

How to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit – Easter camp

There are four essential things that make a person a normal Christian. Faith in who Jesus is and what He has done for us, repentance – ie a turning from specific sin and asking for forgiveness for those sins, water baptism to cleanse us from unconfessed sin and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Biblically all four essentials happened within the same hour (usually) as one event.

Tonight I want to focus on the last one, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Try not to get too hung up on trying to understand the Trinity, that God is three in one. The problem is, we really have nothing on earth that can compare with God and describe God adequately. God has always said He was Father Son and Holy Spirit, in the first chapters of Genesis He said, “let us make man in our image,” that word ‘us’ is plural. All three persons of the trinity are described as creator and God from Genesis to Revelation. I guess the best illustration I have ever heard is that of H₂O. Just as water can be ice, steam or liquid in form, it all has the same characteristics but it can be experienced in three forms.

The bottom line is that there is a Person in the God head who wants to fill your life with His power and love tonight. God didn’t invite you to join His family and give you a triple A battery for you to run your life on, instead He gave you a mega power station for you to draw on continually. The Person of the Holy Spirit wants to talk to you continually, He wants to help you cast out demons, heal the sick and do crazy, extreme things for God.

I remember some of the evidences I saw for the Holy Spirit in the first few weeks when I first started going to a Charismatic Methodist church. On about my first week a visiting speaker described a person who needed some demons cast out of him, he described me perfectly (even though he had never met me) and they easily cast some evil spirits out of me.

About the second week a family brought their new born baby to church. They described their baby as a blue baby because a division in the heart was missing and the blood wasn’t getting oxygenated. They were giving it constant blood transfusions. We prayed for that baby and the next week they brought a doctor’s letter to church saying its heart had miraculously been healed and it was now normal.

About two months into being a part of the church, I was getting used to seeing the power of the Holy Spirit and I brought my friend Geoffrey to visit the church. Geoffrey had never seen that the Holy Spirit is powerful and does miracles. Geff had a bit of ADHD. Jackie Pullinger was due to speak at the church that day and had laryngitis, the elders prayed for her and she spoke perfectly without pain or discomfort. At the end of the service my mate Geoffrey went straight up to her and asked her if it was a set up; had she really had laryngitis?

About a week later, as sick people were getting prayed for and the whole church was still and quiet this old lady stood up for prayer. I can’t remember what was wrong with her but I

remember my mate's reaction. Four rows back, the Holy Spirit touched her and she felt so much of God's love she fell over, totally healed. Remember that everyone was quiet and prayerful and my mate was a little ADHD. He looked under the four rows of chairs and said, at a normal volume, "Oh my God she is dead." I was cracking up and didn't know what to say to shut him up and so I said nothing, then he stood up and said at twice the volume, "Oh my God she is dead you know."

Now I really enjoy The Holy Spirit because He talks to me all day long and His presence around me always makes me happy. If I go to do something, sometimes He will say what to do or not to do, at other times I just have no peace about a decision or I feel something is wrong and then I ask Him what He wants to tell me.

Ultimately, a Christian without the baptism of the Holy Spirit is trying to live on triple A batteries power when a whole mega substation of power is available to them.

Jesus said in Acts 1:8 ***But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world.***

The Church/ Christianity began in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit was given to those first Christians. The Holy Spirit had been poured out on those first Christians, they all spoke in tongues and big Peter stood up and gave the most un-PC sermon ever ending with these words:

³⁶ Everyone in Israel should then know for certain that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ, even though you put him to death on a cross.

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were very upset. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "Friends, what shall we do?"

³⁸ Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is for you and your children. It is for everyone our Lord God will choose, no matter where they live."

This promise is for you, it's for everyone. If you have decided to make Jesus your leader and you have said sorry for your sins specifically, you need to know that God will baptise you with The Holy Spirit today or any day if you ask Him.

Listen to the last words that Jesus ever said before going back to heaven:

Mark 16: 15-18

¹⁵ Then he told them:

Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world. ¹⁶ Anyone who believes me and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe me will be

condemned. ¹⁷ Everyone who believes me will be able to do wonderful things. By using my name they will force out demons, and they will speak new languages. ¹⁸ They will handle snakes and will drink poison and not be hurt. They will also heal sick people by placing their hands on them.

How does a person receive the Holy Spirit?

Most often in the Bible a new believer will ask God for The Holy Spirit then another believer or two will lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. That is the most common way and yet I have heard of people just asking God for the Holy Spirit while lying on their beds or while going for a walk and God still answers their prayer.

The more you get to know God the more you will realize that He is really, really good and only wants good things for you. If you are scared, if you are not sure if you want the Holy Spirit or if you haven't asked God to forgive your sins and forgiven those that have hurt you, God will never force Himself on you. If those things are in the way, then you won't receive the Holy Spirit today. But if you ask Him and we pray, you will receive and either here or at home, you will find that you can hear God's voice so much better, you can with your tiny brain pray for God's will for yourself and those around you by praying in a new language according to His will. Nobody has to speak in tongues but if you have the Holy Spirit you can, and it is the first foundational gift Christians get so that they learn to let go and let God control their prayers, then as time goes on they learn to let go and let God control so much more. It's not the most important gift, it's a good gift, everything from God is good, but it's the starter gift or the foundational gift to a life lived in God's power.

Luke 11:9-13 (CEV)

⁹ So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. ¹¹ Which one of you fathers would give your hungry child a snake if the child asked for a fish? ¹² Which one of you would give your child a scorpion if the child asked for an egg? ¹³ As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.

I am going to tell you one more story, then I am going to tell you what to do as people pray for you tonight if you want to receive the Holy Spirit and God's power on your life.

When I was probably about 18 years of age I heard that the local AOG church was going on a giant combined youth camp, not unlike this. There was a girl in that youth group who was extremely good looking and so I decided that I would join that youth group for the week, go to the camp and this really stunning young lady would fall in love with me. Sadly that part of the plan never worked out but something else did. We met in the hall for a service once a day with this giant of an Australian man who taught us the Bible. This man seemed to have

extremely long arms, he was huge and at times I thought he looked a little bit like a gorilla. At one of these sessions he began talking about the Holy Spirit much as I have been talking to you tonight. At the end of the talk he said if you would like the Baptism of the Holy Spirit come forward. Man, I was ultra shy in those days and I couldn't believe that I was possibly the first person forward. He put his gorilla-like hands on my forehead and prayed for me as just stood there, hands open saying, "God I want everything that you want for me." As he prayed I felt the love of God come over me like someone had just put a giant hot cloak over me and I could feel so much of the love of God my legs went wobbly and I fell down on my back. Now when you are 18ish and self conscious, lying on a concrete floor in front of another couple of hundred teenagers did not feel like a cool thing to do and so after a couple of minutes I tried to get up. And it felt like a huge warm hand was stopping me. I tried several times and then just gave up. While I was lying there I thought, "What the heck, I can really, tangibly feel God's love, I will just lie here and quietly worship God." As I did that I felt a couple of strange words kind of bubble up from my stomach, and then I said them out loud but not loud enough for others to hear, and then a river of words followed and I felt closer to God than ever before. My life totally changed that day. I could feel God's presence much more easily, hear His voice more easily, I cast demons out of people and when I prayed for sick people, most said the pain went away and about 1 in 4 said there was a huge, instant improvement in their health.

You need the Holy Spirit. Being Baptized in water and the Holy Spirit is essential to normal Christian living. You weren't made to live your life on triple A power.

In just a moment I am going to ask people who want to receive the Holy Spirit to move to come to the front and let us pray for you.

I don't want anyone else in the room texting or talking or joking around. People are about to experience a real touch from God.

If we pray for you just stand there with your heart and your hands open and in your mind just pray "Jesus, you promised to send your Holy Spirit to everyone who will follow you, I am asking for the Holy Spirit today." Something like that.

Then let us pray for you and you expect God to give you the Holy Spirit and for a few words to bubble out of your mouth. Sometimes it helps to say an unknown word like Abba first and then let God take over.

Can I suggest a few things to you as you are being prayed for.

1. Don't get analytical but have the faith of a child.

In countries such as Argentina, Brazil and parts of Africa miracles are common place. The people may not be well educated or well off but they hear the gospel and with the trust, with the humility of little children they just believe and miracles are just the norm. I have continually been shocked and amazed by brand new Christians when within a week of committing their lives to Jesus they can pray for a sick person and they get healed or they deliver someone of a demon and they are set free. They have had no training or experience. But like a little child they just trust and humbly believe and the result is a miracle.

“ If you want to be great in God's kingdom,” Jesus said, “learn to be the servant of all.” Just trust and let the Lord take control. He will never force anything on you. He is always good.

2. Don't compare yourself to others. There is a real danger when we are looking to get a touch from the Lord to look around at others and say, “She's flat on her back”, “look at the way he is shaking”, “that sister just can't stop laughing with joy.” “So if that is what getting a touch from God looks like, then why isn't it happening to me?”

What I have realized is that God knows what I need much better than I do. I don't even need to try to understand what He is doing in someone else. It's none of my business. If He knows you and me as well as I am absolutely sure He does then whatever way He decides to show His presence on us is up to Him. If falling down is what is best for me, then I am sure I will fall down. If shaking is best for me, then He will cause me to shake. Some people often cry when the presence of God is on them because God is doing something personal in their lives. I have come to realize that when God's presence comes upon me I feel peace, and joy, and an increased love for the Lord and the words that then come out of my mouth are better than the ones I would have chosen.

3. Just relax; you don't need to make anything happen. Believe that whatever He is doing in you or giving to you is good and rest in that.

4. Take time to enjoy whatever He is giving to you.

Can I encourage you to become very sensitive to when you feel the presence of the Holy Spirit come upon you. Recognise what is happening uniquely in you and take time to enjoy it. I have found that the more I enjoy what God is doing in me and on me; the more likely it is that He will give me more of the same.

When you begin to feel His presence on you, and He begins to impart healing and joy and vision to you, just love Him back and stay in the moment, just enjoy the Lord and He will keep giving to you.

- Don't be analytical; let go of control and trust like a child would trust.

- Don't compare yourself to others; God knows what is best for you and His work in you will be a personal work.
- Rest in His finished work. Be still and know that He is God.
- Believe that whatever He is doing in you and giving to you is good.
- Then just recognise and enjoy what He is imparting to you. Steward the presence of God. Let Him give to you and while you do keep your mind and your heart full of praise for Him.

Your experience may be different from everyone else, but this I know, you seek, you knock, you ask and you will receive.

Luke 11:9-13 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

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Would everyone bow their heads and close their eyes please. God is here and He loves you. He doesn't want you to be a wimp type Christian but a man or a woman of power. If you would like to receive the Person of the Holy Spirit on your life today, if you would like to receive the fourth leg on your chair and become an extreme Christian, just pray this prayer quietly in your mind and then come forward and let others lay hands on you.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I don't understand everything but I know you are good and you love me. You promise to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks. Right now, I come to you, I trust you and I ask that you baptise me in the Holy Spirit. As people pray for me, please fill me with your Holy Spirit and every spiritual gift you have for me. I thank you that you always keep your promises and I choose to receive now, in Jesus name I pray – amen.

If you have prayed that prayer tonight I ask that you