

Message #42 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“What Is The Baptism of the Holy Spirit? - Part 2”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. And thanks to those of you who have written to us. I have really appreciated your input and your questions, and also the opportunity to send out some of our message material. If you're listening to this program, and you've been thinking about sending us a note and asking for a copy of one or more of the messages, please do not hesitate. They are free for the asking. We don't charge anything, and we really do want you to have them. But we can't send them to anyone if we don't know who to send them to. So please write and request copies of messages when you hear one that you might want to listen to again. We would be pleased to send them. Of course, we do ask that you pray for us. I hope you don't think that to be unreasonable. God will supply the money, but there never can be enough prayer. God answers prayer.

Well, last week we talked about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I'd like to go back and visit this subject just a little bit more and see if I can give any further understanding. If you have questions, please send them to us. We love questions. And we will respond either by mail or on our weekly program.

Last week, when I was concluding the message, I talked about the Holy Spirit causing a change inside a person. When a person is Baptized with the Holy Spirit, a change takes place inside. We know that baptism with water symbolizes a change that will take place also, but the baptism of water is the answer to the call of God which shows the intent of a person to respond righteously. An intent to do good is different than what happens when the person is baptized

with the Holy Spirit. When John the Baptist was baptizing in the wilderness, he was telling the people to repent of their sins. When the people were convicted of the truth of John's preaching, they were recognizing that it was actually God who was speaking to their hearts and telling them that they were not currently pleasing to him. Their response was to answer the call of God and repent. As I said last week, and as I'm sure you've heard many times before, repentance is not just being sorry for what you have done, but a turning away from the direction you were going, and going in a new direction.

The word, intent, is important in understanding the difference between the baptism with water and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. When you intend to do something, it means you have already decided on your course of action. When you intend to do something you have already determined what needs to be done, and have determined that you will accomplish it to the best of your ability. Following a Law of Commandment as the Israelites were required to do, is by intent. When you have an intent to do something you follow a principle. Let me give an example here so you can see what I mean.

If you intend to have the oil changed on your car, you determine to do it based on the established fact that the car has sufficient miles on it from the last oil change to warrant it. Also, you have read the manuals and seen that oil changes should be done at regular intervals, etc. Based on your knowledge of what should be done, you determine that you will go ahead and do it. This is the concept of following various established rules, and making decisions of what to do or not to do based on those rules. This is what the Children of Israel did when they were under the Law of Commandments. They had been taught what the proper response was in any given situation, and then they either made a determination to follow those laws, rules and ordinances or they didn't. But if they did intend to keep the Law of Commandments, then they made that determination ahead of time. There is nothing wrong with this concept. To know what is right and wrong and then to make a determination to do what is right and not to do what is wrong, is a good thing. To intend to do what is right is exactly how God wants us to respond.

However, the Bible teaches us that even though some of the Israelites had the most perfect intentions, still, no one was able to keep the Law perfectly. The apostle Paul speaks that interesting verse of Romans 7:15, that says something like this. "That which I desire to do, I don't do, and that which I desire not to do, that is what I end up doing." Paul was actually saying that he had a will, and that he willed himself to do righteousness, but then many times he could not accomplish the righteousness that he wanted to accomplish. This is why no man can be righteous in the eyes of God, because all men are too weak to accomplish that which is right, and all men are too weak to completely resist that which is wrong. No matter how perfect our intent is to do that which is right, sin works in our bodies and from time to time we sin, even though our intent is to do that which is right in the eyes of God.

What Paul was saying to us was that righteousness could not be obtained through the keeping of the Law of Commandments because we humans are too weak to totally resist the temptations of the Devil. We may have a perfect will to do that which is right, but we don't have enough power

within ourselves to completely resist Satan's temptation. If we could, then the Law would have been sufficient to bring about our righteousness. If we could just have a law and keep it perfectly, we would be justified. But that wasn't possible. No man can keep the Law perfectly, and that is why God came to earth in the form of a man to die in our stead, because he knew man was weak, and that as long as we were under the law, we would fail, and therefore would be condemned. No matter how perfect our will to be good was, no matter how perfectly we intended to keep the Law, we would fail because we were human. Satan's power to act in the flesh part of mankind would always be more than humans could overcome by their own power.

Let's read some scripture. Let's look at Galatians 3:18-25. I'll read all eight verses. It says, "For if the inheritance is through the law, it is no more by promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19 What purpose does the law serve then? It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the scripture has included all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut away from the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."

These verses point out quite clearly that inheritance of heavenly things is not by keeping the Law. It also explains that the Law wasn't the vehicle that would lead to that inheritance, but rather was the way in which to prove the righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man. The Law would mediate between God and man, and the conclusion of that mediation was to show man that he was without righteousness, and that the only way to righteousness was through God himself. We also know that Abraham believed the promise of God, and that Abraham's righteousness was established because he believed God. Then we see an interesting point in verse 19. Paul first asks the question, "Then if the promise of eternal life was meant to be by believing the promises of God, then why did God give the Children of Israel the Law? Then Paul answers that question by telling us that the Law was a schoolmaster. It was an instrument for teaching. The Law taught us what sin was, and it taught us that man would only fail in keeping the law and therefore be condemned for the sin which the Law revealed. Fleshly man, in his own strength, just doesn't have enough power to keep the Law perfectly, and therefore the Law will condemn us, just as the Law condemned Israel over and over again.

Jesus Christ, therefore, paid our debt. For we were as sinful under the Law of Commandments as anyone could be. And we were all lumped together, for no matter how true a man's intent was to do righteousness, he would still fail in that attempt at righteousness, and therefore would be grouped together with all the other wicked people of earth. It doesn't make any difference how wicked you are, if you only commit one tiny sin, you come short of the glory of God. You are

still a wicked person and worthy of God's condemnation. Your lot is with the wicked people of this world even though your intent is good, even though you will yourself to be righteous.

So Jesus Christ paid our debt for us. But then, how would we then continue in this righteousness once he has paid our debt for us? The Bible makes it clear in Hebrews 10:26, that when we sin wilfully, when we sin intentionally, there is no longer forgiveness of sin. Once you repent, once you turn away from the wickedness of the world, and then you turn back intentionally, you cannot be forgiven. When you want to sin, God will not continue to forgive you. Repentance shows your intent to do righteousness because you have turned away from wickedness. You have turned around and are going in the other direction and are determined to be obedient to the word of God. But if you turn back, there is no more forgiveness. We have the story of Lot's wife to prove this. When Lot's wife turned back from her intent to follow God, she was doomed. If we turn back, we would also be doomed. Our intent to do righteousness is necessary in order to receive forgiveness.

However, if the intent of righteousness was all that was necessary now that Jesus Christ died for us and paid the penalty for our sins, then we could just continue to be under the Law, and our righteousness would be established because of the blood of Jesus and by our intent to do that which was right. But Paul made it clear in Galatians 5:3-5, that if you try to keep any part of the Law at all, then you are under the Law and have fallen away from the promise of eternal life that comes through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Faith in God and in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus is the only possible way of obtaining righteousness. No righteousness can come by the Law because righteousness can only come by the Law if you keep every Law and precept perfectly. No man can do this. Therefore, righteousness must come strictly by faith in Jesus Christ, and your righteousness cannot be established in any way by the keeping of the Law of Commandments. In fact, if you attempt to be righteous by keeping some of the Law, you must then keep all the Law. We either have to keep the whole Law, or stop trying to do any of it.

So! Don't we still try to follow an established set of rules? The answer to this is, "No!" To try to be righteous by following an established set of rules is exactly how you bring yourself into condemnation, and we don't want to be condemned again, but rather remain free. However, this doesn't mean that the Laws of God aren't good. It just means that when you try to accomplish good by keeping a set of Commandments, you automatically set yourself up for failure. But now comes the good part. Instead of the New Testament of Jesus Christ just being the Old Testament with a new face, we must realize that in order to obey God, we must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit instead of a set of rules. This is where the Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes into play.

When Jesus gave us the promise of the Holy Spirit, he was giving us a way of acting and speaking according to God's will without attempting to keep a law that would condemn us when we failed in keeping it. When we are led by the Holy Spirit of God we then act and speak as we should, and sin is unable to work in us. Let me show you this concept in scripture. In Galatians 5:16, it says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

This scripture is telling us that when we are led of the Spirit we won't be taking part in the lusts of the flesh at the same time. The reason for this is stated in the next verse which tells us that the Holy Spirit of God has an unbridled desire to work against the flesh. This means that any move of the Holy Spirit is going to cause a righteous response. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that when you are moved by the Holy Spirit you act according to the will of God, and that when you are moved by an evil spirit you act contrary to the will of God. Therefore, just as the apostle Paul says in Galatians 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." The Law of Commandments was a schoolmaster. It taught us both what righteousness was, and also taught us what sin was. It also showed us that we could not be righteous by trying to be good. The only way we can follow God without being condemned is to follow the leading of his Holy Spirit which will never move us into anything except that which is good.

Many people would say that you must have a set of rules, or else people could make excuses to do anything they wanted. But, if a man doesn't want to be obedient to God, is he any more righteous if he follows a set of rules anyway? Of course not. His heart is already evil. The only thing that following a set of established rules does for a person with an evil heart is to present a false sense of righteousness. The conclusion is this. If your heart is evil, you will follow evil spirits, and if your heart is good you will follow the Holy Spirit. A man can keep a set of rules even though his heart is evil, but no man can follow the leading of the Holy Spirit unless his heart is good. Your spirit will only move you to righteousness if your spirit is in tune with the Holy Spirit.

As an example of this, consider the scribes and Pharisees in the Bible who were wicked. They followed a set of rules that made them look pretty good on the outside to most of the people. But down in their hearts they were extremely wicked. If the Law of Commandments were to be taken away from these people, and in place of it they were expected to follow the leading of their spirit, their wickedness would be revealed immediately. They would not be able to do anything that appeared righteous because their spirits were wicked, and no wicked spirit can move you to respond in righteousness. But because these same scribes and Pharisees had a set of rules to follow they therefore appeared to others as being righteous because they kept the Law quite well.

Let me summarize a little. When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit we then become born-again in our spirit man. Now, instead of being led by evil spirits through our old spirit nature, that old spirit nature has been killed by the overwhelming of the Holy Spirit, just as our flesh was overwhelmed with water. Our old spirit man died and was buried with the Holy Spirit just as our old man of the flesh died and was buried with the water. Now, because a new spirit has been put into us, we now are moved to act and speak in righteousness according to the word of God. We can only do right things when we are led by the Holy Spirit.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the process of overwhelming the old spirit and laying it to rest, and in its place a new spirit man arises which is completely in tune with the Holy Spirit of God. We no longer need a set of rules to follow, for the Holy Spirit of God leads us. If we allow the Holy

Spirit to move us, then, no matter how it moves us to act, our only response is that which is righteous, because the Holy Spirit can't lead us to do anything else except the will of God.

The bottom line is this. Faith is the only thing that will save you. And this faith must be in the word of God. And the word of God is only established by the two witnesses of God, the two witnesses that stand before the Lord of all the earth. These two witnesses, these two testimonies, are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ, we are accepting the Word of God, for Jesus is the Word of God. And when we accept the Holy Spirit of God, we are also recognizing and therefore accepting God as the almighty God, for we are recognizing that this Spirit is not just any spirit, but is the Holy Spirit of God. Our righteousness is established by believing God, both in that his word is true, and that he truly is all powerful. The record of Jesus Christ is the testimony of God, and the moving of the Holy Spirit is the testimony of God. If you don't recognize that when you are being moved by the Holy Spirit that you are actually being moved by God, then you don't know what spirit you are being led of. But when you follow his Holy Spirit because you recognize it to be his Spirit and not any other spirit, and that it is moving you according to the true Word of God, then your faith in God, your belief in the triune God, is established, and your salvation is secured. Those who worship God must worship him in Spirit and in truth. It is not just the Word of God that you must know, but you must know God well enough to recognize his Spirit also. By following God's Holy Spirit, you are following God. If you don't know God's Spirit, then you don't know God.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the event of the Holy Spirit coming into you and taking over the place of your old spirit nature. The outward manifestation of this event may or may not be immediately seen as an experience of tongues or great emotion, but then again, it may. That will depend on the individual, and to how the Holy Spirit wants to work in them. But when the Holy Spirit overwhelms you, the old spirit nature will be buried, and the new spirit nature of God will take over. And when a true change takes place inside of you, the change will manifest itself in some way. It may not be immediately noticeable at that moment, but like it says in Matthew 7:16, "You shall know them by their fruits." If you truly come to know God by both truth and in Spirit, you will receive God's Spirit. When the Holy Spirit of God comes in, it will be by an overwhelming power which kills your old spirit nature just as the water overwhelms your old man of the flesh and buries it. This is Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And one last thing. If you're looking for God to show you that you truly have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, then all you really have to do is make certain that you truly give yourself to God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. The Holy Spirit doesn't need any more help than this. He will make himself known, and you will know that he works in you.