

Theme: Unlike Old Covenant believers who experienced the Spirit's presence only occasionally and externally, every New Covenant disciple has been baptized with the Holy Spirit and is therefore fully equipped and empowered to grow in devoted engagement with the spiritual disciplines that deepen our delight in God.

## I. Intro - John Wooden and Vince Lombardi

- A. Legendary championship coaches in the 1960's
- B. Both said championships are won by the basics!
- C. A series on the basics of how we grow as believers

## II. The Spirit and the New Covenant

### A. Wait - to be baptized in the Spirit!

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Acts 1:4-5

- 1. Jesus had told them they were to go to all nations!
- 2. First, they must wait for the promise of the Father
- 3. This is the promise that they will be baptized in/with the Holy Spirit (v5)

#### a. Jesus spoke of this in John 7:39

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'

<sup>39</sup>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. John 7:38-39

- 1. Jesus promises living waters will flow out of anyone who believes in Him - all Christians!
- 2. He is speaking about the Holy Spirit
- 3. This was something new that had never been experienced before in the history of God's people!

### b. Jesus spoke at length about the coming of the Spirit in John 14-16.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. John 14:16-17

- 1. Jesus asked the Father to send the Spirit!
- 2. The Spirit had been with them but would be IN them!

### 4. John the Baptist had said this would be the sign of the Messiah - He would baptize His people with the Spirit

for John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.** Acts 1:5

- a. John said this (Matthew 1:11; Mark 1:8)
- b. John was the end of the Old Covenant era - the Messiah will baptize His people with the Holy Spirit!
- c. Thus, the apostles must wait for the Spirit to come BEFORE they can begin going to the nations.

### B. The gift of the Spirit is central to the New Covenant!

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Ezekiel 36:25-27

- 1. One of the great New Covenant promise passages!
- 2. Notice the great provisions of the New Covenant
  - a. Cleansing of sin (v25; points to water baptism!)

- b. God gives us a new heart and spirit - regeneration
  - 1. Jeremiah 31:33 tells us God's Law is written on our new heart!
  - 2. The Law is no longer external but written on our hearts and minds (see Hebrews 8:10)
- c. The Spirit will dwell in every New Covenant believer
  - 1. The Spirit was with (not in) old covenant believers
  - 2. He anointed prophets, priests, and kings, not really every Israelite.
  - 3. This is a MASSIVE change!
- 3. Joel makes a similar promise regarding the Spirit
 

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.  
<sup>29</sup>Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit." Joel 2:28-29

  - a. The coming of the Spirit is central in this New Covenant promise passage as well!
  - b. The key issue here is the UNIVERSAL nature of the gift of the Spirit - men, women, young, old, free, and slave - all believers will receive the gift of the Spirit!
  - c. This is the very passage Peter quotes in Acts 2:16-21 to explain when the Spirit comes on Pentecost!
- C. The coming of the Spirit ushered in a new era in the history of redemption - but not all understood this at first!
  - 1. Many believers still act as if we are in the Old Covenant!
  - 2. vv6-7 - Apostles struggled to understand this and continued to think in Old Covenant patterns and categories (After Hours)!

### III. The Spirit's Work In the New Covenant

- A. The Spirit comes to empower us for a life of mission
 

"But you 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." Acts 1:8

  - 1. Rather than worrying about setting up a kingdom in Israel, the church will be going out to all the world!
  - 2. This is a fulfillment of Genesis 12:3 - all nations will be blessed through Abraham and His Seed (Jesus and then the Church)!
  - 3. In fact, this verse is the theme and structure for the whole book of Acts!
    - a. Jerusalem (Acts 1-7)
    - b. Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12)
    - c. The end of the earth (Acts 13-28)
  - 4. To be filled with the Spirit does not lead to a life of monastic contemplation but rather a life of mission!
  - 5. We are blessed with the Spirit - and sent forth to be a blessing!
- B. The Spirit comes to empower us for a life of holiness
  - 1. The promise is to baptize us with the HOLY Spirit for John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now." Acts 1:5
    - a. All believers are baptized with the Spirit
    - b. The Spirit is the HOLY Spirit - so He will produce holiness in us.
  - 2. This is an explicit part of Peter's teaching

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”<sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “**Save yourselves from this crooked generation.**” Acts 2:38-40

- a. Those who respond are given the gift of the Spirit!
- b. An essential part of the call is coming out of this corrupt generation and world!
- c. The Spirit will always work to conform us to Jesus, causing us to grow in holiness.

3. The Spirit-filled life will bring conviction of sin, and He will empower us for a life of growing holiness.

C. The Spirit comes to empower us to grow in our devotion to God through the means of grace/spiritual disciplines

1. Notice that the Spirit is linked with water baptism!

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, **and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**”<sup>39</sup> For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” Acts 2:38-40

- a. This is the beginning of a Spirit-filled life of growing devotion to Jesus!
- b. Some want to pit the Spirit and external rituals against one another, but Scripture tightly binds them together!
- c. Water baptism is the first of a series of means of grace that will mark the life of all Spirit-filled disciples!

2. Notice the early church/disciples are marked by devotion to Jesus THROUGH the spiritual disciplines

So **those who received his word were baptized**, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.<sup>42</sup> **And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.** Acts 2:41-42

- a. The people who responded and were given the Spirit were baptized and then became active members in the church!
- b. They grew in their devotion to Christ by the power of the Spirit as He worked through the means of grace/spiritual disciplines - water baptism, gathering for public worship, the Scripture, fellowship, the Lord’s Table, and prayer.
- c. Being filled with the Spirit did not mean they did not need these spiritual disciplines - they were how He filled and worked in them!

3. The Spirit-filled life will produce a growing devotion and love for Jesus by empowering us to be devoted to walking with Him through the spiritual disciplines.

4. We will be examining each of these in the coming weeks.

#### IV. Applying the Word

A. Devoted - growing in devotion and love for Jesus!

1. I spent a lot of time thinking about how to capture the idea of the series in its title.
2. The first thing is we are DEVOTED to Jesus - not just religious duties and activities!
3. The reason to engage in all of the practices we are going to look at is to know and love Jesus more!

4. These things are not about earning God's favor - they are about spending time with Him to know Him better so we love Him more!
5. They are also not about "self-discovery"! Rather, they call me to look away from myself to God!
6. This is about deepening our delight in God!
7. Let's be DEVOTED to Jesus together!

B. Devoted - growing in consistency in the means of grace

1. There is NO way to become more devoted to Jesus apart from being devoted to the faithful practice of the means of grace.
2. God has told us how He will meet us, reveal Himself to us, and help us grow in grace - the means of grace! (Q44 from the BRCC Catechism)

The Holy Spirit works in many ways to sanctify us, but He primarily uses the means of grace - specific activities in which God has promised to meet His people and strengthen them by His grace. The most important means of grace are the Word of God, fellowship with believers in the Church, the sacraments of water baptism and the Lord's Supper, and prayer.

- a. The Holy Spirit could work any way He chooses - but He has told us how He will work and where He will meet us!
- b. Example - daily time at a coffee shop for drop-ins
3. Being "devoted" to the means of grace as the Church in Acts 2:42-47 was WILL produce growing devotion to Jesus.
4. Not consistently practicing these means will cause our love for Jesus and our spiritual health to become anemic.

C. The Spiritual Disciplines

1. This is another name for the means of grace.
2. I am using it to highlight that these are given and used by the Holy Spirit! These are capital 'S' disciplines!
3. Through these, we commune with Him and grow in our devotion to the Father, Son, and Spirit.
4. They also must be done in the power of the Spirit - we are in the New Covenant!
5. Some of us have rigorous self-discipline, but that will not work to produce devotion and delight in God! We must rely on the Spirit's power for this!
6. Some of us are totally un-disciplined, but the Spirit WILL give power to any who ask Him so that they can faithfully engage with God in these ways!
7. Thank God we are NEW COVENANT people with the Spirit to empower us! Let's draw on Him together!

D. The New Covenant Table of Devotion and Delight

Devoted - The Spirit-Filled Life

Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4

April 12, 2026

Communion

1Ephesians 1:17-20

Teaching keywords: New Covenant; Holy Spirit; Baptism and Filling with the Spirit; Means of Grace; Christian Life; Passion for Christ

May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, <sup>18</sup> so that you may know him better having the eyes of your heart enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, <sup>19</sup> and his incomparably great power for us who believe - the resurrection power of the ascended Jesus! (Ephesians 1:17-20)