

Why God Gave You the Holy Spirit

If you have been cleansed from sin through Christ's death, you are a vessel of God's very own Holy Spirit—the same Spirit who enjoyed eternal fellowship with the Father and the Son for all eternity past.

That's an incredible thought.

But amid all our seeking the gifts of the Spirit, discussing what it means to be Spirit-filled, theologizing about the Holy Spirit's role, and asking Him to be at work in our midst, sometimes we forget to ask: why?

This is no shallow question. The Holy Spirit is the tangible, personified evidence that we now have total access to God through Christ. The Holy Spirit is the unbreakable seal on our salvation (Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of faith, resurrects our dead souls, and makes us more holy so as to be like Jesus himself.

But that isn't all He does.

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

It seems that whenever the Holy Spirit is given to someone, it's for one crucial reason: to preach the Gospel.

You may already know the verse I'm about to cite. It's in Acts, where Jesus tells the apostles right before His ascension, “[Y]ou will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and *you will be my witnesses* in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (1:8, emphasis added).

But the thread of Spirit-filled witnessing runs far deeper than one verse.

In Isaiah 61, Jesus's life and ministry is foretold with a key phrase: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring *good news*..." (v. 1a). Yes, *that* good news.

In Luke 4, right after Jesus receives the Holy Spirit at His baptism and spends 40 days being tempted by Satan, we're told that He returned to His hometown "in the power of the Spirit (v. 14), went to the synagogue, stood up, and read *that passage*."

In the presence of all his fellow Galileans, he openly revealed His identity as the Messiah for the first time meaningfully with these words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim the gospel" (in essence).

A few short years later, in the Upper Room, Jesus tells his disciples that they're going to be hated and persecuted by the world. And he wraps up his warnings with this interesting prophecy:

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26-27).

And Jesus was right. In Acts 2, when the apostles were finally filled with the Spirit, what was the immediate outward manifestation? Of course they spoke in tongues—but what was the *content* of their speech? Peter stood up and preached one of the boldest gospel messages ever: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified" (v. 36).

The Big Picture

Different people have different gifts and roles in the mission, but nothing has changed since the day of Pentecost as

far as God's motives in pouring His Spirit out on you.

No matter what you believe about the Holy Spirit, if anything you are seeking to do or be anything through Him and making the good news of Jesus known to others isn't somewhere at the core of your motives, you're entirely missing the point.

The Holy Spirit's work throughout all history—Old Testament, New Testament, and now—isn't just about elaborate miracles or exuberant utterances. It's about pointing people to the good news: (1) Jesus died to take your punishment and kill sin in your life, (2) rose from the dead to redeem your life from spiritual and physical death, and (3) ascended to Heaven to send you the Holy Spirit—so you could go and tell others about Him!

So today, consider: why did God give *you* the Holy Spirit?

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