



Summary

What if there is a dimension of life in the Spirit that most believers never fully step into, not because it is unavailable, but simply because they have never been told it exists? That is the heart of what we explore in this message, anchored in Acts 19, where the apostle Paul encounters a group of disciples in Ephesus and asks them a question that stopped them in their tracks: did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Their answer revealed a gap, not in their sincerity, but in their understanding. Walking through seven distinct examples drawn from the book of Acts, we trace a consistent biblical pattern: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation is real and eternal, but there is also a subsequent empowering, what Jesus himself called being baptized with the Holy Spirit, that is meant to be a living, ongoing reality in our walk with God. This is not about strange or unsettling experiences. It is about the Spirit of Christ coming upon us, giving us the strength to resist temptation, the courage to speak truth, and the character to be genuine witnesses. The message challenges us to stop settling for a version of the Christian life that runs on our own willpower, and to start drawing on the power that God has made freely available to every one of us simply by asking.





Points

Title: The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: Power for the Christian Life

Sermon Summary: Drawing from Acts 19:1-7 and a broad survey of related passages throughout the New Testament, this sermon addresses the question of whether a believer can experience an empowering work of the Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation. The pastor argues that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct, subsequent experience to being born again, available to every believer, and necessary for effective Christian living and witness. Through careful examination of seven biblical examples from the book of Acts, the sermon demonstrates that this experience is not uniform in its manifestation but consistent in its purpose: empowering believers to be witnesses to Christ and to overcome temptation and spiritual opposition. The pastor emphasizes that this empowering is not a one-time event but a continually available resource, received simply by asking God for it in moments of need.

Key Points:

- There is a distinction between three relationships with the Holy Spirit described in Scripture: alongside the believer before salvation (para), indwelling the believer at salvation (en), and coming upon the believer in the baptism with the Holy Spirit (epi)
- The twelve men Paul encountered in Ephesus were likely disciples of Apollos in his pre-corrected teaching, having received only John's baptism of repentance and not yet the full gospel of Jesus Christ
- John's baptism of repentance was designed to prepare the heart to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, not to replace it
- The baptism with the Holy Spirit is distinct from and subsequent to water baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation
- Jesus himself named this experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit and commanded his already born-again disciples to wait for it before beginning ministry
- Seven biblical examples of the baptism with the Holy Spirit appear in Acts, each unique in its circumstances, involving varying combinations of laying on of hands, speaking in tongues, and prophecy



- Speaking in tongues is always directed from man to God, never from God to man, and constitutes a praise or prayer language
- Prophecy in its primary biblical sense means to speak forth the word of God, not necessarily to predict future events
- The baptism with the Holy Spirit is available to every believer simply by asking, as taught by Jesus in Luke 11:9-13
- This empowering is the practical means by which believers are able to put on the armor of God, resist temptation, and take every thought captive
- The weakness and ineffectiveness visible in much of the contemporary church is attributed to believers attempting to live the Christian life in their own strength rather than in the power of the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference:

- Acts 19:1-7 (primary passage)
- Luke 3:1-22 (John's baptism of repentance and his announcement of the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit)
- John 14:15-17 (Jesus describing the three-fold relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer)
- John 20:19-23 (Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit into his disciples in the upper room after the resurrection)
- Acts 1:4-8 (Jesus commanding his disciples to wait for the baptism with the Holy Spirit and promising power for witness)
- Acts 2:1-41 (the day of Pentecost and Peter's sermon)
- Acts 4:8 and 4:31 (subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit)
- Acts 8:14-17 (the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands)
- Acts 9:17 (Ananias laying hands on Paul)
- Acts 10:44-48 (the Holy Spirit falling on Cornelius's household)
- Acts 13:8-12 (Paul filled with the Holy Spirit before confronting Elymas)
- 1 Corinthians 14:1-5 (the proper use and purpose of speaking in tongues and prophecy)



- Romans 8:31-39 (the confidence and victory available to the Spirit-empowered believer)
- Ephesians 6:10-20 (the armor of God)
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (spiritual weapons for pulling down strongholds)
- 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (God providing a way of escape from temptation)

Stories:

- The pastor recounts the account of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28, who knew only John's baptism until Aquila and Priscilla explained the way of God more accurately, providing the background context for understanding the twelve disciples Paul encountered in Ephesus
- The creation of man in Genesis 2:7, where God breathed life into Adam, is presented as a parallel to Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit into his disciples in John 20, illustrating the new birth as a re-creative act restoring the spirit that died at the fall
- The account of Moses striking the rock in Exodus 17 and then being commanded to speak to the rock in Numbers 20 is used to illustrate that since Christ has already been smitten for sin, believers need only speak to him to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit
- The story of David refusing Saul's armor before facing Goliath in 1 Samuel 17 is used to illustrate that the armor of God cannot be worn in human strength but only through the power of the Holy Spirit
- The repeated cycle of Israel's apostasy and restoration in the book of Judges is referenced to illustrate the consequences of heeding or ignoring the forth-told word of God
- The pastor uses the personal illustration of the French phrase *etudes de ballet* to demystify the concept of speaking in tongues, noting that foreign languages are not inherently frightening and that the gift of tongues is simply speaking in a language unknown to the speaker
- The contrast between 3,000 dying when the law was given at Sinai in Exodus 32 and 3,000 being saved on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is noted as a significant biblical bookend illustrating the superiority of grace over law



Scripture

Here is a comprehensive list of all scripture references mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

****Acts****

- Acts 1:4-8
- Acts 2:1-41
- Acts 4:8
- Acts 4:31
- Acts 8:14-17
- Acts 9:15-17
- Acts 10:44-48
- Acts 13:8-12
- Acts 18:24-27
- Acts 19:1-7

****Genesis****

- Genesis 1:24
- Genesis 2:7

****Exodus****

- Exodus 17:5
- Exodus 32:23

****Numbers****

- Numbers 19

****Judges****

- Judges 17 (referenced as upcoming study)

****1 Samuel****

- 1 Samuel 17

****Psalms****

- Psalm 16:8-11
- Psalm 110:1



****Isaiah****

- Isaiah 40:3-5

****Joel****

- Joel 2:28-32

****Luke****

- Luke 3:1-22

- Luke 11:9-13

****John****

- John 14:15-17

- John 16

- John 20:19-23

****Romans****

- Romans 7

- Romans 8:31-39

****1 Corinthians****

- 1 Corinthians 10:4

- 1 Corinthians 10:12-13

- 1 Corinthians 12:3

- 1 Corinthians 13:30

- 1 Corinthians 14:1-5

****2 Corinthians****

- 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

****Ephesians****

- Ephesians 6:10-20

calvary
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gulf coast



Quotes

- Is there or can there be even the possibility of an empowering experience with the Holy Spirit subsequent to the believer's salvation experience? Some people say no. You get all of the Holy Spirit you will ever receive in the very moment you are born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit at salvation.
- When the plain sense makes the most sense, seek no other sense.
- People wanna change the name of that to make it sound more comfortable. It is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Why do we call it the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Well, I'll tell you why, because that's what Jesus called it.
- It is the Spirit of Christ. Did you ever see anything in the Gospels that would embarrass you about Jesus' ministry? And so all these weird manifestations, and I understand people having a desire to experience things, but all these weird manifestations that you see that are purported to be the baptism with the Holy Spirit or Pentecostal or however the expression might be, that is not the case with what we see in the Bible.
- The struggles that we have in our Christian life is because we lack the power of God upon our lives.
- The next time you're tempted to sin, ask for and receive a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit and see what happens to that temptation. The temptation flees. It is the way of escape.
- It's why the church is so weak and it's why it all looks so pretentious to the outside world because we're not moving in the power of God, we're moving in the power of men proclaiming to move in the power of God who do not understand having the power of God upon their lives.
- I will not let other people's opinions or misuse of the baptism with the Holy Spirit due to being misled about this clear biblical doctrine prevent me from being a Berean on this subject, to study the Scriptures daily, to know everything that can be known about this vitally important aspect of actually living my life in Christ by his power and not mine.
- All I've been doing, Pastor Bill, is receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit all day long, and I'm like, praise the Lord. It's available, it's powerful.
- Jesus said it best, and I require no further proof. Acts chapter one verse eight, not many days from now, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me.



Discussion Questions

The sermon describes three distinct relationships with the Holy Spirit -- alongside, indwelling, and upon -- and argues that many believers remain unaware of the third; how might your Christian life look different if you actively sought the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in moments of temptation or ministry?

Pastor Bill draws a parallel between God breathing life into Adam in Genesis 2 and Jesus breathing on his disciples in John 20, suggesting both are acts of spiritual creation; what does this connection reveal about the nature of salvation and what it means to be made in God's image?

The sermon argues that the disciples in Acts 19 were followers of Apollos before his own understanding was corrected by Aquila and Priscilla, raising the question of how incomplete or inaccurate teaching shapes the spiritual formation of those who receive it -- where might you be operating on an incomplete version of the gospel?

John the Baptist's baptism of repentance is described as preparation for something greater, and the sermon suggests some believers stop at repentance without pursuing the fullness of what God offers; in what ways might Christians today settle for a preparatory experience when a deeper one is available?

The sermon presents seven distinct examples of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts, each unique in its circumstances, with no single consistent pattern of tongues, prophecy, or laying on of hands; what does this variety suggest about how God works and the danger of requiring a specific formula for spiritual experience?

Pastor Bill contends that the church appears weak and pretentious to the outside world because believers attempt ministry in human strength rather than divine power; do you agree with this assessment, and what would a church genuinely operating in the power of the Holy Spirit look like in practical terms?

The sermon uses the contrast between striking the rock and speaking to the rock in Exodus and Numbers as a picture of how we receive from God now -- through asking rather than striving; how does this image challenge the way you typically approach God when you are in spiritual need?

Peter is described as inconsistent and unreliable throughout the Gospels, yet becomes a bold and eloquent preacher immediately after the day of Pentecost; what does this transformation suggest about the relationship between human character and divine empowerment, and what hope does it offer for your own weaknesses?

The sermon emphasizes that tongues, properly understood, are always directed from man to God as a praise language and never from God to man, which contradicts common Pentecostal practice; how should a believer evaluate spiritual experiences and expressions in their church community against what Scripture actually teaches?

Romans 7 describes the exhausting cycle of doing what one does not want to do and failing to do what one intends, and the sermon presents the baptism with the Holy Spirit as the answer found in Romans 8; where in your own life do you most feel the tension Paul describes, and how does the promise of divine empowerment speak into that struggle?



Small Group Guide:

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Based on Acts 19:1-7

Overview

This session explores one of the most misunderstood and often avoided topics in the Christian life: the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Through Acts 19:1-7 and seven additional examples from the book of Acts, we examine what Scripture teaches about an empowering experience with the Holy Spirit that is available to every born-again believer, distinct from and subsequent to salvation.

Key Takeaways

- The Holy Spirit has three distinct relational modes described in Scripture: alongside the believer before salvation (para), indwelling the believer at salvation (en), and coming upon the believer in the baptism with the Holy Spirit (epi).
 - The baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a one-time event but is available freshly whenever a believer needs it.
 - Jesus himself named and promised this experience in Acts 1:8, commanding his already born-again disciples to wait for it before beginning ministry.
 - Every biblical example of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is unique to its situation, meaning there is no single required formula for how it is received.
 - The primary purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is to empower believers to be effective witnesses to Christ and to live the Christian life beyond their own natural strength.
 - Fear, misinformation, or the misuse of this doctrine by others should not prevent believers from pursuing what Scripture clearly teaches.
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Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Before hearing this sermon, what was your understanding of the baptism with the Holy Spirit? Was it something you had thought much about, or was it largely unfamiliar territory? How did your background shape that understanding?
2. The pastor opened by suggesting that many Christians do not experience the baptism with the Holy Spirit not because it is unavailable, but because they do not know about it, do not want it, or are afraid of it. Which of those three reasons, if any, has been most true for you personally?



Digging into the Text

3. In Acts 19:1-7, Paul encountered about twelve men who were described as disciples and believers, yet something about them prompted him to ask whether they had received the Holy Spirit. What do you think Paul might have observed in their lives that raised that question? What might it look like in a person's life today if the Holy Spirit's power is absent?
4. Read Acts 1:4-8. Jesus commanded his already born-again disciples to wait for the baptism with the Holy Spirit before beginning any ministry. What does it say about the necessity of this experience that Jesus gave this instruction to people who had already been walking with him for three and a half years and had already received the indwelling Holy Spirit in John 20:22?
5. John 14:16-17 describes three distinct relationships with the Holy Spirit using three different Greek words. In your own words, how would you explain the difference between the Holy Spirit being alongside someone, indwelling someone, and coming upon someone? Why does that distinction matter?
6. The sermon walked through seven examples of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts, and each one was different. Some involved laying on of hands, some did not. Some involved tongues, some did not. Some involved prophecy, some did not. What does that variety tell us about how God works? Why might it be a mistake to insist on one particular pattern or set of outward signs?
7. The pastor drew a connection between Romans 7, where Paul describes the frustrating cycle of doing what he does not want to do and failing to do what he wants to do, and Romans 8, where Paul speaks with confidence about being more than a conqueror. What does the baptism with the Holy Spirit have to do with the difference between those two chapters?

Going Deeper

8. The sermon described the baptism with the Holy Spirit as God's provision for escaping temptation, referencing 1 Corinthians 10:13. How does that reframe the way you think about temptation? Have you ever thought of asking for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit in a moment of temptation rather than simply trying harder to resist on your own?
9. The pastor made the point that the armor of God described in Ephesians 6 cannot be put on through human effort alone, comparing it to the armor of Saul that did not fit David. Do you agree that the armor of God is meant to be worn through God's power rather than personal discipline alone? How does that change the way you approach spiritual warfare?
10. The sermon addressed the fear many believers have around the gifts associated with the baptism with the Holy Spirit, particularly tongues and prophecy. The pastor noted that it is the Spirit of Christ that comes upon a believer, and asked whether anything in Jesus' ministry would be embarrassing or frightening. How does keeping the focus on the character of Christ help address fear or skepticism around this topic?
11. Luke 11:9-13 records Jesus promising that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. What keeps believers from simply asking? What might need to change in your own prayer life in light of that promise?



Reflection and Application

12. The pastor said, "It is why the church is so weak and it is why it all looks so pretentious to the outside world, because we are not moving in the power of God, we are moving in the power of men." Do you agree with that assessment? Where have you seen evidence of it, either in your own life or in the broader church?
13. The sermon closed with a challenge to receive a fresh baptism with the Holy Spirit the next time you face temptation, rather than relying on willpower. What would it look like practically for you to make that a habit? What obstacles might you face, and how could your small group help hold you accountable?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One or More of the Following:

- Read through the seven biblical examples of the baptism with the Holy Spirit listed in the sermon (Acts 2:1-4, Acts 4:8, Acts 4:31, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 9:17, Acts 10:44-48, Acts 13:8-12) and note what is consistent and what is different in each account. Write down what stands out to you.
- The next time you face a moment of temptation or spiritual struggle, stop and ask God directly for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit before doing anything else. Take note of what happens.
- Spend time this week reading Romans 7 and Romans 8 back to back, paying attention to the shift in tone and confidence between the two chapters. Ask God to make Romans 8 a lived reality in your life and not just a theological statement.
- If this topic raises questions or fears for you, commit to studying it further rather than avoiding it. Be a Berean, as the sermon encouraged, and search the Scriptures on this subject with an open and honest heart.
- Pray specifically and consistently this week using the promise of Luke 11:13, asking the Father to give the Holy Spirit in fresh measure for whatever you are facing.

Closing Prayer Suggestion

Close your group time by praying together, inviting each member who is willing to ask openly for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Encourage honesty about fears or uncertainties, and remind one another that the one who comes upon us is the Spirit of Christ, whose character is gentle, holy, and trustworthy. Pray also for one another's specific areas of temptation or weakness, asking God to make his way of escape real and tangible in each person's life this week.



5-Day Devotional:

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on the Themes of the Holy Spirit, Salvation, and Empowered Living

Day 1: Prepared Hearts, Prepared Lives

Reading: Luke 3:1-16

Devotional: John the Baptist was not the destination -- he was the road. His baptism of repentance was never meant to be the final word, but the first word, preparing hearts to receive something far greater. Many believers live their entire lives in this preparatory stage, aware of their sin, genuinely sorry for it, yet never moving forward into the fullness of what God has provided. Repentance clears the ground, but it is Christ who builds on it. Ask yourself today whether you have allowed your awareness of sin to become a resting place rather than a launching point toward deeper life in Christ.

Day 2: The Promise He Made and Kept

Reading: Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2:1-21

Devotional: Jesus did not suggest that his followers wait for the Holy Spirit. He commanded it. To men who had walked with him for three and a half years, who had witnessed miracles firsthand and heard his teaching daily, he said plainly that they were not yet ready. That is a sobering word. Readiness in the kingdom of God is not measured by knowledge or experience but by the presence of God's power upon a life. The day of Pentecost was not an accident of history. It was a kept promise. God keeps his promises. The same Spirit poured out then is promised to all who call upon the name of the Lord.

Day 3: In You, With You, Upon You

Reading: John 14:15-21; Acts 19:1-7

Devotional: Jesus described three distinct dimensions of relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit who moves alongside the unbeliever, convicting and drawing. The Spirit who takes up residence within the believer at the moment of new birth. And the Spirit who comes upon the believer, clothing them with power for witness and endurance. These are not the same experience, and the New Testament does not treat them as such. The twelve men Paul encountered at Ephesus knew only the beginning of the story. When they heard the rest, everything changed. Do not settle for a partial story. The whole counsel of God is available to those who seek it.



Day 4: Power That Produces Witnesses

Reading: Acts 4:8-13, 31; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Devotional: Peter before the Sanhedrin was not the same Peter who denied Christ three times outside a courtyard fire. The difference was not willpower or personal resolve. The difference was the power of God upon his life. Scripture tells us he was filled with the Holy Spirit in that moment, and what followed was bold, clear, unashamed proclamation of the risen Christ before the very men who had orchestrated the crucifixion. This is what the baptism with the Holy Spirit produces -- not spectacle, but witness. Not performance, but presence. The same power that steadied Peter in that council chamber is available to steady you in whatever room you find yourself in today.

Day 5: Ask, and Keep Asking

Reading: Luke 11:9-13; Romans 8:26-39

Devotional: The invitation of Jesus in Luke 11 is breathtaking in its simplicity. How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. Not to those who perform correctly, or who belong to the right tradition, or who have reached a certain level of spiritual maturity. To those who ask. Romans 8 describes a life lived from the inside of God's power rather than straining against it from the outside. Nothing in all creation can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. That love is not passive. It is active, pursuing, and empowering. Ask today for a fresh filling. Ask tomorrow. Ask whenever you need it. He will not refuse you.