

Victoria Ave./Emmanuel Baptist

Sunday, September 20, 2020

1 Corinthians 2:1-11

The Spirit's Role in Discipleship (part 2)

You have become or are a believer and you want to know what you should be doing? It is all about next steps! The problem is that there is so much information, beliefs, and interpretations that it is hard to wade through the waters and come to the truth. You want to be the best disciple and you want the Holy Spirit to use you for the kingdom of God...but what does that look like?

Today we are going to look at these questions and we are going to start with God's written word. Let's look at our scripture today: 1 Corinthians 12:1-11:

12 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. ² You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. ³ So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else

the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

So...

We have answered the call to be a disciple. We have been obedient through the waters of baptism. We have been taught that we have been baptized with the Holy Spirit...but what about all this other stuff.

This is where the misinformation kicks in again. Many believers have been influenced by our more charismatic brethren that the proof that you are a true believer and disciple is that when you experience "Spirit baptism", the proof of this is the fact that you WILL speak in what is called "tongues." To them "tongues" is considered an unknown "heavenly" language that sounds like babbling to many.

Some charismatic groups will encourage individuals who have not spoken in tongues to just start using incoherent words and it will kick in or they will have classes or "schools of ministry" to teach you how to do it. I am not quite sure why the Spirit is unable to have an individual do it without help or classes.

The proper understanding of these things have already been dealt with. We seem to often relive the problems that the Apostle Paul had in Corinth where the idea of "tongues" as a spiritual language and gift took shape and had to be dealt with. Here is the problem:

The Corinthian church was almost completely made up of new converts that were coming out of pagan temple worship. As they were learning about Jesus and Christianity, they were having to get rid of some of their "religious" baggage that they brought with them from the pagan temples.

A big piece of baggage was this idea of speaking in a “Holy” language. You might say “sure – it happened with the disciples and apostles at Pentecost!” The issue was, at Pentecost, the languages being heard were known languages in use! So where did this idea of an “unknown” language come in?

Just like water baptism, speaking in an unknown language was nothing new. It was a desired response and action for those who would worship the Greek and Roman gods. In the temples, if you were to speak in an unknown tongue, it meant that the god’s had personally blessed you, and much of the time that meant that they liked you more than others.

The new believers in Corinth have come out of this way of life and have continued to desire “tongues” to show that God loved them. To make matters worse, the Corinthian church was an elitist church where there were the very rich and the very poor, and often the poor were abused or ignored and allowed to suffer. There was a lack of LOVE!

Paul deals with this issue, first by chastising the people for not being loving and then by addressing the issue of what we call the ecstatic gifts (tongues, prophecy, healing etc...). Paul really downplays what we call “tongues” by putting so many rules over its use, it really almost makes it impossible to do. Paul limited it to one or two times in any gathering. Only one person at a time could speak in tongues, and there always had to be an interpretation. He even tells them that he would prefer to speak 10 understandable words rather than a bunch of gibberish and cautioned the members that if a stranger came in and observed some of this going on, they would think that Christians were crazy.

Paul goes on to state in 1 Corinthians 12:30:

³⁰ Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not!

To say that everyone must practice one or two specific gifts is not biblical. The Holy Spirit gives this ability to whomever he wills!

WHY THE CONFUSION?

What you need to know as a believer is the difference between “baptism” and “filling” of the Spirit. As we said last week, all believers are baptized by the Spirit. This is how we join Jesus. How we participate in Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. The Spirit dwells in us and unites us with Jesus. A believer has the fullness of the Spirit right from the beginning. The Holy Spirit is not a commodity that we can get “more” off...for the most part, we need to understand how to listen and obey the Spirit we have. You do not need to plead with the Holy Spirit to fill you as if you are deficient. The Spirit of Christ is a person and you either have him or you don’t

While the baptism by the Spirit is a single non-optional event for believers, the “filling” of the Spirit is optional.

Ephesians 5:18 is a key verse for this understanding:

18 Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit...

The filling of the Spirit is a repetitive event. For example, Luke tells us in Acts 2:4 that the disciples were ***“filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*** But only a short time later, in a different situation, we read that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31).

What is the difference between those who are filled with the Holy Spirit and those who are not? It boils down to a failure within people to surrender their lives to the Spirit’s leading and direction!

We need to make sure that the reason we are asking the Spirit to fill us is not selfish and self-centered. This was the problem in Corinth. We do not

desire filling for the purpose of status or to be “more loved” by God. To have such an attitude would be to indulge in the sin of pride (the same sin that caused Satan to fall and the sin of Adam and Eve!).

SO WHAT SHOULD YOU SEEK FROM THE SPIRIT?

Next week we finish our series and answer the question of “what should you seek from the Spirit?” First, we will look at what are called “spiritual gifts.” The second, “spiritual fruit.”

Let’s pray...