

Small Group Series on the Holy Spirit

BUT WAIT THERE IS MORE

Study Guide

Introduction	Learn And Receive By Faithp1
Meeting 1:	The Word Alone Is Not Enough (On The Infilling With The Holy Spirit)p2
Meeting 2:	This Is For Everyone (On Receiving The Holy Spirit)p6
Meeting 3:	Will You Still Serve Him (On The Holy Spirit And Suffering)p9
Meeting 4:	The Foolishness Continues (On The Manifestations Of The Holy Spirit)p13
Meeting 5:	The Battle Is On (On The Holy Spirit And Spiritual Warfare)p16
Meeting 6:	It Is A Gift (On Speaking In Tongues)p19
Appendix:	How To Get Ready For The Infilling With The Holy Spiritp22

Introduction: Learn And Receive By Faith

Welcome to this small group series on the Holy Spirit. Many a time any teaching on the Holy Spirit has been controversial across the church denominations and therefore the Holy Spirit has not always featured prominently in preaching and private study. This has certainly been the case in my own upbringing and in my work as a pastor. Therefore, as you undertake this small group series may you discover what I also discovered for myself. There is more! There is more to learn and receive from God as a Christian.

The aim of this study is two-fold. 1) Six small group messages want to teach the truth and promises of God concerning the Holy Spirit 2) so that by the building up of faith everyone can receive a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians seem to lack the fullness of the Holy Spirit in their lives because they simply do not know enough about him and therefore cannot put their trust and faith in God's promises about him. Yet, the Bible is clear that "by faith we receive the promise of the Spirit" (Galatians 3:14) and that this "faith comes from hearing the message" of God (Romans 10:17).

According to the two-fold aim of this small group series on the Holy Spirit please embrace the discipline of learning but do so in an atmosphere of worship. Let learning and receiving go hand in hand. Humble yourself and praise God. Pray for him to be present with all of his blessings. Even Jesus received his first infilling with the Holy Spirit while he prayed (Luke 3:21-22).

The DVDs and CDs of the study material are free of copyright which means that they can be freely copied and distributed to others. Please do so with a mission heart. Alternatively attractive sets can be purchased at the cheapest price possible from

Toowoomba City Church
PO Box 2216
Toowoomba
Qld 4350
Australia

Ph: 07 4638 2399; Fax: 07 46392691
Email: tcchurch@tcchurch.com.au

If you are interested in finding out more about the work of the author, please try the following website <http://www.geocities.com/mayeredgar> and if you have some encouraging or otherwise helpful feedback please email me edgar.mayer@lca.org.au.

God bless you richly.

Edgar Mayer

Meeting 1: The Word Alone Is Not Enough (On The Infilling With The Holy Spirit)

Warm-Up

- 1 What are your expectations as you begin this study?
- 2 Why do you think the Holy Spirit is often a controversial topic among Christians?
- 3 How open are you to learn more from the Word of God? How do you feel about going deeper into the things of God?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

(See the next two pages after the following page)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 Read Luke 24:45-50 and reflect on the disciples' knowledge, faith and worship of God at this point? Would we consider them to be fit candidates for spreading the good news about Jesus and send them out? What did Jesus say and why? Read Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5 and Acts 1:8.
- 3 What is the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Even before the first disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit they had a measure of the Spirit in them because according to 1 Corinthians 12:3: " ... no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" but then what more did they receive? The Bible does not offer a definition but you may look up one or more of the following Bible passages: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:2-4; 2:17-21; 10:44-46; 13:52; 19:6.
- 4 Do the water baptism and the Spirit baptism always coincide? You may look up one or more of the following Bible passages: Acts 8:14-17; 10:44-48; 19:6. According to Acts 2:38-39 what is expected to happen in any person coming to faith in Jesus Christ?
- 5 Are you baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit? The word "baptism" means "immersion" and conveys that we are to be submerged in and drenched by the Holy Spirit. Have we experienced this and are we meant to experience this? [Session 5 will take up the topic of experience in more detail.] What do the following Scripture passages suggest: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:2-4; 2:17-21; 10:44-46; 13:52; 19:6? According to Romans 8:14,16 are we meant to have an awareness of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Are we always meant to experience the closeness of the Spirit with us? See Mark 15:34; Luke 4:1-13 and 2 Corinthians 1:8.

What Now

- 1 Are we ready to hear more and resist the temptation of jumping to conclusions?
- 2 If we feel threatened by the teaching on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, can we ask God to turn our fear into a positive hunger for more of him?

Personal Ministry Time

(See the next page)

Personal Ministry Time

The leader(s) may ask the group members to come forward and receive prayer with the anointing with oil. The idea is that this is a time of consecration whereby people let go of their fears and known sins. The people of Israel consecrated themselves before receiving a visitation of God at Mount Sinai and in Ephesians 5 sick people are encouraged to repent, confess their sins, receive the anointing with oil in order to receive healing from God. Thus, now may be a time for the small group to get ready for receiving more from God. We allow God to cleanse us from all potential blockages/barriers which sin raises against God and receiving from him.

The leader(s) may minister by first asking: "Is there a specific sin that you need to let go before God? Any fears or unforgiveness or unwillingness to hear anew the Word of God ... ? Do you want to share publicly or confess silently?" Give time for spoken confession or silent confession. Then the leader(s) may anoint the person with oil, lay hands on him/her and pray something like this: "I anoint you now with this oil in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, pour out your Holy Spirit on NN and let the Holy Spirit do a cleansing work in him/her. Keep bringing up the sins that hinder your presence. Prepare a clean vessel that can receive from you and be filled by you. Holy Spirit, make NN holy as you are holy. Fill him/her with all of you. NN, receive forgiveness and may this small group series on the Holy Spirit be life-transforming in your walk of faith. In Jesus' name. Amen."

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 1: The Word Alone Is Not Enough (On The Infilling With The Holy Spirit)

Is a mind full of God-knowledge and a heart full of praise for God enough to do what Jesus commissioned us to do: preach forgiveness in his name, reach anyone with the saving news of forgiveness? No, it is not enough - even though we sometimes tend to forget.

Wait for something else. John the Baptist, who came before Jesus, he said about him - Luke 3:16: " ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit ... " And Jesus himself also spelled it out clearly to the first Christians - Acts 1:4-5: " ... Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait ... in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Acts 1:8: " . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

The Catholic priest Francis MacNutt does make a good point when he says: "In the early Church, adults who were baptized expected, at the same time, to be baptized in the Spirit; they regarded the two experiences as the same event" (Francis MacNutt: *The Nearly Perfect Crime. How the Church Almost Killed the Ministry of Healing*, Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2005, p62). There is also truth in the statement: "For those baptized as infants, the Spirit's indwelling cannot manifest itself in the same way as for adults. In some cases it appears that the Spirit's influence gradually grows in us as we ourselves grow physically ... " (Francis MacNutt: *The Nearly Perfect Crime. How the Church Almost Killed the Ministry of Healing*, Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2005, p63). Thus, there is good reason to see water baptism and the baptism with the Holy Spirit as being closely linked to each other. They are both meant to come together at the beginning of our Christian life. However, all of that does not guarantee that every time there is a water baptism there is also the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

From fear to repentance to the baptism with the Spirit ... "Oh God, forgive me. I have been so wrong. I need the breath of your Spirit to bring life to me and to the Scriptures. I want to worship you. I am so tired of stuffy religion."

Then the Bible nowhere gives a definition of what happens. There are only descriptions of experiences. Acts 2:2-4: "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues ... " Acts 10:44-46: " ... the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the message ... heard them speaking in tongues and praising God ... " Acts 13:52: "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Spirit." Acts 19:6: "When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

... Then there is the symbolism of a mighty wind, tongues of fire, ... In one instance Jesus describes the Spirit as an internal "spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).

Now the Catholic priest continues: "Emotionally, it usually leads to an overflow of great joy. Spiritually, some of the Spirit [original: charismatic] gifts - especially praying in tongues - usually accompany it ... different parts of our being are touched by the Spirit: Our *minds* are enlightened. People who once felt that reading Scripture was a chore now find delight in reading it ... We often receive *guidance* about what to do or not to do ... We will notice a change within our *spirit*: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will come and live within us, and we will know and love them in a deeper way. Jesus will love us and show Himself to us (see John 14:21). We shall be *protected* from the evil one (see John 17:15). Jesus' love, joy and peace shall be with us (see John 14:27; 15:9,11) ... "

... The Catholic priest shares this important insight: " ... There is no one list of things that always happens to every person. It is as if God tailors the outpouring of the Spirit to each person individually" (Francis MacNutt: The Nearly Perfect Crime. How the Church Almost Killed the Ministry of Healing, Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2005, p62-63).

Without that Word we have nothing that reveals the truth about Jesus and we have nothing that the Spirit can empower. We hold the Word and the Spirit together - not playing one against the other and not neglecting the one in favour of the other. We are people of the Word and the Spirit.

Meeting 2: This Is For Everyone (On Receiving The Holy Spirit)

Warm-Up

- 1 What is your most prized possession and how much were you willing to invest and sacrifice in order to have it?
- 2 How passionate are you about receiving from God?
- 3 How easy is it to receive from God?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes
(See the next two pages)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 In Acts 8:16-17 the Holy Spirit came after water baptism and with the laying on of hands but in Acts 10:44-48 the Holy Spirit came before water baptism and without the laying on of hands. Why is there no particular method which we could follow and then take possession of the Holy Spirit? What does this mean for us?
- 3 After the disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:2-3, they were again filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 4:31. Like the disciples we have an ongoing need to be filled and refilled by the Holy Spirit. Are we aware of the dynamic nature of the Spirit's presence in our lives? Are we sensitive to the ebb and flow of his movements in our work and worship?
- 4 How many Christians can receive the baptism or infilling with the Holy Spirit? See Acts 2:38-39 and Luke 11:9-13.
- 5 One of the spiritual principles which makes us ready to receive the Holy Spirit is repentance. How thorough do you think God wants us to be in our repentance? See Acts 2:38; Hebrews 12:14; Luke 14:25-35.
- 6 Another spiritual principle which makes us ready to receive the Holy Spirit is to put our faith in the Word of God. Does Acts 19:2 in any way resemble your situation? What do the following passages say about faith and unbelief: Matthew 17:20; Mark 6:5-6.
- 7 Another spiritual principle which makes us ready to receive the Holy Spirit is to pray for the Holy Spirit. Have you ever formulated a prayer for the infilling with the Holy Spirit? What does Luke 11:9-13 teach us about such prayer?
- 8 Another spiritual principle which makes us ready to receive the Holy Spirit is to receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. See Acts 8:17-18; 19:6; 2 Timothy 1:6. Would you be happy to let another Christian serve you in this way?
- 9 Another spiritual principle which makes us ready to receive the Holy Spirit is to wait for the Holy Spirit. See Acts 1:4-5. What could be the benefits of a waiting period before we receive the infilling with the Holy Spirit?

What Now

- 1 After what we have heard, how much do we still want the Holy Spirit? Are we prepared to spend time and energy and discipline on the following? One: Repent and completely turn away from everything that we know is wrong in our lives. Two: Put our faith in Jesus and trust the promise that we will receive infillings and refillings of the Holy Spirit. Three: Pray for the Holy Spirit. Four: Ask another Christian to lay his or her hand on us and pray for us. Five: Wait for the Holy Spirit to come.

Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 2: This Is For Everyone (On Receiving The Holy Spirit)

... the key focus was set: the message of salvation is about him, Jesus Christ, and repentance and forgiveness will be preached in his name. Making a similar point Jesus said - John 16:12-15: " ... The Spirit will not speak on his own ... He will bring glory to me ... "

... two preliminary remarks. One: There is no one particular method which we could follow and then take possession of the Holy Spirit. There is no manual. There is no control of God.

The second preliminary remark aims to clarify that we do not only receive the Holy Spirit once and then we are done with receiving him. There is an ongoing need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore there is an ongoing need to apply the spiritual principles - which will be expounded in the course of this message.

However - and we need to understand this - once we receive this baptism with the Spirit we do enter into a more empowered relationship with God - but - we do not always remain on the same level of being filled by him. The Holy Spirit may fall on us and manifest his presence in an awesome way but however great the mountain peak experience may be we do not stay there.

I summarize: Every Christian who confesses Jesus as Lord has a measure of the Spirit's power in him but then everyone can also experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit where there is a fuller release and infilling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. After this initial baptism with the Spirit and infilling there need to be refillings because the same level of the Spirit's power and manifest presence does not remain with us constantly. Furthermore, we can actually grow in the Spirit's power.

And just a reminder: The point of this preliminary remark is that we do not only receive the Holy Spirit once and then we are done with receiving him. There is an ongoing need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore there is an ongoing need to apply the spiritual principles - which will be expounded in the course of this message.

What are some spiritual principles which make us ready to receive the Holy Spirit in the way that God has intended for us? Number one: Repent and completely turn away from everything that you know is wrong in your life.

The second spiritual principle which prepares us for receiving the Spirit is to put our faith in the Word of God.

The third spiritual principle which prepares us for receiving the Spirit is to pray for the Holy Spirit.

The fourth spiritual principle of receiving the Holy Spirit has to do with impartation. By this we mean that the Holy Spirit can be passed on from one person to another - usually by the laying on of hands.

The fifth and - for today - last spiritual principle which prepares us for receiving the Holy Spirit is simply to wait.

One: Repent and completely turn away from everything that you know is wrong in your life. Two: Put your faith in Jesus and trust the promise that you will receive infillings and refillings of the Holy Spirit. Three: Pray for the Holy Spirit. Four: Ask another Christian to lay his or her hand on you and pray for you. Five: Wait for the Holy Spirit to come.

Repent, have faith, pray, receive prayer with the laying on of hands and then wait. God is good. Amen.

Meeting 3: Will You Still Serve Him (On The Holy Spirit And Suffering)

Warm-Up

- 1 What makes you truly happy?
- 2 Do you expect the baptism with the Holy Spirit to be a positive experience for you? In what sense?
- 3 How easy is it to be a Christian?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

(See the next two pages after the following page)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 What were the disciples slow to believe according to Luke 24:25-26? Why do we still have trouble connecting a Spirit-filled life and suffering?
- 3 What was the problem of the Spirit-filled Corinthians according to 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-2? How might God confront this problem? See Deuteronomy 8:1-5; Hebrews 2:10; 5:7-9; 12:5-11.
- 4 According to Acts 2:37 why is even our conversion wounding work? Do we feel wounded?
- 5 Would we be able to say the same as John Bunyan and the apostle Paul? John Bunyan: "By this scripture I was made to see that if ever I would suffer rightly, I must *first* pass a sentence of death upon everything that can be properly called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyment, and all, as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. The *second* was, *to live upon God that is invisible*, as Paul said in another place; the way not to faint, is to 'look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal' (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:18)." The apostle Paul: "Far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians 6:14). Is that another key to be used mightily by God through the Holy Spirit?
- 6 Even the Spirit-filled Jesus faced discipline and temptation for forty days in order to bring forth the character which was to handle the power of the Spirit without becoming corrupted. What then can we expect from God?
- 7 What kind of God do we serve? He did not appear to commiserate with a grieving Loren Cunningham cradling his dead wife but asked him rather bluntly: "Will you still serve me?" Only then did he heal her. What do we learn from that?
- 8 At this point of time are we still passionate about being drenched by the Holy Spirit or are we losing interest because of the cost involved?
- 9 Can we count a few of the blessings which have flown from suffering Christians?

What Now

- 1 Can we allow God to use suffering in our lives to bring forth the character which can handle the power of the Spirit without becoming corrupted?
- 2 Can we encourage each other to endure patiently?

Personal Ministry Time

(See the next page)

Personal Ministry Time

The leader(s) may ask the group members to come forward and pray for them as they prepare to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As God often puts people through times of trial, discipline and waiting on him before he releases the Holy Spirit fully in their lives, we pray for perseverance, an attitude of humbling ourselves under the hand of God, wisdom to recognize the lesson which we are meant to learn, etc.

The leader(s) may lay hands on people and pray something like this: "Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that you pour out your Holy Spirit on NN in power and make him/her receive even more from you. You may pour out your Spirit in power right now. Please do so. And in the times of waiting for the fillings and refillings with the Holy Spirit, let there be patience and trust in you. Please build up his/her faith, help him/her to persevere and humble himself/herself before you. Your promises can always be trusted and he/she will receive. Everyone who asks will receive. You are pleased by the faith which keeps on asking passionately about what you can give. You are honoured by our faith. Please stir up an even greater hunger for the Spirit in this person and let him/her not let up until he/she receives. Amen."

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 3: Will You Still Serve Him (On The Holy Spirit And Suffering)

In the presence of so much Spirit power how can there be weakness, bones broken, tears and blood, rejection and ridicule, even torture and death?

The last preliminary remark relates to the others and points to a problem. If the baptism with the Holy Spirit can come at the beginning of our Christian life and is not necessarily tied to growing maturity, then how will we not go off the rails - handling great power but getting corrupted in the process?

The connection between Spirit power and suffering marks the Christian life from the beginning and comes to the fore whenever a person comes to faith ... "Conversion is not the smooth, easy-going process some people [original: men] seem to think ... It is wounding work, of course, this breaking of the hearts, but without wounding there is no saving ... " (John Bunyan, quoted in John Piper: Tested By Fire, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001, p65).

He quotes from the New Testament where the apostle Paul says - 2 Corinthians 1:9: "We had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead." Then John Bunyan says: "By this scripture I was made to see that if ever I would suffer rightly, I must *first* pass a sentence of death upon everything that can be properly called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyment, and all, as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. The *second* was, *to live upon God that is invisible*, as Paul said in another place; the way not to faint, is to 'look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal' (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:18)."

The Bible passage which became very dear to Claudio Freidzon was Deuteronomy 8:1-5: " ... Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord ... Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you."

All was gone. What happened next on that desolate stretch of desert road defies all reason. Loren Cunningham writes: "There, with not a living thing around me for miles, a voice spoke my name aloud. 'Loren!' I looked around. Then I knew. Even though I had never heard His voice with my ears before, I recognized it as the voice of God. 'Yes, Lord?' I responded, my voice choked with emotion. 'Loren, will you still serve me?' Why did he have to ask me? There was nothing else left in my life but Him. Through tears I looked into the clear desert sky and answered. 'Yes, Lord, I'll serve you. I have nothing left except my life ... and you can have that, too.' In a moment, the Lord spoke a second time. 'Pray for Darlene.' ... I began to pray with all my might. To my astonishment, she drew a rattly-sounding breath ... "

The question is: After having listened to all of these stories and the Bible teaching do you and I still want that kind of power? Are we at this point of time still passionate about being drenched in the Spirit or do we lose interest because there is a cost attached? Maybe a more middle-of-the-road religion seems safer now and suits us better than the full-on faith which embraces the discipline of suffering to handle the Spirit's power. How much do we seek God? What sort of church are we?

Meeting 4: The Foolishness Continues (On The Manifestations Of The Holy Spirit)

Warm-Up

- 1 What kind of behaviour really offends you?
- 2 Are you aware of any of your own behaviour that can be most annoying to others?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

(See the next two pages)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 How did Jesus offend the people around him? Are we still offended by any of that? See John 1:46; Luke 7:34; Matthew 12:24; John 6:61; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.
- 3 What offended people at the very first infilling with the Holy Spirit? See Acts 2:13.
- 4 Mike Bickle compiled the following list of what might happen when the Holy Spirit moves on people. Is there anything on that list that would offend you? Why? " ... Shaking, jerking, loss of bodily strength, heavy breathing, eyes fluttering, lips trembling, oil on the body, changes in skin colour, weeping, laughing, 'drunkenness', staggering, travailing, dancing, falling, visions, hearing audibly into the spirit realm, inspired utterances (that is, prophecy), tongues, interpretation; angelic visitations and manifestations; jumping, violent rolling, screaming, wind, heat, electricity, coldness, nausea as discernment of evil, smelling or tasting good or evil presences, tingling, pain in the body as discernment of illnesses, feeling heavy weight or lightness, trances (altered physical state while seeing and hearing into the spirit world), inability to speak normally and disruption of the natural realm (for example, electrical circuits blown)."
- 5 Why would God jeopardize his own work by offending us? See 1 Corinthians 1:27-29; Luke 10:21.
- 6 Discuss the following quote: "If we attach great significance to the manifestations, people will equate the manifestations with the work of the Spirit and even view them as a badge of spirituality. When that happens, insecure people will often imitate these manifestations to draw attention to themselves and appear spiritual. An equally significant mistake would be to try to suppress the manifestations. Imagine a person who is under such intense conviction by the Holy Spirit for his sins that he has an acute sense of the torments of hell and is trembling as a result of that conviction. Now imagine the immense folly of approaching a person like that and telling him to snap out of it! If we attempt to suppress a real physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work, we are in danger of putting out the fire of the Spirit."
- 7 Based on Jesus' words in Matthew 7:20: "By their fruit you will recognize them" Jonathan Edwards devised five diagnostic questions which help in the discerning of a genuine move of the Holy Spirit: "1. Does it bring honour to the person of Jesus Christ? 2. Does it produce a greater hatred of sin and a greater love for righteousness? 3. Does it produce a greater regard for Scripture? 4. Does it lead people into truth? 5. Does it produce a greater love for God and people?" How do these questions put spiritual manifestations into a mature perspective? What is important in matters of salvation? See Luke 4:47; Acts 2:21,38.

What Now

- 1 Can we make a commitment that we will not be offended at God's "foolishness"?
- 2 Can we allow God to manifest his presence among us and within us in whatever way he chooses?

Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 4: The Foolishness Continues (On The Manifestations Of The Holy Spirit)

By design - on purpose - God plans to offend - scandalize - us.

Now the Holy Spirit is another great source of offense even among churches. Not only does he move in unlikely people - like us - he also often comes causing strange manifestations and that shall be the main focus for the remainder of this sermon.

The disciples came under the strong influence of the Holy Spirit which some mistook for alcohol saying - Acts 2:13: "They have had too much wine." I wonder what caused this impression. Did the disciples stagger around or fall to the ground or slur their words? The Bible reports in other places that the apostles Peter and Paul both fell into trances (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:12-13). Then the Bible knows of people falling in the presence of God (Daniel 8:17; 10:7-10,15-19; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Revelations 1:17), faces shining supernaturally (Exodus 34:30f; Acts 6:15), temporary blindness (Acts 9:4) or numbness (Luke 1:22), and lots more.

The Holy Spirit is not shy in causing strange manifestations and then he is also not shy in manifesting further strangeness through the way he operates in us and through us - further humbling us.

This is absolutely crucial. You and I - we don't underestimate how hard it is to recognize the genuineness of the Holy Spirit amidst the offense of manifestations. Why does God seem to jeopardize his own work?

Luke 10:21: "At that time Jesus full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.'" " ... you have hidden these things from the wise and learned ... "

A quote from another pastor raises some more challenges: "If we attach great significance to the manifestations, people will equate the manifestations with the work of the Spirit and even view them as a badge of spirituality. When that happens, insecure people will often imitate these manifestations to draw attention to themselves and appear spiritual. An equally significant mistake would be to try to suppress the manifestations. Imagine a person who is under such intense conviction by the Holy Spirit for his sins that he has an acute sense of the torments of hell and is trembling as a result of that conviction. Now imagine the immense folly of approaching a person like that and telling him to snap out of it! If we attempt to suppress a real physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work, we are in danger of putting out the fire of the Spirit."

Jonathan Edwards probably drafted the most widely respected tests for spiritual manifestations. Based on Jesus' words - Matthew 7:20: "By their fruit you will recognize them" - he devised five diagnostic questions: "1. Does it bring honour to the person of Jesus Christ? 2. Does it produce a greater hatred of sin and a greater love for righteousness? 3. Does it produce a greater regard for Scripture? 4. Does it lead people into truth? 5. Does it produce a greater love for God and people?"

Back to the beginning. Would God ever do anything that would offend us? Yes, he would. The Holy Spirit has a habit of offending us and in turn under the influence of the Spirit we offend others. Yet, we allow God to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him. Amen.

Meeting 5: The Battle Is On (On The Holy Spirit And Spiritual Warfare)

Warm-Up

- 1 Have you ever been in danger of getting hurt or even killed? What did you do and how did it feel?
- 2 Are you okay in handling conflict? Are you confident, fearful, resourceful, denying its presence, capable of defusing tension, ... ?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes (See the next two pages)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 How much do we and the world believe the following quote by a Christian theologian: "It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles ... [This is] unintelligible and unacceptable to the modern world"?
- 3 According to the Bible how central is the conflict with Satan to our faith? See Acts 10:38; Luke 22:53; Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8.
- 4 According to the Bible how central is the conflict with Satan to our daily experience as Christians? See Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 26:17-18; Ephesians 2:1-10; Ephesians 4:27.
- 5 Do we live according to the truth of spiritual warfare? Are we aware of engaging the domain of Satan in battle? Are we preparing ourselves for battle on a daily basis? Do we become vulnerable by downplaying this aspect of our faith and spiritual reality?
- 6 Why do we need the infilling of the Holy Spirit before we engage in the battle of mission work? See Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 10:38.
- 7 Notice the connection between Jesus' baptism with the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:21-22), the fightback of Satan (Luke 4:1-2) and the ongoing battle with Satan's domain rescuing people from his power (Luke 4:18-19,31-44). What then can you expect to happen after you have received an infilling of the Holy Spirit?
- 8 In some cases what might even happen before one's infilling with the Holy Spirit? As God's power comes close to people and forces a confrontation with whatever is sinful within them, how much may they be stirred up? See Mark 1:21-28.
- 9 What are some of the weapons of spiritual warfare? See Ephesians 6:10-18.
- 10 How did Jesus use the sword of the Spirit in Luke 4:1-13? How did the Spirit-filled Jesus handle his lack of positive emotions and experiences at that time?

What Now

- 1 Can comfortable Christians like us change to being Spirit-filled soldiers engaging in a battle with the domain of Satan? Can we become disciplined?
- 2 Can we appreciate our need for power and thus seek an infilling with the Holy Spirit?

Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 5: The Battle Is On (On The Holy Spirit And Spiritual Warfare)

In fact we have come from an era where some of our brightest theological minds argued against the world-view of the Bible saying - I quote the eminent New Testament scholar Rudolph Bultmann and this is from the early 1940s: "It is impossible to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time believe in the New Testament world of spirits and miracles ... [This is] unintelligible and unacceptable to the modern world" (Rudolph Bultmann in Bartsch, H.-W. & Fuller, R. H.: *Kerygma and Myth*, London 1972, p5). And another quote: "Human knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world - in fact, there is no one who does ... Now that the forces and the laws of nature have been discovered, we can no longer believe in spirits, whether good or bad" (Rudolph Bultmann in Bartsch, H.-W. & Fuller, R. H.: *Kerygma and Myth*, London 1972, p5).

The Holy Spirit comes with power and then - without fail - he leads us into battle and makes us confront unholy spirits - the domain of Satan.

Jesus' death surprised Satan with sudden defeat by removing all grounds for accusations and guilt ... Colossians 2:15: " . . . having disarmed the powers and authorities [of Satan], he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." Also 1 John 3:8: "He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God [Jesus] appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

In addition to the message of Jesus Christ power is needed. Why? Because every Christian reaching out is engaged in a power struggle - with the kingdom of darkness - which necessitates that every Christian needs to wait on the Holy Spirit for fillings and refillings with his power.

How prevalent is this power struggle with Satan? We consider a few more Bible passages: Ephesians 6:12: " . . . our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." 2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ ... " Acts 26:17-18: " ... I am

sending you ... to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins ... " Ephesians 2:1-10: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient ... But because of his great love for us, God ... made us alive in Christ ... " Ephesians 4:27: "Do not give the devil a foothold. [Do not sin.]"

Seek to become real in your relationship with God - allow his holiness to come in, seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit - and you will discover that the powers of darkness do not cede ground without attempting to fight back.

The word of God - the truth of God - the accuracy of teaching determines whether we win or lose against the powers of darkness. Before we sin, we have to believe a lie. Rick Warren hammers the point: "The battle for sin always begins in the mind. Always. If you lose the battle in your mind - your thoughts - you've lost the battle ... sow a [sinful] thought and you reap a [sinful] action." Neil Anderson in his spiritual warfare manual emphasizes: "Satan is a liar and a deceiver and the only way he can have power over you is if you believe his lies."

We do not always feel the Spirit even when he is present with power. How then did Jesus fight back? Jesus took the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God and he quoted the Bible against the lies of Satan and he marshaled the truth against his feelings of hunger and hardship.

Oswald Chambers: "God has frequently to knock the bottom board out of your experience if you are a saint in order to get you into contact with Himself. God wants you to understand that it is a life of *faith*, not a life of sentimental enjoyment of His blessings. Your earlier life of faith was narrow and intense, settled around a little sun-spot of experience that had as much of sense as of faith in it, full of light and sweetness; then God withdrew His conscious blessings in order to teach you to walk by faith. You are worth far more to Him now than you were in your days of conscious delight and thrilling testimony."

The Holy Spirit comes with power and then - without fail - he leads us into battle and makes us confront unholy spirits - the domain of Satan. You and I - wrestle with the implications. Do not be taken by surprise but learn to use our weapons. Amen.

Meeting 6: It Is A Gift (On Speaking In Tongues)

Warm-Up

- 1 What was one of the more embarrassing moments in your life?
- 2 Is there anything in the church that you find embarrassing or somehow weird? Why?

Worship & Prayer

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes
(See the next two pages)

Let's Talk About It

- 1 Feel free to voice your first impressions in response to the DVD message. Then tackle some of the following questions.
- 2 Have you ever heard anyone speaking in tongues? How did you feel when this happened?
- 3 How much teaching have you received on the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues so far? Has there been encouragement for you to receive the gift also?
- 4 Many Christians want to receive all the spiritual gifts except the gift of tongues. Why is that so and do you have a similar attitude?
- 5 Why does Nicky Gumbel call the gift of speaking in tongues a "beginner's gift"? See Acts 10:44-46; 19:6.
- 6 How many Christians received the gift of speaking in tongues in Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6.
- 7 Is the gift of speaking in tongues necessary for salvation? See Mark 16:16; Ephesians 2:8.
- 8 What are some of the uses of speaking in tongues? See 1 Corinthians 14:14; Acts 2:11; 1 Corinthians 14:2; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:13,27.
- 9 How do we receive the gift of speaking in tongues? Consider the following quotes:
 - "Many people expect to be seized upon, overwhelmed, and virtually compelled to speak in tongues. But this is not the way the Spirit treats us. He leads, He encourages, He prompts, He gives - but He does not force. The prompting may be a syllable, a word, or a phrase in the mind; to the understanding it is a meaningless sound, but when spoken out it leads into a new tongue. Or, it may be a certain 'moving of the Spirit' upon the tongue or lips, which will form into syllables and words as one lends the voice. Or, it may be a spontaneous speaking forth, difficult to describe because it is so personal. People's experience of just how it begins seem to vary greatly. Once begun, however, the phenomenon is fairly consistent: A spontaneous and usually fluent language, in which the words are prompted not by the mind but by the Spirit." "Once a person has spoken in tongues, he may do so at will thereafter."
 - "They explained to me that if I wanted to receive the gift of tongues I had to cooperate with the Spirit of God; I needed to open my mouth and start to speak to God in any language but English or another known to me. As I did, I received the gift of tongues also."
- 10 What are the two temptations which can diminish the gift of speaking in tongues? Consider the following quotes:
 - "I am just making this up ... This is a natural thought, for the interaction between the believer and the Holy Spirit is so subtle that it is hard to draw a clear line between my speaking and His prompting. The temptation, when this thought comes, is to draw back and deny the gift, or to quit using it. Our ultimate confidence cannot be the experience itself, but God's Word ... He has promised not to give me a stone when I ask for bread (Matthew 7:9) ... As you continue to use the gift, you will pass through this test ... "
 - "The initial enthusiasm wanes or you may from the beginning not feel very much and because your mind is not engaged you may actually become bored speaking in tongues."
- 11 Is the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues for you?

Personal Ministry Time

(Use and modify the appendix to pray for the infilling with the Holy Spirit and give the option to pray also for the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues)

Snippets From The Message & Your Notes

Meeting 6: It Is A Gift (On Speaking In Tongues)

In the book of Acts speaking in tongues is closely associated with the infilling of the Holy Spirit ... Acts 2:4: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak in other tongues/other languages as the Spirit enabled them." ... Acts 10:44-46: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The . believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on these people [original: the Gentiles]. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God." In similar fashion Acts 19:6 says: "When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

In 1 Corinthians there are further references to speaking in tongues which are very affirmative - 1 Corinthians 12:28: "And in the church God has appointed ... those speaking in different kinds of tongues." 1 Corinthians 14:1-5: " ... eagerly desire spiritual gifts ... For anyone who speaks in a tongue ... utters mysteries with his spirit ... He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself ... I would like every one of you to speak in tongues ... " 1 Corinthians 14:13-15: "For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind." 1 Corinthians 14:18: "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you." 1 Corinthians 14:39: " ... do not forbid speaking in tongues."

The key to salvation is faith in Jesus Christ - not speaking in tongues.

There is really no maturity level required and in Acts on different occasions all believers - without exception - seemed to have received that gift all at once.

Nicky Gumbel writes: "Not every Christian speaks in tongues. Yet [the apostle] Paul says: 'I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,' suggesting that it is not only for a special class of Christians. It is open to all Christians. There is no reason why anyone who wants this gift should not receive it."

A Lutheran pastor writes: "It would seem that prayer in which the mind is unfruitful would have little value. What blessing can it be to pray when you have no idea what you are praying about? Actually, this is one of its greatest blessings - the fact that it is not subject to the limitations of your human intellect. The human mind, wonderful as it is from the hand of the Creator, has limited knowledge, limited linguistic ability, limited understanding, and furthermore is inhibited with all manner of prejudice, little and large. Speaking in tongues is a God-appointed manner of praying that can bypass the limitations of the intellect. One may picture the difference something like this: A prayer with the mind comes upward from the heart and must then pass through a maze of linguistic, theological, rational, emotional and personal checkpoints before it is released upward. By the time 'it gets out,' it may be little more than a slender trickle. An utterance in tongues comes upward from the depths, but instead of being channeled through the mind, it bypasses the mind and flows directly to God in a stream of Spirit-prompted prayer, praise and thanksgiving."

However, I may repeat that one of the key uses of speaking in tongues is simply the provision of a language or languages for prayer which seem to operate more in the privacy of our own prayer times rather than in public - 1 Corinthians 14:14: "He who speaks in tongues edifies himself ... "

A Lutheran pastor writes: "Many people expect to be seized upon, overwhelmed, and virtually compelled to speak in tongues. But this is not the way the Spirit treats us. He leads, He encourages, He prompts, He gives - but He does not force. The prompting may be a syllable, a word, or a phrase in the mind; to the understanding it is a meaningless sound, but when spoken out it leads into a new tongue. Or, it may be a certain 'moving of the Spirit' upon the tongue or lips, which will form into syllables and words as one lends the voice. Or, it may be a spontaneous speaking forth, difficult to describe because it is so personal. People's experience of just how it begins seem to vary greatly. Once begun, however, the phenomenon is fairly consistent: A spontaneous and usually fluent language, in which the words are prompted not by the mind but by the Spirit." "Once a person has spoken in tongues, he may do so at will thereafter."

Nicky Gumbel writes: "They explained to me that if I wanted to receive the gift of tongues I had to cooperate with the Spirit of God; I needed to open my mouth and start to speak to God in any language but English or another known to me. As I did, I received the gift of tongues also."

The first temptation comes almost at once. We think: "I am just making this up." The second temptation usually comes after we have exercised the gift for a time - perhaps a few weeks or months. The initial enthusiasm wanes or you may from the beginning not feel very much and because your mind is not engaged you may actually become bored speaking in tongues.

The gift of speaking in tongues exists and the Bible says - 1 Corinthians 14:39: " ... do not forbid speaking in tongues." Are we ready to engage and seek this for ourselves? Amen.

Appendix: How To Get Ready For The Infilling With The Holy Spirit

If you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit, then you desire something that Jesus has promised to give - Acts 2:38-39: " ... 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. The promise is for you ... and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call."

According to the Bible every Christian has the Holy Spirit in some measure because " ... no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3). However, Jesus promised his disciples more. He promised his believing followers that they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5) which means that they would be completely submerged in the Spirit and drenched by the Spirit. Thus, every Christian can seek to be filled and refilled with the Holy Spirit as happened again to the believers in Acts 4:31: "After they prayed ... they were all filled with the Holy Spirit ... "

There is no set method which we can follow and thus control the infilling with the Holy Spirit. We do not control God but there are God-given ways which make us ready to receive the precious gift of the Holy Spirit in the manner God has intended for us. You may get together with someone that can pray for you and with you - perhaps lay hands on you. However, if you do not have anyone that can do that for you, there is nothing holding you back from praying on your own.

Some are filled with the Spirit without receiving the gift of tongues. The two do not necessarily go together. Yet in the New Testament and in experience they often do go together. There is no reason why you should not pray for both.¹

You may follow these steps:

1. Invite God to be present and assert his lordship over you and this time. Pray something like this:

My worship is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus, as you disarmed the powers and authorities of this dark world and triumphed over them by the cross, be with me now. Cover me with your blood and complete forgiveness so that the devil has no foothold in my life. In your name I bind whatever wants to exalt itself against you and declare that nothing must interfere with your purposes for me now. Amen.

2. Repent and turn away from everything that you know is wrong in your life. Pray something like this:

**Lord God, our heavenly Father,
I am a sinner and I have sinned against you,
not only in my words and actions,
but also in my secret thoughts and desires
which I cannot fully know or understand,
but which you know completely.
I am sorry that I have displeased you,
and repent of the evil I have done.**

Add what comes to your mind about concrete sins which you have committed and sinful practices which have a hold on you.

**For the sake of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
have mercy on me, forgive my sins,
and graciously help me in my weakness. Amen.**

3. Put your faith in the promises of God. Jesus said - Matthew 17:20: " ... if you have faith as small as a mustard seed ... Nothing will be impossible for you." Then Jesus gave us great encouragement when he said - Luke 11:9-13: " ... Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened ... If you then,

¹ Nicky Gumbel: Questions Of Life. A Practical Introduction To The Christian Faith, Colorado Springs: Cook Communication Ministries 1993, p162-163.

though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." Trust that everyone who asks will receive the Holy Spirit. Exercise faith.

4. Have someone lay hands on you and pray for you or simply pray yourself something like this:

Lord Jesus, I invite you to fill me with your Holy Spirit. Drench me completely with his power and holiness. I want to receive and be open to your gift and presence.

5. Wait for more of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on you. While you wait, keep on "asking", "seeking" and "knocking" until your prayer is answered according to the promises of Jesus - Luke 11:9-13: " ... Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened ... If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

While you wait bring before God any potential blockages to the full release of the Holy Spirit in you, e.g.: sins such as unforgiveness, bitterness, doubt, anger, jealousy, sexual immorality, greed, ...

6. If you would like to receive the gift of speaking in tongues, ask. Then open your mouth and attempt to praise God in any language but English or any other language known to you. *"Simply lift up your voice and speak out confidently, in the faith that the Lord will take the sound that you give Him and shape it into a language."*² Pray something like this:

Lord Jesus, please drive away all fear, doubt and confusion about the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. Please help me to surrender the control of my tongue to you. Please help me when I hesitate to give voice to strange sounding words which I do not understand. I thank you that you are giving good gifts to your children and I accept the gift of speaking in tongues from you in expectant faith ...

Now speak out the first sounds that come to your lips and do not be discouraged. Do not worry about how you feel or how you sound.

7. Believe that what you receive is from God. Do not be quick to doubt the experience. Do not be quick to judge that you are not meant to have this gift.

8. Persevere. Languages take time to develop. Most of us start with a very limited vocabulary. Gradually it develops. Speaking in tongues is like that. It takes time to develop the gift. But don't give up.

9. If you have prayed for any other gift, seek opportunities to use it. Remember that all gifts have to be developed by use.³

In closing remember that after the initial baptism with the Holy Spirit we need refillings because we do not always stay on the same level of Spirit power. Nicky Gumbel writes: "Being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time experience. Peter was filled with the Spirit three times in the space of chapters 2-4 in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31). When Paul says, 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18), he uses the present continuous tense, urging them and us to go on and on being filled with the Spirit."⁴

² Larry Christenson: Answering Your Questions About Speaking In Tongues, Minneapolis: Bethany House 1968, p130.

³ Nicky Gumbel: Questions Of Life. A Practical Introduction To The Christian Faith, Colorado Springs: Cook Communication Ministries 1993, p162-163.

⁴ Nicky Gumbel: Questions Of Life. A Practical Introduction To The Christian Faith, Colorado Springs: Cook Communication Ministries 1993, p162-163.