spirit falls, they're praising the Lord in other languages and then after magnifying God in this manner Peter says, "How can we deny water baptism to them since they've received the same Spirit, the same gift that we've received." We better baptize them. That was a profound mark because what it amounted to was there was no waiting period to get the authorization from headquarters back in Jerusalem. That was a sticky subject – should we let *those* people into *our* church? Will the men have to be circumcised? Will they have to start keeping dietary laws? Maybe they'll have to do certain kinds of other performances? No. If they received the same Spirit as did we then what is to prevent their baptism?

Acts 19 we have an experience where the Ephesian 12 are baptized and then receive the Spirit. Again, here's a variety of experience here. Sometimes and most frequently it's the case that a person is baptized and then receives the Spirit. But sometimes the order is reversed. That's all right. The Spirit is sovereign.

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

There are very strong terms that continually describe the experience of baptism in the Spirit. Again I'm distinguishing from the experience in the Spirit when we are saved. Which all believers obviously have.

In Acts the terms are used of the Spirit on the lips of Jesus like the promised Spirit, or John baptized with water but in not many days you'll be baptized with the Spirit, also Acts 1:8 "You'll receive power after that the Spirit has come upon you." Then in Acts 2 these terms are used to describe the coming of the Spirit on 120 – they were all filled, the Spirit was poured, it was the promise that was given. Also Peter stands up and exalts the multitude to receive the same gift. Receive the gift of the Spirit.

All of these terms describe something that is very active and alive. When we speak of the Spirit being poured out we're speaking of something very evident and involving the physical part of our being. It is more than an inner light going on. It is more than a deeper consciousness of God. It is something which is so profound that very strong verbs are used to describe it. Words like filled and baptism and poured out.

In regard to the Samaritans the same kinds of strong words are used. Acts 8 you find Peter and John come up after Philip has ministered. Verse 15, "When they arrived they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them. Actually the word is the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon them. They had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus inferring that their baptism had only been a baptism in water but they had not yet had the baptism in the Spirit. Therefore Peter and John placed their hands upon them and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is also described later as being bestowed upon the Samaritans and it is described as the gift of God. Simon Magus tries to buy the gift of God with money, that gift which has been bestowed. Acts 9 the term is used that Paul is filled with the Spirit. Acts 10, strong words again are used – the Spirit falls, the gift of the Spirit has been poured out, they have received the Spirit. Peter in retelling this in Acts 11 says the Spirit fell. They were baptized in the Spirit and they received the same gift as did we.

Again strong words in Acts 9 – receive, baptized, came upon.

This by the way separates the gift of the Spirit from something which might be more common among us – sacramental kind of church where when you reach a certain age hands are laid upon you and you supposedly receive the Spirit although you're conscious of nothing happening. It may simply be empty hands placed upon empty heads as someone has said. Resulting in an empty experience.

These terms are vital in that they show actually the personality of the Spirit of God imparted and bestowed and poured forth upon the believer.

Several weeks ago I noted this incredible scripture from the gospels in regard to the descent of the Spirit. That in the personality of Jesus it is said "the Spirit of God descended upon him as a dove in bodily form." I indicated at that time that that is tremendous mystery. I do not understand how the Spirit of God took on that characteristic. But what the gospel writers are intent on saying is that the Spirit's coming was in a very real way. It was not totally mystical or inner

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

experience. There was the force of the descent of the personality of the Spirit of God upon Jesus. Then very similar strong language is used of the coming of the Spirit upon Christians where the Spirit is described as being poured out.

The internal experience of those who have come into Spirit baptism has certain characteristics. We might note these in Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19. In Acts 2 the internal experience is that the 120 are filled with the Spirit and begin to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives them utterance, or gives them the power to speak forth boldly. These tongues we are told in Acts 2 are tongues which are given in praise to God. They hear them magnifying God, telling the wonders and the praises of God. It's very clear right from the first time tongues is mentioned in scripture that it is a language of prayer and praise to God. It glorifies and exalts God. This was a normal consequence of the work of the Spirit in the 120. The 120 did not receive on the day of Pentecost all of the nine gifts of the Spirit described in 1 Corinthians 12. It does not indicate some spoke in tongue, some prophesied, some exercised discernment, some interpreted, some had the gift of wisdom, some had the gift of knowledge. These are gifts for the flow of life within the body of Christ. But on the initial experience, the Pentecostal experience, they all gave utterance in other tongues magnifying and praising God.

In Acts 8 there is nothing indicated as to the exact internal evidence that was presence in the Samaritan believers who are said to have received the Spirit. We might well wonder if they had an internal experience that was similar to the 120 in Acts 2 or whether they simply had an experience that had no visible evidence to it.

Let me kind of put before you Acts 8 in terms of what I would identify as happening. The key is the role and the relationship of Philip to Simon Magus the magician, the one who has been the guy who has been in the forefront of religion in Samaria. Philip comes and he is preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. His ministry has basically in addition to preaching to characteristics to it. Paralyzed people are being healed. The lame were healed and demons were being cast out. It's striking when you look at Philip's ministry that it notes specifically that the lame were being healed. I don't know if that was the beginning of a special gift of faith in regard to healing ministries. There are some healing ministries that appear especially. The gift as it operates appears to evident in some illnesses but not others. It's a strange phenomena that I don't have an explanation for. But Philip is evidence from the New Testament that in a special realm of healing there was power that was displayed. And also demons were subject to his word and people were delivered.

In light of that proclamation of the gospel many people had come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Samaritans were responding. The church at Jerusalem heard about it. Peter and John come up and they lay hands upon them that they might receive the Spirit. Then Acts 8 says that when Simon Magus saw that the gift of the Spirit had been poured out upon the Samaritans he said, Let me purchase this gift that I too may give the Spirit. That's kind of strange. Why would Simon Magus want to do that?

I'd like to present to you what I think is a logical scenario of what happened. When Philip came to Samaria, Simon Magus who had been the number one man in the religious community lost his place. There is nothing worse than to be bumped. Especially when you are holding on with dear life to your position of status. Somebody else comes along and things are happening that never happened in your life before. Simon Magus kind of plays it cool. The text seems to indicate that

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

he had really not made an all out commitment to the Lord. That he had gone along with what was convenient and popular for the moment. When Philip came along there is no attempt that we see Simon Magus trying to buy the gift of healing or the gift of exorcism from Philip. These would be wonderful things to have. But if Simon Magus buys these from Philip that only makes him still on a status equal to Philip. If he could get what Philip is doing he's still only equal to Philip. He's not any better than Philip but he's better than he would have been. But he's still not number one.

So he waits. Peter and John come up and they lay their hands upon people and something begins to happen, something begins to happen to the believers that had not happened when Philip was there. Simon Magus says, Let me buy that.

Why does he want to do that? Because in his worldly way of thinking if he can bestow what Philip had not bestowed the assumption is that he jumps one step up above Philip and is on a par with these visiting apostles from Jerusalem – Peter and John who are bequeathing or through the laying on of hands something is happening that had not happened through the ministry of Philip. So he has restored himself to number one place again in the community. That I think is the nuts and bolts of what is at the root of Simon Magus. The whole attempt to buy spiritual influence through the clout of money. Subtle temptation in the body of Christ today, by the way.

I would submit that something physical and external happened when Peter and John came that enabled Simon to see that something went on. I cannot accept the understanding that when Peter and John laid their hands on people nothing happened. Or they smiled brighter. I cannot see Simon Magus wanting to buy anything that just made people smile. Something external and physical happened that seemed to be something that Simon Magus could capitalize on. And restore himself in position.

Interesting in the book of Acts, the 31 instances of believers coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, only 8 of those 31 times specifically mentioned water baptism. It would not be surprising to me that on a percentage relationship the five instances where believers come to Spirit baptism that there should be a couple instances where the utterance in other tongues would not be mentioned. That is not to exclude it from happening. I would find it difficult to assume that the believers at Samaria received some different experience from one the one hand the 120 or the other hand Cornelius, which is shortly coming up.

The scripture appears to be silent on it however and we can only look at the silence of the text and attempt to presume what happened.

Acts 9 – Saul. What happens in terms of the internal experience he has with the Spirit of God? Again, we are not told. But it is striking that when Paul comes to Ephesus years later, Acts 19, his first question to believers is, "Having believed did you receive the Spirit?" He lays hands upon them that they might receive the Spirit and what happens? They receive the Spirit and speak in tongues and prophecy. That internal evidence which goes on in their life. It would again be, when you look at this matter in a logical sense it's difficult for me to assume that Paul was laying hands upon people to receive and experience which he himself had not had. Which was foreign or strange to him. Or that the apostle Paul in his own experience would have had an encounter with the Spirit that was somewhat of a different character and nature than had the other

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

apostles. One of Paul's great claims in the letter "By no means am I less an apostle than those who physically saw the Lord."

It would be fair and right to presume that the man in Corinthians who said, "I speak in tongues more than you all," had this internal experience of language and praise in the Spirit.

In Acts 10 again the internal evidence of speaking in tongues and exalting God. The tongues again are praise and exaltation of God.

In Acts 19, again, it's utterance in tongues and prophesying.

What are the external reactions to this Spirit baptism?

They are very strong. They are not the sort of thing that leaves people scratching their head and saying, "Did anything happen?" But people walked away with a number of different reactions which indicates that something happened they couldn't explain but they had various powerful reactions to it.

In Acts 2 people are bewildered, amazed, marveled. Then they're amazed again. Then they're perplexed. Finally some wind up mocking. Simon specifically saw something happening in the Samaritans. Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed.

Acts 9 is a very personal one on one situation and there is no external reaction that is given.

Acts 10 and 11 the believers that have come with Peter to Cornelius' house – six circumcised members of the Jewish Christian congregations – are amazed that the Gentiles have received the gift of the Spirit and are praising God in other languages.

Peter was smart in the Lord. He's got this call. The Lord's telling him, "go up to Cornelius' house. Go with these people that I have sent to get you, these servants of Cornelius." Peter is already planning ahead. He knows if he goes to Cornelius' house he's going to have to answer to somebody. He's not going alone. He's going to take a witness or two, to protect me in the event that there are allegations made against my ministry and my letting down of the standards. Peter not only takes a witness or two he winds up taking six. Just to adequately make sure all the bases so to speak are covered. These six are the ones who are tremendously amazed at these gentiles exalting in God.

In Acts 19 like chapter 9 it's more of a private experience so no external reaction is recorded.

There are varying patterns too in terms of laying on of hands. Acts 2, there are no hands laid upon the believers. In Acts 8, there are hands laid upon them. Acts 9, hands laid upon Saul. Acts 10, no hands laid upon the believers to receive the gift of the Spirit. Acts 19, yes there are the hands of the Apostle Paul on persons to receive. Suggesting that the Spirit has more than one way of coming. When hands by the way are laid upon a person it's indication that the same Spirit of God which is upon me is now through the laying on of hands, we are praying that that Spirit likewise will come upon you.

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

Trying to look at the evidence in Acts and saying, What does it conclude? I would understand that the conclusion of the experience, these five experiences in the book of Acts, teaches us that subsequent to salvation there is an encounter in the Spirit which has internal experience in our life. We know what is happening. We do not guess about what is going on. And it has external ramifications as well, that other people notice that something has happened to us.

Sometimes we get lost in the data. I present the data because it's important to look at it. But we need to back off and look at maybe the larger purposes of God for us in our personal lives. What is the Spirit seeking to do inspiring empowerment, in spirit baptism. The Spirit is seeking to touch us in the center of our being. The self, the individual can perhaps be looked at from three centers. Our outer perimeter – our body. An inner sort of perimeter which is our psyche or soul. And the core of our being which is our Spirit.

If you're meeting me for the first time you're basically meeting the outer me. The body. You're coming at the outer perimeter and you cannot know me very well.

If you come to know me better you will come into contact with my psyche or my soul which from the scripture is broken up into three parts. It is the rational part of me, the thinking part of me. It is the emotional part of me. And it is also the decision making part of me. The psyche basically embodies personality traits which are common to all mankind – Christian and non Christian. The reason, the emotion and the decisions making process – the will.

If you really come to know me, you will know something about my inner spirit. You will get past the realm of reason and the realm of emotion and the realm of decision making. I would be comfortable in your presence when we're not even having a conversation. Something deeper is going on. Communication of Spirit to spirit. Especially this is true in marriage bondedness. It is more than ever true of God's relationship with us. I don't want to chop us into three different parts – body, soul and spirit. And the three never meet. We're all at the same time. Simultaneously all these cords of life are together and salvation embraces all of them.

But I think it's helpful to look at when we want to be ministered to how these various facets of our personality are ministered to.

For example suppose you want to minister to the outer me. The body. Pie ala mode would help. Or a good backrub, or neck rub or foot rub.

How can you minister to my psyche, to my soul? Those three aspects of my personality – my reason, my will and my emotions. One of the things that would really charge me, super innervate me – a good intellectual challenge would. A word study – finding out what a word you've used all your life really meant, that's exciting. Reading a great book. Coming across a great idea. That ministers to my psyche, to my soul.

Of if you want to minister to the emotional side of my psyche then expose me to some great and uplifting music.

If you want to minister to the will and decision making part of me then give me opportunity to make a courageous decision. When I'm in the pits and there's a convenient way to do something. Then there's the right way to do something that involves acting out of principle

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

instead of convenience. That kind of decision and then let me make the right one. There is nothing more fulfilling than making the right decision,

The Spirit of God wants to go beyond touching our body and our psyche. The Spirit of God wants to penetrate an area in our lives that is beyond the ability of a back rub, or a good book, a good symphony, a good decision. Beyond all of those things. How does the Spirit of God come in and touch the inner core of our being in Spirit baptism.

What the Spirit does is come in on a level of what I would say a non-verbal level, a non-rational level. It's as though the baptism in the Spirit is God's way of speaking to the depths within us from the depths within himself. That inevitably when you can counter this experience of baptism in the Spirit there is as though there was a tremendous release within your personality. A tremendous instantaneous knowing of ease in the presence of God. A release of depths within you as you praise God and give utterance of what the Spirit is breathing into your life to say and share.

But this praise which comes out of you is one which is liberating to the Spirit. It also produces a tremendous rest and ease in the presence of Jesus and in the work of the Spirit. The Spirit seeks to touch us in our inner being in a way where no man or no thing can touch us. Deeply penetrate and liberate us from within. He does this in a very unique way. He does this by causing the center of our being to radiate back glory and honor and praise to him. Because the essence of being at ease and living life as it's meant to be lived is to live it with glory and praise to God.

If you really want to be at rest seek not your own things but seek God. Seek his Spirit. There's a tremendous release.

In the book of Acts we see a sort of at ease sort of a church. Confident of its relationship with the Lord. Not inhibited, not shy in expressing itself in worship as maybe sometimes we are. But released from the inhibitions from the past which hold it back so that it cannot let it self be free to just vocalize the praises of God. Whether the vocalization in Aramaic or in some unlearned tongue. But it's that loosening of that inhibition in praise toward God, loosening that inhibition in relationship to other people and then from that the springboard of experience which sends people out to minister and be empowered to witness to others.

I'd like to say one other thing that's not related to the baptism of the Spirit but helps makes a distinction in ministry. Sometimes in the body of Christ we need to exercise discernment as to the ministry that's being exercised, whether it's the ministry to the soul or ministry to the Spirit. We can be very easily aroused with certain kinds of music, certain kinds of stories. It's possible for a person in a ministering role to isolate on those things that they know will work. Certain songs that have the right kind of bounce to it or what ever. If you pull that kind of music and get the right words together you can get an audience stirred and even a vast crowd simply doing nothing but ministering to the soul, ministering to the things that build up the psyche but may not build up the spirit. There's a difference to ministering to the psyche or the soul and ministering to the spirit. The critical difference is this, the ministry to the spirit will always have front and center unashamedly. It will always have Jesus Christ front and center. He will be lifted up. He will be exalted. There will be a tremendous emphasis upon his life. A tremendous emphasis upon his crucifixion and his death. There will be a tremendous emphasis on his resurrection and power. There will not be an emphasis upon my experience. There will not be an emphasis on

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

what I have been through so much as an emphasis upon what Jesus Christ has done for me in the person of his life and ministry and work. It's a critical distinction and one that's very easy to lose sight of. The Spirit of God seeks to minister to the center of our being so we can rest in God.

This is why Paul will say that the Spirit baptism which is initiation of the prayer life in the Spirit is one which edifies the self. It builds us up. In the Spirit we are communicating in ways that are non-verbal. We have to communicate in non-verbal ways. The deepest ways often that we communicate are not with language at all. But with expressions and love.

One other thing about the ministry of the Spirit that I think is really important to look at. The charismatic or Pentecostal experience of the Spirit I think each of us individually re-enter the experience of the 120 in Acts 2. Individually and personally we re-gather in the house they were setting. The reason why I note this is there are some occasions in the scripture where we're told to gather. We're told to continually keep the Lord's supper until he comes. Almost without exception every time I take the Lord's supper I see myself setting in that room with Jesus and his followers.

There is the sense that runs through the Old Testament in respect to the exodus when the death angel passed over and the children were preserved because the blood of the lamb was applied on the doorpost. There's the sense of the continual keeping of the Passover where every Jewish generation was to put itself in the shoes of the experience of the people who had the Passover. That experience was being recreated in them and they through memory and through scriptures stepped back in that experience and remembered that it was not just the Lord delivered our forefathers from Egypt but the Lord delivered us. We were seminally there. Genetically there in our forefathers in Egypt. We were present in the room when the death angel passed over. Remembering their experience becomes our own experience. So it's not *they* went through the Passover but it's *we* went through the Passover. We were with them in that moment.

Paul makes this great theme in Romans where he says we were in the cross of Christ. We were baptized into Christ's death. When we are baptized, what are we doing? We are physically seeing ourselves as being placed into the cross of Jesus Christ. We are there. We are back in time. The cross is not something that happened to him, it's not something that John and Mary and Peter and the others saw. It was something I was in. I was involved. I was baptized into his death and I was raised to walk in newness of life. I was in the room when he appeared to the ten on the evening of his resurrection. By looking at the gospels and knowing the story, I suddenly find myself present. When he breathed upon the disciples he then breathed upon me as well. I'm there in faith and believing. I'm in the room.

That same kind of recapitulation and restatement takes place on the day of Pentecost as well. If we are in that room when he first breaks the bread with his disciples on the eve of his passion and he says "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you." We're there again and saying, Yes Lord. This is for me. I'm there. Then we're in another room on the day of Pentecost. We're in a house, all in one place sitting. Through the recreation of that experience in us we are looking back and we are remembering and taking our place on the day of Pentecost. We're saying no as some say, The Spirit was outpoured a long time ago and it happened to them. It was reserved for that place. But we're saying, No. I was there. I am there. The Spirit is poured out upon me. That is my experience. That is my treasure. The Spirit of God has energized me. The

EXPERIENCE THE SPIRIT IN PENTECOST EMPOWERMENT

The Holy Spirit

Spirit of God is coming upon me as he did upon the 120 when they praised God and magnified him and greatly praised him, so the Spirit of God comes upon me. I too am there.

We see again in a living sort of a way the presence of the Spirit as he brings the reality of what he has done in the first instance into the reality of our experience now. The Spirit of God very much wants to touch our lives and deeply impact us with the personality of Jesus.

If our experience with Spirit baptism is simply to have a titillating experience that we can talk about, how good it felt it's all vain and no good. But if it is indeed to reproduce something of the character and the light and the power and personality of Jesus Christ in us it is in God's will and it will greatly benefit and build us up in our faith.

[end of tape]