

Leading People into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

(Reference: Terry Virgo Session Brighton 2007
<http://www.kingsarms.org/filledwithspirit>)

Acts 13 – “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed”

We are Charismatic not simply because of lively worship but presence of God, the filling of the Holy Spirit and the ongoing manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit.

Terry Virgo “I would hardly ever ‘just pray’ for someone because of the <potential> backlash – it’s not just helping people come in but stay in happy and assured”

Church history hinges on one verse: Acts 1:8 “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you”. It was this that took fearful incompetent men and made them into world changers.

The disciples had a backcloth to this message – Gideon, David, Judges. This was the history of Israel – spirit filled leaders empowered when the spirit came upon people.

Joel also said there will come this end time outpouring (Joel 2:28)

Then John the Baptist declared 2 things (John 1)

“He is the lamb of God who will take away your sin” (v29)

“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit” (v33)

Jesus doesn’t mention the Spirit until he says “I have come to spread fire on the earth but I have a baptism to be baptised with and I am ‘shut in’ until that is accomplished” (Luke 12:49) It’s clear that the Lamb of God must come first.

Various views:

Evangelical view: – you have it. When you become a Christian you have what there is. Being full of the spirit is a gradual thing. Usually this position is held by those who believe the gifts of the spirit have ceased.

Second blessing view: God can’t fill a cup that’s already full. You need to surrender then he’ll fill you. Wesleyan teaching – the coming of the Spirit burns out all sin.

Pentecostal view: You wait - ‘tarrying meetings’

Release of the Spirit: You essentially got it at conversion – now it’s released. Taught by Wimber and Watchman Nee.

“All Scripture is profitable for doctrine” – you can get theology from narrative.

No Epistle tells you to get baptised in water or the spirit – it’s just taken for granted. If we didn’t have Acts we wouldn’t know how it happened.

It’s hard to build a theology from the apostles themselves because they lived through the redemption story. It’s much better to learn from the second generation as depicted in Acts.

Acts 2:36-39 Jews: “You will receive the gift of the holy spirit – it’s for you and all your children”

Acts 8:14-17 Samaritans: “for he had not yet fallen upon any of them”

The Samaritans had been converted and then they were filled with the spirit

Acts 9:17 Paul: “you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit”

Paul’s testimony would be I was converted on Damascus road then later filled with the spirit

Acts 10:44 “the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard his word”

Acts 19:2-6 “There <Paul> found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Paul’s initial question to these people and their response makes it clear that they were not believers yet. However, he leads them to Christ and they are subsequently filled with the spirit. What is clear though is Paul’s expectation. If receiving the spirit is the same as being converted then Paul’s question makes no sense. “Were you converted when you were converted”. Paul clearly saw something amiss and understood that it was possible to believe but not be filled with the Spirit. This passage makes a nonsense of the Evangelical view that every person who is saved is filled with the spirit.

The Theology that it’s a later blessing doesn’t fit with Cornelius’ story or the Ephesians or Paul himself. The concept of second blessing doesn’t fit with the evidence of Acts. Like a general saying ‘go fight and if you do well I’ll give you a gun’

Release of the spirit – Apostles didn’t talk like this ‘the spirit had not yet fallen upon them’ It doesn’t say they released the spirit.

Pentecostal view – strong emphasis on tarrying until you speak in tongues. People go to tarrying meetings for years – just waiting passively for something to happen. Day of Pentecost is unique in that Jesus said ‘wait’ - John 7:37-39 is the key to this

John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

It’s a prophetic statement – the spirit is not yet given because he’s not yet glorified. If you’d have pushed through on that day and said ‘I’m thirsty’ Jesus would have said ‘wait’. But they don’t say after Pentecost ‘you need to come and wait’.

We're looking to provoke faith – “you don't need to wait anymore” John 7 – not yet glorified. Acts 2 – now glorified.

“Am I holy/worthy enough” – has nothing to do with it. We must smash that thinking – Jesus didn't say wait until you're holy enough. It doesn't say “the spirit was not yet given because they weren't ready” No instead it says “Jesus was not yet glorified”.

Gal. 3:2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? “

We must ask ourselves “when do you think you'll be good enough?”

It's Jesus who makes us good enough.

It's not about you praying a bit more – you must stimulate and illuminate them to the place of faith. The promises is to everyone.

If someone's been prayed for many times then 'let's talk' – I don't have magic hands. John 7:37 is now up to date. So what does it say “anyone thirsty” – are you thirsty – looks like you qualify. Let him come to me. Come to Jesus – not a person who'll do it to me. But come to Jesus and drink.

If I'm laying hands on you, you must still be coming to Jesus.

Frequently Asked Questions on being filled with the Spirit.

(Terry Virgo's notes plus additions by Simon Holley)

1. What about speaking in tongues?

1. Not everyone speaks in tongues (1 Cor 12:30) but lots (perhaps most) do. Paul even says that he desires that all would speak in tongues which must be a reflection of the heart of God (1 Cor 14:5)
2. If people don't have tongues as an initial evidence it's clear that there must be 'some evidence' for Paul to ask the question in Acts 19.
3. It's not God who speaks in tongues – it's you. Some people switch into passive mode. Some people wait for God to do it.
4. Speaking is what you do – the language is what God gives. You have to project speech. Elijah – take the little oil you have and pour it – as the oil went over the lip of the vessel the miracle was not that it started but that it continued. Peter – this could happen every minute now. Peter had to take his walking apparatus and walk. You begin to pour and it flows.
5. Make sure they understand that it's not all about tongues.

2. What is the situation for believers who have not been 'filled' when they believed – what is their relationship with the Holy Spirit?

- a. Clearly to be a Christian we have to be born of the Spirit (John 3:8, Gal 3:29)
- b. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him (Rom 8:9)

- c. Yet clearly there is a distinction in the gospels and Acts concerning this filling/enabling/empowering for service.
- d. We needn't get hung up on this instead our question should be 'have you been filled with the spirit and received empowering/gifts of the spirit'? If not then let's pray!

3. What do you do if people still do not receive?

- a. Don't tell them that they have when they haven't – they will know!
- b. Take the focus off tongues but keep an expectation on 'evidence'
- c. Release 'tension' by helping them relax and stand with them (perhaps pray again at a later time) until they are sure.
- d. Reaffirm God's love for them and talk again about their expectations and beliefs.
- e. Often they will be filled 'out of pressure of the situation'

4. What about further fillings of the spirit?

Clearly critical in Acts (2:4, 4:31, 13:52) and a command to pursue in the Epistles (Eph 5:18 best translated 'be being filled with the Holy Spirit')