

Eternity Daily Bible Study - No. 354
Series: The Primal Church - Acts Chapters 1-8
Verses: Acts 2:38-41
Topic: The Gift Of The Holy Spirit
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Acts 2:37-41 LITV And hearing, they were stabbed in the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men, brothers, What shall we do? (38) And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, each of you on the name of Jesus Christ to remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those afar off, as many as *the* Lord our God shall call. (40) And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted, saying, Be saved from this perverse generation. (41) Then truly the *ones* gladly welcoming His Word were baptized. And about three thousand souls were added that day.

The question is “Men, brothers what shall we do”? They were pricked to the heart by the fact they had crucified the Messiah. Peter’s reply is actually quite complex:

1. Repent.
2. Be baptized
3. Each one of you
4. On the name of Jesus Christ
5. For the remission of sins
6. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit
7. This is a promise to you and your children, near and far as many as the Lord shall call.

Firstly these verses definitely calls on all Christians ‘each one of you’ to be baptized, and if you have not been baptized, please do so immediately, in simple obedience to the word of God.

Secondly we clearly have a “salvation package” here that was all meant to happen in one day – repentance, faith, baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit. Verse 41 indicates that they were baptized that day - there was no delay. The Church of Christ and a few other denominations practice immediate baptism and I believe that is scriptural as we also see it in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8:38)

The salvation package culminates in receiving the Holy Spirit – and in this case they would have expected receiving the Holy Spirit to include the gift of tongues and prophecy – because that is what the Holy Spirit “looked like” on this occasion. It is also what it looked like at the house of Cornelius and on a couple of other occasions. The Holy Spirit was received in such a way that was observable to an outsider – and this generally was both visible and audible. (see also Acts 8;17,18)

Receiving the Holy Spirit was a certainty – “each of you”...“you shall receive”

...”this is a promise”. Thus this power was not just for special revivals now and then in Church history – it was for all believers from the moment of their new birth in Christ!

However receiving the Holy Spirit was not ‘automatic’, in Samaria it was delayed until the apostles got there and in Ephesus it only came after they had been baptized in the name of Jesus. For many people receiving the tangible real power of the Holy Spirit has been a second experience some time after conversion.

In my life there were a number of steps. Firstly I was definitely and clearly born again and received peace, understood the Scriptures and began to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit. This was the Spirit in me. Then there was a deeper work of sanctification and empowerment after a revival sermon when I gained the power to witness and became a bold Christian, this was God’s Spirit upon me in power. It is after this that I knew would end up in Christian work.

Quite soon after this, through Campus Crusade I learned about how to have a daily infilling of the Holy Spirit and how to walk in the Spirit and have self-control and a sound Christian life. Then seven years later I spoke in tongues and twelve years after that I started finding myself healing people in Jesus’ name. Thus there has been a continual growth in my relationship with the Holy Spirit. I do not think that anyone else has to follow these same steps. However I do think that all Christians should seek the indwelling, infilling and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

The salvation package is not just a remission of sins package, though that is very important. It is also a receiving of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is for everyone, as many as the Lord shall call, both far and near, indeed it is for “each one of you” – not just charismatics and Pentecostals. This is not a denominational thing – it is a God thing!

Do not be deterred (as I was for many years) by the irrational behavior of some who claim the Spirit. As I have repeatedly said, God is intelligent and expects us to behave intelligently also (if we are to be in His image)– and He gives us wisdom for this purpose. The Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom – not of folly, He is a Spirit of holy order, not of fleshly disorder.

Receiving the Holy Spirit in power can be different from His quiet inner dwelling after conversion. If you are a Christian, and Christ dwells in you, you have the Holy Spirit within you. However you may not yet have Him upon you in power for ministry and witness. You should seek this. It is not dangerous or crazy. God is good and only gives good gifts to His children:

Luke 11:9-13 CEV So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. (10) Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. (11) Which one of you fathers would give your hungry child a snake if the child asked for a fish? (12) Which one of you would give your child a scorpion if the child asked for an egg? (13) As bad as you are, you still know how to give good

gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.

Whatever your theology or your denomination I ask you to do what Jesus says in this passage – ask, search, knock. God wants you to have a deeper relationship with God the Holy Spirit and will pour His Spirit out if you ask Him to – it's a promise for each of you!

Blessings,

John Edmiston

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