

GOD'S WORD

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT!

"Tarry... until you are filled."

THE LORD Jesus Christ combined His commandment to tarry until receiving the Holy Spirit with His commandment to, "Go ye into all the world... ." As one last and great instruction, these two commandments were the last Words on earth of our Lord Jesus Christ before He returned to heaven after His resurrection.

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Acts 1:4-9

We, as believers, have traditionally adopted and taken to heart God's wish that we would do something for Him and for others: that we would, "go into all the world," as missionaries, as He commanded. However, in the manner strangely typical to man, while readily accepting the task of doing something for God, we have often forgotten the other half of our Lord's commandment, the half asking us to **be** something for Him! While 'going' is an external action, 'being' is internal, and the only thing that will go with us into eternity. What we do for God will count in eternity only as far as it is a result of our love for God and our devotion to Him, and as it is a part of our Christ-like nature, and is done in His power. Again, this is all internal. The process was begun, Spiritually, internally, at salvation,

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Gal. 3:3

...and is continued and perfected by that Same Spirit. It is this internal imperative that is addressed by our Lord's command to receive His power for transforming us and for ministering to others - to receive the Infilling of the Holy Spirit, as we begin our walk with our Lord and begin serving Him. It is the transforming power of the Infilling that was the reason for Christ's command to "tarry, " or pray, and seek God for it. And the Lord considered it so important to receive that He required the disciples to stay where they were and not respond to "the great commission" until they had received that power! (Nor have God nor His Word changed since: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Heb. 13:8) The Holy Spirit enters each one of us at salvation, a process that is called the, "baptism in the Holy Spirit:"

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Cor. 12:13

This does not mean at all, however, that the newly saved man is filled with the Holy Spirit. This comes after salvation:

Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

Acts 8:15, 16

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Acts 19:5,6

This wonderful experience takes place when the Christian surrenders himself completely to God over and beyond the amount needed to receive salvation, and allows and invites the Holy Spirit to fill and move through him. We are commanded:

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

Eph. 5:18

If ye love Me, keep My commandments.

John 14:15

In receiving His Infilling those who are obedient to and desirous of Him are promised gifts:

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.

1 Cor. 8:7-11

It is this power, considered so necessary by Christ with which to equip His newly-commissioned apostles, that provides every Christian with power to similarly serve Christ and fulfill His commission. Christ has never, since His provision of the Infilling, expressed any change of opinion nor methodology regarding the necessity of His children's receiving it, nor has He ever informed us that His power in us has been limited or has ceased. Indeed, with the approaching great falling away that is foretold in Matt. 24:12, Lu. 18:8, II Thes. 2:3, etc., we are in need of Christ's empowerment more now than at any time in Church history, including the age of the young Church. Then, the Church had the promise of being built strong; now, the Church has the promise of a coming apostasy.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Heb.10:23-25

The Holy Spirit has not left the Church; the Church has left the Holy Spirit!

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Rom. 11:29

Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

James 4:8

"THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY"

Experience shows us that 'the gift of speaking in tongues' is the first gift of the Spirit given by God after a person has received the Infilling of the Holy Spirit, and the first indication given by God. And experience is confirmed by Scripture. God explains in the Book of James that the tongue is the most difficult part of the body to tame, and that if one can tame his tongue he can tame and control also his whole body. The tongue is the first thing that God claims and uses when He is given total control over our life by the Infilling of the Holy Spirit. When God has control of our tongue He has control of all of us and is able to rule and employ us much more effectively and completely.

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. 3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

James 3:2, 3

And, despite the fact that not everyone receives the same gifts of the Spirit, every gift is open to everyone as the gifts are needed. These gifts, most needed at a particular time or time period, God refers to as "The best gifts,"

But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Cor. 12:31

This more excellent way is outlined in the next chapter of I Corinthians: the 'way' is love. This is the same love explained as the basis for all the "fruit of the Spirit." Love is not merely one of the fruit, but the one from which all the others spring.

(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:)

Eph. 5:9

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Gal. 5:22,23

God is always more interested in what He can do to us than what He can do through us. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit (the Infilling) that enables in us the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And it is these fruit (God's: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance) in us, that enable us to do God's work successfully. One can usually tell the difference between someone filled with the Holy Spirit, and one who is not: one filled tends to a greater extent, than he did before, to show the fruit of the Spirit and to reflect the grace and beauty of God. It is the Holy Spirit Who enables and ensures the change in us from earthly to Spiritual. It is evident, then, that regardless of whether or not we will ever be on the mission-field as were the Apostles we are required by God to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He alone it is, Who will be able to transform us into what we are desired and intended by God. It is the fruit of the Spirit that transforms the Christian from an earthly man to a heavenly. (For instance, the disciples, who had hitherto been shut up fearfully in an upper room, the doors locked, after the Infilling had both the courage and the ability to preach the Word of God.) The Infilling by the Holy Spirit had transformed the people of God... and promises to do the same for us, both individually and as a Church. The truth of God established the early Church, but the Holy Spirit transformed and empowered them. And the Holy Spirit will work today exactly the same way if we will respond to God's invitation to receive His incredible gift, the power of the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet received the Infilling you are encouraged to seek it. It is a promise not to the unsaved, but to the already-saved; it is something for the already-saved to ask for with confidence in their Heavenly Father!

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Lu. 11:13

It is a commandment of God but it is also a blessing promised by God. It is indeed an act of obedience to God, but it is also a great benefit and gift to the Christian. This author is constantly blessed to experience yet again the fact that God has determined that what is good for Him is always automatically what is also best for man! Seek the Infilling. Pray and tarry for it. Seek out, if necessary, a second church body, or perhaps a home or mid-week prayer group who not only acknowledge but also actively exercise the Infilling and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, who can help you receive the Infilling and grow in experience in its practice. Whatever you do, do not let the blessings escape you that are promised to those who are willing and obedient to let God have full reign over their lives and to enjoy the experience of being in total surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ!

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

Is. 1:19

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. or the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts 2:38-39