

How Lives Are Changed

The Bible is a book of transformative power. Its words are life-changing. Nevertheless, the Scriptures can be used to abuse as well as for good. C. S. Lewis said, of all bad men, the worst of bad men are religious bad men. The sooner one is willing to die for the faith, perhaps he would be willing to kill for the faith, or paint a “Thus saith the Lord” across his own opinions. The prophet Ezekiel also warned of those false prophets who say, “Thus saith the Lord” when the Lord hath not said. How can someone biblically and faithfully preach the word for transformation?

The Scriptures are called “the Sword of the Spirit”. In part, preaching the Scriptures transformatively requires that the preacher understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit. This seminar sets forth how the preacher can be filled with the Spirit and how this is essential for good homiletics. If the Bible is to be preached transformatively, the ministry of the Holy Spirit must be active in the process. Furthermore, in Jesus’ Upper Room discourse he explains to his disciples that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is essential to their proclamational enterprise. This seminar will explore what Jesus meant regarding the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the life of his disciples as he deployed them.

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The Ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Power to Transform

Disclaimer: I am not a fan of trying to reduce the complexities of the Christian faith down to simplistic formulas; nevertheless, faith in Christ should be transferable, it should be simple enough that it can be passed on to children, yet deep enough that the greatest of scholars remain perpetually fascinated.

Key Point: The historic Incarnation was a unique event; nevertheless, the days of the Incarnation have not ceased. God is still incarnating His ministry in the world; now it is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit through the Body of Christ, the Church.

Note Jesus’s Ministry in Philippians 2:5-7 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Kenosis [emptied Himself]

1. Kenoo – to give up or lay aside what one possesses. As a military term it meant laying aside insignias of rank before going into battle
2. The voluntary surrender of:
 - a. The outward manifestation of His Divine Glory
 - b. The independent use of His Divine Attributes
3. Jesus was not only the perfect sacrifice for sins and by His death made reconciliation with God possible; He also was the perfect example of one whose will was surrendered to the will of the Father. Throughout John's Gospel Jesus says, "All the Father told me to say, that I have said" or, "All the Father told me to do, that I have done".

The Upper Room Discourse

John 13:14-15, 17 & 20 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you....If you know these things you are blessed if you do them....Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

John 14:12, 16-21, 23 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.

[Possibilities regarding the greater works spoken of here:

1. Greater by virtue of the remarkable nature of them.
2. Greater by virtue of the number of them.
3. Greater by virtue of the fact that those who lack capability can do anything at all (note the widow's mite—it was smaller than the gifts of the Pharisees but it was considered greater, see Luke 21:1-4).
4. Greater by virtue of the corporate increase of them.
5. Etc.]

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a while the world will behold me know more; but you will behold me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him....If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

Acts 1:8 You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes 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. [Jesus made a connection between the life of witness and the ministry of the Holy Spirit].

Sorting Out Terms Relative to the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Baptism by (or in) the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist's Teaching: Mark 1:8 "I baptize you with water; but He will baptize you *with* the Holy Spirit". (The preposition *with*, in this verse, can be translated, *in*, *by*, or *with*).

I Corinthians 12:13 "For *by* one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..." (Baptized is an aorist tense verb, which speaks of completed action in past time. *By*, here, is the same preposition used in Mark 1:8, and can be translated *in*, *by*, or *with*). It would appear that baptism *in*, or *by*, the Holy Spirit is the placing of the believer into the Body of Christ, to do His will in the world, i.e., the Holy Spirit's ministry is Incarnated through the Body of Christ.

Filling of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18 "Be filled with the Spirit". (This is an imperative expressed as a passive present tense. How do you obey a passive imperative? In essence the text is telling believers to let it be done to them; or in other words, stop doing what is preventing this normative Christian experience from happening).

Note: Ephesians 4:22-24 "...lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

Ephesians 4:30 "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God".

Ephesians 5:1&2 "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and **walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us..."

Ephesians 5:8 "**walk as children of light**".

Ephesians 5:15 "**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...be filled with the Spirit".

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in the Scriptures: Romans 12:6-15 (prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, mercy); I Corinthians 12:7-11 (wisdom; knowledge; faith; healing; miracles; discerning of spirits; speaking in tongues; interpretation of tongues). These lists are not exhaustive. The first persons mentioned in the Bible as being filled with the Spirit were Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, who were filled with the Spirit to do artistic work (Exodus 31:1-6). Also, Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord to do mighty feats of strength (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14).

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...” [John Hunter and Tea-infusion]

Three Kinds of People

1. The Natural man: I Corinthians 2:14
2. The Spiritual man: I Corinthians 2:15-16
3. The Fleshly, or Carnal, man: I Corinthians 3:1-3

Spiritual Breathing (with a little help from Campus Crusade for Christ)

1. Exhale: I John 1:9 “If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.
2. Inhale: Ephesians 5:18 “Be filled with the Spirit” [Note I John 5:14-15 “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know we have the requests which we have asked from Him”.

Follow God’s Leadings to be Witnesses—examples of the kinds of things that can happen indicating that you are living under Someone’s direction:

1. Failing a course in Graduate School and what became of it. (Contemporary Theology and the reading and study that followed).
2. Missions in the Mexicali Valley in the village of Jalisco and what became of it. (Two male translators: Jose and Prudentio).
3. A brief conversation in an Oxford pub and what became of it. (Nick Wyatt, the Oxford Bulldogs, Steve Connor, and AMFI).
4. Ministry in Romania behind the Iron Curtain and what became of a seemingly missed connection with members of the underground church. (Othniel Bunaccio and Yula Borsaci in Brasov, Romania).
5. The Holy Spirit is doing an Incarnational work through the Body of Christ, the Church, that He might love others to Himself. Not everything that happens seems to make sense at the time; but be patient, God has not abandoned His world and wants to deploy you for Christ and His Kingdom.

Suggested Readings:

Root, Jerry & Stan Guthrie. *The Sacrament of Evangelism*. Chicago: Moody Press.