

THE GIFTS AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT WATER OF LIFE

Introduction

One of the greatest blessings the Bible offers a believer is "The Promise of the Father." This promise is referred to initially in [Luke 24:49](#) and again in [Acts 1:4, 2:33 and 2:38](#), [Galatians 3:14](#) and [Ephesians 1:13](#). These verses create an excitement and an anticipation of a fulfilment of life and possibility for all those who will be counted as New Testament believers. Much of the The Book of Acts, as well as many of the epistles, center around the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Yet the work of the Holy Spirit is likely the most misunderstood ministry in the entire Bible. His work is often abused and or misused creating a fear that keeps many who are hungry for a deeper and more meaningful walk with God at a distance. Much of the church has assigned the work of the Holy Spirit to certain denominations or groups of believers, a decision that insulates them from the challenge of working through all it takes to have a Spirit filled walk with Jesus.

There is no question that the work of the Spirit can be difficult to understand. His work is often one clouded in mystery. Yet there are many practical examples in the Bible of the Spirit working in the day to day affairs of believers bringing life and passion as well as balance and integrity to ministry. The truth is, much of the work of the Spirit isn't nearly as mystical as many Christians would like you to believe, though it is all very supernatural. The great Bible scholar R.A Torrey once said, "The secret of effectual living is knowing the power of the Spirit through the Word. The secret of effectual service is using the Word in the power of the Spirit. There are some who seek to magnify the Spirit, but neglect the Word. This will not do at all. Fanaticism, baseless enthusiasm, wildfire are the result. Others seek to magnify the Word, but largely ignore the Spirit. Neither will this do. It leads to dead orthodoxy, truth without life and power. The true course is to recognize the instrumental power of the Word through which the Holy Spirit works, and the living, personal power of the Holy Spirit who acts through the Word."

This paper has been written in order to establish and maintain this viable and life-giving work of the Spirit at Water of Life Community Church.

Clarifying the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Christians often hunger for a deeper and more meaningful relationship with the Father, one that is full of His interaction with them. This is the work of the Spirit, the work [I Corinthians chapters 12, 13, 14](#) speak of; a releasing of charismata or spiritual gifts to empower believers into His presence. Unfortunately, we have all witnessed or heard of the misuse and abuse of gifts, which cause many to fear the Spirit's ministry. It is important to say at the outset of this discussion that people, including many Christians, tend to abuse whatever it is that God gives to bless us. We have often abused the life-giving grace of the cross, taking advantage of the death and resurrection of Christ. Fortunately, God doesn't withdraw grace due to humans abusing it. In like manner, when we abuse the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit, we are taught in the Word to correct our behaviour, not do away with the Spirit's ministry.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The book of Romans makes it clear that all believers receive the Holy Spirit at their rebirth.

*However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. **Romans 8:9***

The book of Acts makes it clear that after that initial sealing of the Spirit there is still a deeper work of the Spirit to be done in every believer's life. Many call that work the Baptism of the Holy Spirit." The Scriptures refer to this work as the, "filling, renewing, refreshing and baptising of the Holy Spirit." What is abundantly clear is the on going need of all Christians to be impacted by the Holy Spirit; to be touched, filled, baptised and renewed experientially by the Holy Spirit as the disciples were on the day of Pentecost;

*And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. **Acts 2:1-4***

*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. **Acts 1:8***

The Purpose and Power of His Spirit

At Water of Life, we do not believe that there are two tiers in Christianity, those baptised in the Holy Spirit and those who are not. When we create this distinction as a marker of spiritual maturity we do a fundamental disservice to all involved. Rather, we believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to all believers to primarily empower them to do ministry. The Book of Acts makes this very clear. The disciples were told to remain in the upper room in prayer until the Father visited them with power from on high. This power was never meant to be exercised in a way that brought some into deeper relationship with the Father, while holding others out. There was never an inside and an outside group in the New Testament. Rather there were those who opened to the Father's touch, and yes, even in the Book of Acts, those who chose not to open to His touch.

*Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 'Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.' **Acts 6:1-3***

Notice the criteria used here to define who the Apostles would choose to wait tables and who would not be selected. "Select seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit..." It is quite obvious that if everyone was "full of the Spirit" that certainly wouldn't have been included as a prerequisite to serving in this situation. So we see that in the early years of the church there were those who opened to the fullness of the Spirit's work and those who did not.

Clarifying the Purpose of The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

This filling of the Spirit is not necessarily the marker or even a marker for spiritual maturity, though many in the church have declared it to be. The filling with the Spirit is certainly to be desired and embraced to help empower one who desires to grow deeper with the Lord in touching and serving others, but it is in no way a guarantee that one will experience spiritual growth and maturity. This activity, also known as sanctification, is our day to day walk with God that includes time in prayer, the Word and worship that daily draws us near to the Father's heart. The infilling of the Holy Spirit can in many ways enhance these activities, but there are many Spirit-filled believers who grow cold and unfruitful in their daily hunger and passion for Jesus. A cursory overview of the book of I Corinthians makes this very apparent. The Church in Corinth moved in the power of the Spirit (see chapters 12-14). They operated in healing and prophetic gifts, but they failed miserably in their day to day walk with God

and with each other. There were divisions among them allowing sin in the camp and they had little or no conviction to deal with it.

*Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgement. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' and 'I of Apollos,' and 'I of Cephas,' and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptised in the name of Paul? **I Corinthians 1:10-13***

*It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. **I Corinthians 5:1-2***

Thus it is crucial that we recognize and remain open to all that the Spirit brings to us. That we would honour the Holy Spirit's multifaceted work of empowering the believer for works of ministry and sanctifying believers in their daily walk, convicting and renewing them, embracing all that He has set before us in His Word.

A Historical Look at the Spirit's Work

Historically speaking the only renewal the evangelical church has experienced has come through this "filing" or "baptism" that Jesus alone can give. (**John 1:33**) Godly men such as D.L. Moody, R.A. Torrey, Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, Jonathan Edwards, Andrew Murray and John Wesley all experienced this power. R.A. Torrey, Dean of Moody Bible Institute and Biola College said, "I sought earnestly that I might be baptised with the Holy Spirit...the result was a transformed Christian life and a transformed ministry."

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is usually separate and distinct from the salvation experience, yet they may happen simultaneously at salvation. Jesus on His last night before His crucifixion declared to His disciples the need to cling to Him and remain in relationship with Him at all times. This would certainly assume salvation had taken place when He spoke:

*Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. **John 15:3***

Further we see in **John 20:22b**, He imparted the Spirit to them declaring;

He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

The word "receive" in the Greek text is aorist imperative and this tense never has a future meaning. Some would say Jesus was prophesying about **Acts Chapter 2**, the event of Pentecost, but that is impossible. Jesus was not dealing with some experience yet to come, He was sealing their salvation with the Holy Spirit (See **Ephesians 1:13** below). This is very important to those who were taught that there was "no second experience" of Holy Spirit baptism after salvation, when in fact biblically there is.

For Jesus later told all of these same men who had received the Holy Spirit previously to tarry until they were baptised with the Holy Spirit. Jesus declared the salvation of His disciples and the sealing work of the Holy Spirit that is clearly referenced in;

Ephesians 1:13, *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...*

This sealing of the Spirit took place before Pentecost in the upper room according to **John 20:22**, with the baptising power coming later at Pentecost.

*For John baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. **Acts 1:4***

It was at Pentecost that we can see the purpose of this baptism clearly defined when Jesus said,

And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, 'Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?'

*He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.' **Acts 1:5-8***

The Defining Purpose of the Spirit's Baptism or Filling

Acts 1:5-8 sets the perimeters and purpose of this impartation of the Spirit.

...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

The empowering work of the Spirit is primarily intended to be used in outreach, touching and healing others in Jesus name. Repeatedly in the Book of Acts, we find believers experiencing and embracing this empowering for ministry, thus we believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit ought to be embraced today if we are to do His ministry effectively.

*Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. **Acts 8:14-17***

*And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' **Acts 9:17***

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also, for they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for them to be baptised who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?' And he ordered them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days. **Acts 10:44-48***

And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, and he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said to him, 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.' And he said, 'Into what then were you baptised?' And they said, 'Into John's baptism.' And Paul said, 'John baptised with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' And when they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy

Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. And there were in all about twelve men. Acts 19:1-7

Spirit Filled Living as a Daily Lifestyle

We believe that this baptism or filling should be an ongoing part of the Christian life, not just a "one time experience." For any of us to be effective for Jesus we need His power to do His work and we need it every day. We need to be refilled and renewed in order to remain fresh, passionate and vibrant for Jesus. This is the example we see in Peter's life. We are told of in the Book of Acts that he was touched, baptised, and filled no less than three times. **Acts 2:1,4** Peter was with the disciples in the upper room and he was filled with the Spirit, yet in **Acts 4:8** and **Acts 4:31** we are told he received a fresh filling of the Spirit.

Then Peter, having been filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them: 'Rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we to-day are examined concerning the good deed to the ailing man, by whom he hath been saved, be it known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye did crucify, whom God did raise out of the dead, in him hath this one stood by before you whole. Acts 4:8

And they having prayed, the place was shaken in which they were gathered together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and were speaking the word of God with freedom, and of the multitude of those who did believe the heart and the soul was one, and not one was saying that anything of the things he had was his own, but all things were to them in common. Acts 4:31

Once a Christian has experienced the ministry of the Spirit, it then becomes a daily activity of Spirit-filled believers to continue to invite His touch in their lives and to remain open to His work.

Receiving the Baptism of the Spirit

Some desire the work of the Spirit for the wrong reasons. They have seen their friends touched, they have heard about certain sign gifts being manifested and desire to experience those gifts or they are just looking for a new experience with God. The baptism of the Spirit certainly includes the miraculous touch of Jesus, but He doesn't touch us so that we can be touched; He touches us so we can touch others.

He gives the Holy Spirit to those who come to seek His touch in their lives and ministry and His Word is clear that He gives to those who ask and keep asking, to those that seek Jesus, not His gifts or power.

And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 'For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. 'Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 'Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion will he? 'If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?' Luke 11:9-13

Don't be discouraged if the first time you open to His touch you don't sense Him move in you. Pursue Him with all your heart and you will, according to His promise, find Him. He will meet you. This may be done alone in private, in a class or at a service. We encourage you to come to the altar and invite prayer, to the ministry team, to other Spirit-filled believers and ask them to lay hands on you and invite His touch as you open to Him.

Once He has touched you, you should expect that the baptism of the Holy Spirit will be followed by a release of charismata or sign gifts. This may or may not include speaking in tongues, but surely we should expect miraculous things to follow as they did in the New Testament;

*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills. **1 Corinthians 12:7-11***

These gifts may include power to impart physical healing, emotional healing, supernatural prophetic insight, the ability to discern deeply in the spiritual realm as well as the gift of a prayer language often known as the gift of tongues. Each of these gifts are found throughout the New Testament.

Before We Close

We believe all gifts should be used in an orderly and Biblical fashion according to the guidelines found in **1 Corinthians 14:26-33**. It should be said that we know where people exercise any gift from God there will be times they misuse those gifts. That is neither an excuse nor a licence to do so, but it is a spiritual reality and it is the reason our pastors are trained to help keep Biblical boundaries around the use of these supernatural gifts. It is our job as Elders and Pastors to kindly give instruction here. Our goal is to give order to the use of gifts, not shut them down because some would abuse them.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ADDENDUM

I. Prophecy (SEE PAMPHLET ON PROPHECY FOR FURTHER CLARITY)

- A. We believe in the New Testament use of prophecy as outlined in **1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14**. This would include the public use of prophecy as outlined in **1 Corinthians 14:26-33** and the more private ministry of the gift of knowledge or "word of knowledge or wisdom" found in **1 Corinthians 12:8**.

For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:8

- B. We believe that the gift of prophecy is used for edification, exhortation and consolation as found in **1 Corinthians 14:3**, i.e., to build up, encourage and console. That it must be used within Biblical guidelines of **1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14**. This includes being kind, gentle and loving when exercising the gift of prophecy.
- C. We believe that our "prophetic words" must not trap others into a course of action, "God says you must do this or that." Rather they must remain open to the possibility of at least partial error, "I think God may be saying this to you," 'Does that make any sense?'

*We know in part and we prophesy in part. **1 Corinthians 13:8-9***

- D. We believe that gift of prophecy ought to be used to "confirm" what God is doing in you already. If not, put the word on the "shelf" for later reference, but don't try to be self-fulfilling or

living under what was spoken by another person. Remember New Testament believers (including you) were given the Holy Spirit and the Bible to guide them daily in all they do.

- E. We believe only those whose lives and gifting we know, ought to exercise the gift of prophecy in a public assembly. We would in no way seek to hinder the flow of the Spirit of God by telling you not to prophesy. However, if you are new to this assembly or are unsure that what you feel led to speak is from God, please take the word to a Pastor or Elder so that they can decide a course of action at that time.

II. Prayer For Healing

- A. We believe in praying for healing of the sick, and emotionally and spiritually wounded. *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.* **James 5:14**

- B. We believe that laying on of hands is often appropriate during prayer.

And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. **Acts 9:12**

- C. We believe that concerted, pointed prayer for freedom or "deliverance" from demonic spirits is Biblical and often appropriate, but we ask that this always be overseen by a trained leader or Pastor, and that it be done with great sensitivity both to the Holy Spirit and person involved.

III. We Believe In The Gift of Tongues

- A. That there are three ways of expression for this gift's use:

- 1. To build up the person using the gift as they pray.

For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. **1 Corinthians 14:2-4**

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 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 14:14,15**

- 2. The public use of the gift of tongues. This use must always be followed by an interpretation.

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophesy or of teaching? **1 Corinthian 14:6**

What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and let one interpret; but if there is not an interpreter, let him keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. **1 Corinthians 14:26-28**

- 3. The gift of tongues when used to "sing with the spirit."

*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***

*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 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; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father. **Ephesians 5:15-20***

IV. Recommended Reading

We recommend these books to read to clarify this issue:

The Book of Acts – Dr. Luke

Joy Unspeakable – Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones

Secret Power – Dwight L. Moody

The Work and Person of the Holy Spirit – R.A. Torrey

The Spirit of Christ – Andrew Murray

Divine Healing – Andrew Murray

The Beauty of Spiritual Language – Jack Hayford

We believe these books provide a Godly, Biblical and evangelical perspective on both the gifts and baptism of the Holy Spirit.