

Overflow: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Selected Passages

Bethany Assembly of God

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Central Proposition: You can be confident in the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Introduction

Throughout the past two months we have been in a sermon series about renewal we've called "Overflow." Our vision is to renew Bethany's foundations for an overflow of God's presence in the Pioneer Valley and around the world. By renewal, we mean a sustained spiritual revitalization and cooperation with the Spirit's work in us and through us. It's ongoing revival that is supported by the reformation of our habits, methods, systems, and church culture. Increasing our understanding of who God is and what He is doing in us gives us a foundation for renewal. And for Pentecostal believers, there is a culmination of this: baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals believe that God wants to do an ongoing work in the life of every believer that follows, is distinct from salvation, and empowers him or her to fulfill His mission to reach the world with the Gospel. This gift relates well to the renewal that we've been preaching about and praying for because many Pentecostals have described an increase in their desire for the experience and expression of the very beliefs we've been learning about that lead to renewal. In two weeks, I want to talk specifically about experiencing baptism in the Holy Spirit and how to prepare to receive this gift. But today, I want to make sure that you see it clearly in God's Word. Let's take a look at the biblical justification for this belief and what makes it distinctive.

1. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is different from salvation.

When you become a believer in Jesus, the Holy Spirit makes His home in you. He applies the death and resurrection of Jesus in your life. Baptism in the Holy Spirit doesn't imply that the Holy Spirit doesn't already live in you or that He isn't working in your life. Instead, there is another work the Holy Spirit wants to do in you and through you that the Bible calls baptism in the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit and it comes after you're saved. The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in the New Testament were written by the same author. In both of these books, Luke's teaching on the Holy Spirit places emphasis on empowerment for witness. The Gospel of Luke opens with the Holy Spirit's work in Jesus' birth and baptism. He filled John the Baptist and his mother, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and various people received revelations from the Spirit. Then, Jesus was baptized and the Spirit descended on Him. Throughout the rest of the book we are led to the understanding that everything Jesus did, He did in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus announced that He would pour out the same Spirit on His disciples. The book of Acts opens with Jesus reaffirming that promise and then fulfilling it by baptizing His followers in the same Spirit on the day of Pentecost. See Acts 8:14-19; 10:44-46; 11:15-17; 19:1-7; Luke 1:15, 41; Luke 1:35; Luke 1:67, 2:27; Luke 3:22; Luke 4:1, 14, 18-19; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:7-8; Acts 2:4.

The Old Testament also revealed the Holy Spirit's work when someone is saved and the empowering or charismatic work of the Holy Spirit. See Isaiah 59:21; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Isaiah 42:1; Joel 2:28-29. Not

only that, but Jesus used language reminiscent of the Old Testament when He assured His disciples concerning the promise of the Father in Acts 1:8 (cf. Num. 24:2; Judges 3:10).

Peter's defense for speaking in tongues on the day of Pentecost was not from a passage relating to the Holy Spirit's work in a person's heart, but describes the Spirit's prophetic or charismatic function. See Joel 2:28-29. Acts chapter 8 is probably the clearest example of a group that was obviously saved prior to being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans not only believed, they were baptized in Jesus' name. When the Christian leaders from Jerusalem heard about this, they sent Peter and John to investigate. See Acts 8:12, 14-17; Acts 13:3; 2 Timothy 1:6-7. Another example in Acts comes from the Gentiles as the gospel message continues to spread. There was an Italian military officer named Cornelius that feared God and had a vision. As a result, God sent the apostle Peter to speak to him and his family. Cornelius reminds us that baptism in the Holy Spirit can happen in different ways. There is little evidence that Cornelius and his family were saved before Peter arrived. In fact, they appear to have been saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit almost simultaneously. This brings up an important point. Believing that salvation and Spirit Baptism are distinct does not mean that there is always a time gap between salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit. See Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-7.

2. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is accompanied by the initial, physical evidence of speaking in tongues.

Speaking in tongues was one of the signs given to the disciples that they had been filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On that day, they began to speak in languages that they didn't know as the Holy Spirit enabled them. They were speaking in human languages that they had never learned, but there were people in Jerusalem who overheard them speaking and understood what they were saying. Speaking in other tongues is recorded multiple times in the New Testament, is a theme of the book of Acts, and appears normative in the early Church. Speaking in tongues is not the purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit and it is not the only sign that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Instead, we believe it is the initial, physical sign. It is the first, external evidence that a person has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. See Acts 2:4, Acts 10:46, 19:6, 8:17-18.

Through Acts and its roots in the Old Testament, you can see a connection between speaking in tongues and prophecy. We read earlier that when the believers in Ephesus were filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues and prophesied. They should be seen as a fulfillment of Moses' wish that all God's people would prophesy. See Acts 19:6, Numbers 11:29. The Church is a prophetic people. We are end times prophets. That doesn't mean that we all prophesy as such. But it does mean that as a church and as individuals we are called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the excellent plan of God and call people to His kingdom. As such, we function like prophets.

Conclusion

I know this message was content heavy, but I wanted to lay the foundation for you to have confidence in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I have 3 steps that you can take to continue with this. First, I will be including more information in our weekly podcast called "The Leftovers" and I encourage you to listen to that podcast this week. Second, in two weeks, I will be preaching another message on the same topic. That one will be more about the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit and how to seek that gift. Third, simply begin

seeking that gift now. You may still have questions, but if you've been convinced that baptism in the Holy Spirit is found in Scripture then trust Jesus' words when He said, "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Luke 11:11-13.