

Filled with the Holy Spirit

In the early portion of this chapter, we see the true power of God the Almighty and the entrance of the Holy Spirit in the early apostles. “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting”. The issue of tongues may be controversial in many denominations, but the true wonder in this passage is the movement of the Holy Spirit and the miracle performed by God. While the concept of tongues may seem confusing to the human mind, is it more confusing than any other miracle performed by God? Consider the parting of the Red Sea, the sun standing still, turning water into wine, healing the sick, and bringing the dead back to life. The focus here should be the miracle performed by God, and the result of His influence - many people hearing about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

1. Do you distinctly remember the moment that you felt the Holy Spirit enter your life? Was this the same day that you confessed faith in Jesus or did it occur earlier / later?
2. Have there ever been moments when you've experienced the Holy Spirit move through a distinct moment or situation? What happened? How did it feel? What was the outcome?
3. Does any part of your prayer life involve asking God to fill you with His Spirit? Should we be asking God for this? Why or why not? What should we expect from this prayer?
4. Similar to the issue of tongues, are there other miracles that God has performed, both in the Bible and in the world around you, that just don't "make sense"? What does this say about the God that we serve?

Your Testimony, Your Faith

Peter, once the denier of Jesus, now steps up to defend his apostles and his Messiah. Once the crowd heard it, they asked, “What should we do?” The response was repentance, baptism, and conversion. Peter's confidence in his testimony and faith proved to those around him that Christ was real, the Holy Spirit was real, and real action must be taken. Our testimony and confidence in faith are some of the best ways to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in all areas of our lives. People want reasons for why you believe what you believe. People want evidence that God has done something in your life. Oftentimes, we tend to underestimate our testimony, simply stating, “Well I was baptized as an infant and I've been a Christian ever since, and life's been dandy”. If we truly believe in the movement of the Holy Spirit, then our entire lives are continually being influenced by the free gift of Jesus Christ. Our whole lives are testimonies, and we must be ready to proclaim it to all who have ears.

1. What is your personal testimony? How did you come to faith in Jesus?
2. How has your life changed and continually changing since you accepted Him as Lord and Savior?
3. How confident are you in your testimony and “reasoning” for faith? Have you shared either with family, coworkers, or friends? What was this process like? What was the result?
4. Has the Holy Spirit ever given you guidance as you converse with doubters or seekers?

Inward Conversion, Outward Action

Simply put, while the Holy Spirit was an inward conversion of the apostles, we clearly see that it resulted in an outward action. Verses 42 through 47 show the response of the early converts as they worshiped their Savior and loved each other in community. In the same way, once we accept Jesus as our Savior, a change in action and lifestyle should naturally follow. Being a Christian is countercultural, but it's only countercultural if we truly live it out and let the Holy Spirit influence all aspects of our lives. In other words, once God's Spirit has entered your heart, others should realize it too as you begin to live your life radically different than what you once did and what society suggests is “normal”. The inward movement of the Holy Spirit should result in a radical outward expression that cannot be explained by anything other than the glory of Jesus. Once God's Spirit enters your heart, things should be better because of His work through you!

1. Have you noticed a difference in your lifestyle since you proclaimed your faith in Jesus? Have others?
2. How have you changed since you accepted Christ? How have your relationships changed? How has your marriage changed? How has your parenting changed? How has your approach at work changed? In other words, how have things changed by God's work in your life?
3. If you feel like "nothing's changed" in your life, then what does this say about your faith and spiritual life?
4. How can we begin to mimic the response of the early church in our giving, serving, loving, and spreading of God's Word in our relationships, workplaces, and surrounding community?

Prayer Focus

- That we consistently ask God to fill our hearts with the power of His Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim His word and the Good News of Jesus
- That we would use our testimony and faith as tools to spread the Gospel to those in our lives
- That the Holy Spirit entering our hearts would result in a radical outward expression of love for Jesus and His people