

03. Mark 1:9-10

“The Baptism Controversy” Pt.2

(9/13/26)

Mark’s gospel, like any other historical record, has a beginning—and so he starts out his gospel:

Mark 1:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the Prophets: “*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.*” ³ “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.’*”

The story of the good news of Jesus Christ begins with a *messenger* who was sent by God to announce the coming of the Messiah—that messenger’s name was John.

John’s birth was special in that long before he was born on the earth, his coming was foretold by the O.T. prophets.

As God said through the prophet Malachi:

Malachi 3:1 (NKJV)

¹ “Behold, I send My messenger and he will prepare the way before Me...”

John was the one prophesied in the O.T. who would be the forerunner of the Messiah.

It would be John’s ministry to act as a spokesman for God (prophet) and announce Messiah’s coming thus preparing the way for Him by preaching a message of repentance and baptizing people in the Jordan River.

Mark 1:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰ And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.

Jesus walked approximately sixty miles from Galilee to the lower Jordan River to be baptized by John—indicating how important John’s baptism was in launching the ministry of Jesus.

Now, because of the importance of baptism, we have set aside last week and today to do a two-part message I’m calling **“The Baptism Controversy.”**

The English word “baptize” comes from the Greek word “*baptizo*” which means to “*immerse*.”

It is used 74 times in the New Testament every time the idea is immersion—the question is into what?

Well, we have to look at the context of each passage to determine that—because the word is used to speak of 6 different kinds of baptisms in the N.T.—

- 1. The baptism of suffering**
- 2. The baptism of distress or of being overwhelmed**
- 3. The baptism of judgment**
- 4. The baptism of salvation**
- 5. The baptism in water**

This morning we want to look at another baptism the N.T. teaches—a baptism that is also not without controversy—the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

6. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Now to set this study up, turn to John 14 and let's look what Jesus taught His disciples about the Holy Spirit the night before His crucifixion—

John 14:15–17a (NKJV)

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth...

The word “**Helper**” is the Greek *parakletos*—it comes from 2 Greek words—“*para*” (alongside) and “*kaleo*” (to call).

And so very simply, a *parakletos* is someone who has been called alongside another for the purpose of helping or comforting—which is why some translations call Him the *Comforter*.

Jesus Himself was the first Parakletos—the first Helper Who came alongside the disciples physically to help them and teach them God's truth and to train them for the work of ministry.

But then in John 14 He told them He was going away—but He promised not to leave them alone and helpless like orphans.

He promised that, upon His return to heaven, after His resurrection, He was going to ask the Father to give them another Helper Who would come alongside them to direct, guide, teach, lead and empower them for the work Jesus had called them to do (the Great Commission).

And then on the day of Pentecost as the disciples were in the upper room praying and waiting on the Lord—the Holy Spirit was poured out, and the disciples were all “*filled with the Holy Spirit*.” (Acts 2:1-4)

From that point on the one word that described them was *dynamic*!

They were dynamic and successful because they were filled with and totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit. (Explain)

And as we read the book of Acts, we can see how dependent they were on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the activities and ministries of the early Church, and how that their success in ministry was directly tied to and based upon their reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

As we continue reading the Book of Acts it records that in the first 30 years of the Church's existence—they turned their world upside-down for Jesus! (Acts 17:6)

And think about that—they did it all without any formal theological training and without the help of radio, television, the internet, or social media!

Today by contrast we can see how ineffective and unsuccessful the Church has been in our generation in impacting the culture for Jesus Christ—even with all of the 'tools' we just mentioned at our disposal.

And please don't point to the mega-churches to prove me wrong. (Explain)

I believe this is due to the fact that the Church today is depending more on the ingenuity and creativity of man in developing techniques, programs and methodologies to build the Church—rather than on the power and direction of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

A.W. Tozer—

“If the Holy Spirit was removed from the early church 90% of what they did would have come to a halt. If the Holy Spirit was removed from the church today 10% of what we're doing would come to a halt.”

And so, this leads us to the focus of this morning's message—"The Baptism with the Holy Spirit."

Let me start by saying that Jesus spoke of three levels of relationship that the Holy Spirit can have with a person.

These are *ascending* levels of relationship—in other words, they build upon each other.

Jesus outlined these levels using 3 different Greek prepositions each one corresponding to one of these levels—the first 2 come out of John 14:15-17:

John 14:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever-- ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with (para) you and will be in (en) you. (Explain)

Then we fast forward three days to Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead—

John 20:19, 21-22 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ...²¹ As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit Who had been with them has now come inside them—in other words they were now New Testament Christians. (Explain)

To see that third Greek preposition mentioned—we need to look at Acts 1:8:

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

⁸ **But you shall receive power [Greek is dynamis] when the Holy Spirit has come upon [Greek—'epi'] you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

All Christians have the Holy Spirit in them (Explain—Romans 8:9)—but not all Christians have the Holy Spirit upon them.

This is what the Bible calls the “*Baptism with the Holy Spirit*” which is a separate and often subsequent work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life apart from salvation.

What is the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the baptism of *power* that equips Christians for *service*.

Again, it is extremely important to note that as the Lord Jesus Christ prepared to begin His public ministry—He makes it a point to walk 60 miles from Galilee down to the lower Jordan River to be baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist.

The Lord Jesus obviously believed that this was something very important to launching His public ministry—not John’s baptism in water, but the baptism that followed:

Luke 3:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. ²² And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

I want you to notice the wording of verse 22—“*And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him...*”

This baptism is absolutely essential for service because it supplies the power necessary for doing the work God has called each of us to do.

Remember these were simple, uneducated men—how could they possibly fulfill Jesus’ command to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations?

Who would listen to them? How could they impact their world for Jesus Christ being the simple Galileans that they were?

The answer—God was going to endue them with supernatural power from on high and was going to do the work *through* them.

Again, this is where that third Greek preposition comes into play—“**with**”, “**in**” and thirdly “**upon**”.

Luke 24:49 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father **upon (epi)** you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Please understand these men knew the gospel—they had walked with Jesus for 3 ½ years and no doubt had heard Him preach the gospel thousands of times—I’m convinced they could have preached the gospel in their sleep!

And yet Jesus told them they weren’t ready to go out into all the world preaching it—not until they were endued with power from on high (the Baptism with the Holy Spirit)—“*So go back to Jerusalem and wait there until you receive this power...*” (Luke 24:49)

The idea that we no longer need this power (as they did being simple and uneducated men) because we have our Bible colleges and seminaries to train men and women for the ministry—is patently false and utterly ridiculous!

Effective ministry isn’t a matter of having a Master of Divinity or a PH. D in theology—more ‘head-knowledge’ isn’t the answer—the disciples had the head-knowledge, what they needed was the power to use it!

Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole

house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat **upon** each of them. ⁴ And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit...**

Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV)

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." [*not just for the 1st century or apostolic period*]

The result? → 3000 men plus woman and young people were saved on that day (Pentecost).

It's very important for us to understand that Jesus, the Son of God, in His humanity waited 30 years until He was baptized with the Holy Spirit—and only then did He begin His ministry by saying—

Luke 4:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel...*

How absurd it is for us to think that we can do anything for God in the way of ministry without the same power Jesus knew He needed to do the work the Father had given Him to do.

I believe that this is one of the greatest needs in the Church today and the single greatest reason the church is so ineffective in the world in its work for God.

Didn't Jesus promise us that against His Church the gates of hell would not prevail—then why does it seem we are losing the culture war to the devil?

I believe it's because we are trying to do the work of God in our own strength, ingenuity and intelligence—and not in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You need to understand that the three and a half years of Jesus' ministry on the earth—were not done in *His* power, as the Second Person of the Trinity—but in the power of the *Third* Person of the Trinity, *the Holy Spirit*.

Peter acknowledged this in Acts 10—

Acts 10:36, 38 (NKJV)

³⁶ The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ...

³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

That is how Jesus did the work of God and this is how we must do the work of God—in the same power of the Holy Spirit.

The Testimony of D. L. Moody's Baptism with the Holy Spirit

"I can myself go back almost twelve years and remember two holy women who used to come to my meetings. It was delightful to see them there, for when I began to preach, I could tell by the expression of their faces they were praying for me. At the close of the Sabbath evening services they would say to me, 'We have been praying for you.' I said, 'Why don't you pray for the people?' They answered, 'You need power.' 'I need power,' I said to myself, 'why, I thought I had power.' I had a large Sabbath school and the largest congregation in Chicago. There were some conversions at that time, and I was in a sense satisfied. But right along these two godly women kept praying for me, and their earnest talk about 'the anointing for special service' set me thinking. I asked them to come and talk with me, and we got down on our knees. They poured out their hearts, that I might receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost. And there came a great hunger in my soul. I knew not what it was. I began to cry as never before. The hunger increased. I really felt that I did not want to live any longer if I could not have this power for service. I kept on crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit."

Then came the great Chicago fire. On the evening of that memorable night in 1871 when one-third of the city was laid in ashes and thousands were left homeless, Moody had preached in Farwell Hall. With the institutions which he had founded in ruins, Moody went east to appeal for funds, but he said,

"My heart was not in the work of begging. I could not appeal. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with His Spirit. Well, one day, in the City of New York—oh, what a day!—I cannot describe it, I seldom refer to it; it is almost too sacred an experience to name... I can only say that God revealed Himself to me, and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different; I did not present any new truths, and yet hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience if you should give me all the world..."

Moody's biographer finished by saying—"The sermons were not different; but the servant was! The truths were not new; but now they were pungent and penetrating! A few had been converted before; now converts came by the hundreds!"

Now let me say that if Jesus needed the power of the Holy Spirit to be effective in ministry—and Peter and Paul and men like D.L. Moody—then who do we think we are that we can live the Christian life and be involved in ministry without the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

“Okay you’ve convinced me—how do I receive this baptism with the Holy Spirit?”

How do you receive anything from God—you simply ask in faith:

Luke 11:9-13 (NKJV)

⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

But often the Baptism with the Holy Spirit doesn’t come upon a Christian’s life until there is a *brokenness*.

I’d like to share with you just a little from the life of Dr. Walter Wilson as recorded in the book, *“They Found the Secret.”*

The author tells us that Dr. Wilson was converted to Christ on a December night in 1896, afterward—

“...he became a lover of the Scriptures and became diligent in teaching, preaching and distributing tracts. Much effort, however, seemed to produce little result, and no apparent success followed his labors. This ineffectiveness troubled him, but he was told by others ‘not to look for results, but only to be busy at seed sowing.’”

This went on for 17 years until January 14, 1914, when he heard a message given by Dr. James Gray, who later went on to become the president of Moody Bible Institute, on the need to surrender our lives fully to the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work.

Upon hearing this message, Dr. Wilson went home and there laid on the floor of his room, utterly heartbroken over his fruitless life, he cried out to the Holy Spirit and said,

“My Lord, I have mistreated You all my Christian life. I have treated You like a servant. When I wanted You, I called for You; when I was about to engage in some work, I beckoned You to come and help me perform my task. I have kept You in the place of a servant.

I have sought to use You only as a willing servant to help me in my self-appointed and chosen work. I shall do so no more. Just now I give You this body of mine; from my head to my feet, I give it to You. I give You my hands, my limbs, my eyes and lips, my brain; all that I am within and without, I hand over to You for You to live in it the life that You please. You may send this body to Africa or lay it on a bed with cancer. You may blind the eyes or send me with Your message to Tibet. You may take this body to the Eskimos or send it to a hospital with pneumonia. It is Your body from this moment on. Help yourself to it. Thank you, my Lord, I believe You have accepted it...

If you think that that prayer is bizarre or fanatical—it's because you neither understand nor have experienced brokenness in your life for God—(Explain)

The author goes on to say from that day on Dr. Wilson's life was '*dramatically and forever changed*'—he went on to become a tremendous soul winner, all because he came to a place of brokenness and surrender—coupled with the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

R.A. Torrey—

"The lack of this absolute surrender is shutting many out of the blessing today. People turn the keys of almost every closet in their heart over to God, but there is some small closet of which they wish to keep the key for themselves, and the blessing does not come."

What are you holding back from God and refusing to surrender to Him?

Is it a relationship? Is it a dream? Is it a goal? Is it an object? (For the Rich Young Ruler it was his wealth)

The Lord Jesus is inviting you to follow Him completely—will you accept His invitation?

The only way you will ever experience the fullness of God in your life is if you are broken, surrendered, plugged into a local church and using your gifts in ministry.

Then pray for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit—and a fresh filling every day!

The Results of Being Baptized and then filled with the Holy Spirit

1. *First, you become acutely aware of your own sinfulness and desire more than anything else to live a life of absolute obedience and holiness to God.*
2. *Jesus becomes near and real and there is a deeper sense of fellowship, communion and intimacy with Him than anything you've ever experienced before. Your love for Jesus becomes all-consuming.*
3. *There is a renewed hunger for the Word and prayer. As you read the Word, the Scriptures seem alive with meaning and full of richness.*
4. *There is supernatural strength against temptation and victory over habitual sins.*
5. *There is a great increase of spiritual power. Where there was once dryness and bareness in ministry there is now freshness and fruitfulness.*
6. *There is a boldness in witnessing and a burden for the lost unlike anything you've known before.*
7. *The emphasis of your life moves from the temporal to the eternal.*
8. *There is great joy and a heart full of praise for God—which is what Paul mentions in Ephesians 5:19 as one of the evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit.*