

The Outpouring of the Spirit, #5

The Blessings of the outpouring of the Spirit on the believer, #2

Intro: In our last study on the Holy Spirit we talked a little about the blessing of the outpouring of the Spirit upon NT believers. We noticed that the outpouring of the Spirit resulted in two important actions: 1) revelation of the word of God; 2) performance of miracles that confirmed the authenticity of the revelations.

Paul in his epistles often described the effect or blessings of these two things in the life of the early church. These statements should be understood in light of the background experience of the people to whom Paul was writing. The background is the miraculous work of the Spirit in revelation and confirmation of the word. In our last lesson we saw that the outpouring of the Spirit.

Confirmed that these new disciples belonged to God; thus Paul speaks of how they were “sealed” with the Holy Spirit.

Assured them that the inheritance God had promised them as His children would be given them; thus Paul speaks of the Spirit as the “earnest” or “pledge” of their redemption.

Now let’s continue the study by noting other blessings that came through the outpouring of the Spirit upon the early church.

The outpouring of the Spirit guided the church in worship!

What happened when the disciples came together for worship? We might be quite surprised at the service. The Holy Spirit guided the worship by providing the content of songs and prayers.

What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit; (Jude 20)

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; (Ephesians 5:18-19)

What a blessing it would have been to these new churches to be guided in their worship by the Holy Spirit! Even if they did know what to pray or what to sing, the Spirit would provide just what was needed for the time.

The outpouring of the Spirit gave the church instruction in the absence of a full revelation of God’s will.

Just as the outpouring of the Spirit identified those who had been baptized as belonging to the Lord, it also provided guidance for the same.

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. (Galatians 5:18)

By such statements Paul is affirming that one of the blessings of having received the Spirit is the guidance or instruction that the Spirit gave them.

This guidance did not take the form of a personal inner gyro that directed every step of every believer, but an external source of instruction to the whole church that came through the charismatic gifts.

The Spirit was active in the teaching assemblies of the church to provide the needed knowledge and wisdom to instruct the church!
But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. (1 Corinthians 14:3)

The Spirit's instruction came through the gifts of revelation and not through some subjective inner leading moment by moment!

Having the power to receive revelations and work miracles did not guarantee a faithful life, unless the disciples listened to and applied the Spirit's message. Thus the church was urged to let the Spirit's revelations guide them!

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

When the Galatians listened to and applied the Spirit's teaching they would no longer live in sin, producing the works of the flesh, but would live in the righteousness of faith, practicing the fruit of the Spirit.

However if they continued in a life of sin, the Holy Spirit would be grieved!

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

The presence of the Spirit within them was used as an incentive to live a holy and moral life.

Amazing as it might seem to us, some of those who spoke in tongues and prophesied on Sunday appeared at the temple of Aphrodite later in the week to have sex with the cult prostitutes there and offered the rationale that it was no wrong but merely a fulfillment of a need of the body. Paul rebuked them for such shallow thinking and reminded them that their "one flesh" relationship with the harlots also brought the Spirit of God which was dwelling in them into that relationship!
Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Earlier in the epistle Paul pointed to the fact that they should treat one another with love and respect because the whole body was a temple of God.

Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Though the church was receiving revelations in part there was still a need for apostolic guidance as well until the full revelation of God came.

Paul, quite aware of the gifts of the Spirit among the Corinthian church, felt the need to further instruct and encourage them as an apostle of Christ to be faithful to the Lord's will.

On one occasion, he even felt compelled to remind them that he "too" had the Spirit of God and that what he wrote was from the Lord and should not be set aside by those who may have used having a gift of the Spirit as a reason not to listen to his teaching!

But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:40)

If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. (1 Corinthians 14:37)

The outpouring of the Spirit gave assurance of the truth to the NT congregations.

It is interesting that the apostles appealed to the Spirit's presence among the congregations as proof that Jesus was indeed God's Son and an assurance that groups that denied this were apostate or not of God.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. (1 John 2:20-22)

And the one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And we know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. (1 John 3:24)

On another occasion Paul appealed to a particular message that came by the Holy Spirit. The message was that of God's love for mankind which he said was...

"poured out in our hearts through the Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

The outpouring of the Spirit assisted the church in reaching unbelievers.

The gifts of prophecy and tongues would have benefit for those who came into the church's assemblies.

Tongues had evidential value to the visitor; since it revealed by miracle God's presence among the disciples.

So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. (1 Corinthians 14:22)

However useful this sign might be, it had to be used with caution lest the visitor seeing a whole church full of tongue speakers and decide that they were crazy! Thus, the gift of prophecy also had benefit to the unbeliever: If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are

mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. (1 Corinthians 14:23-25)

Conclusion: Clearly the outpouring of the Spirit provided wonderful blessings to both unbelievers indirectly and believers directly. Was this outpouring to last for all time? Was it only temporary? What does the Scripture teach? We will answer this question in our next lesson.