

## BEING PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

### LEARNING TO WAIT ON GOD

One of the most difficult things we must learn in our spiritual walk is to wait on God. We pray, and hand our situation over to God, expecting a prompt answer with fairly quick results. God's work is sure and perfect, but it may take much more time than we imagine. It may take time to change the hearts and minds of those involved in any petition, or to bring circumstances into order without interfering with free wills. It is at this point that our fleshly nature can rear its head, and we endeavour to hasten the desired result with many additional prayers, and other means that we may think may stir God into action. But when we interfere with God's working, He withdraws, and we are left floundering, all because we do not rest and trust in His faithfulness to answer our prayers. It is imperative that we learn patience, and wait on God to perfect His work. We must believe in our hearts that God loves us and is with us, and that He has heard our prayers and is working in our circumstances to bring about His will.

**“For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.”** Isa 49:23.

**“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret -- it only causes harm.”** Ps 37:7-8.

**“The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”** Isa 40:28-31.

### INFILLINGS OF THE SPIRIT

#### *The regeneration of our spirits at salvation*

At receiving the salvation of the Lord our spirits are regenerated, enabling us to discern spiritual truth, and grow in the knowledge of the blessings of salvation. We have the capacity to perceive spiritual truth from the Scriptures, reading Christian material, and conversing with other Christians. Basically, this infilling is for our own personal spiritual growth.

When did the disciples receive this infilling? The disciples did not receive their full salvation until the Lord was taken to heaven, and His blood placed on the heavenly altar. After He returned He filled them with the Holy Spirit, which is the perceived evidence of our salvation.

**“When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, “He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.””** John 20:20-23.

## *The infilling of the Spirit that enables us to minister to others*

After their salvation, the disciples were told to wait at Jerusalem until they received power from on high. When the Spirit fell at Pentecost, the disciples prophesied, spoke in tongues, and received gifts of the Spirit that enabled them to minister in the power of the Spirit to others.

## *Further infillings of the Spirit*

There are further infillings of the Spirit that enable people to minister overcoming life to others in dire circumstances, or to prepare them for a new ministry.

**“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” Acts 4:29-31.**

Timothy received the ministry of the evangelist by the imparting of the Holy Spirit by Paul. **“Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.”** 2 Tim 1:6.

God may have put it on our hearts to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It may be that we pray in obedience, not realising that this may just be the starting point that opens the door for God to do a preparatory work.

## **WAYS IN WHICH GOD MUST PREPARE US**

### ▪ **We should fervently desire the Spirit:**

Unless a person realises his need, and has a fervent desire for the Spirit, he won't fully receive it. To facilitate this, God may strip away our consciousness of His presence in the Spirit, leaving us with a spiritual emptiness and impotence, prompting a fervent desire to be filled with the Spirit. The degree with which we are filled with the Spirit is related to the strength of our desire. If we have a casual longing for the Spirit, we may expect a small infilling. If our overall desire is only to experience the power of the Spirit, we can expect nothing.

### ▪ **We must be taught to wait on Jesus to initiate and direct our ministry:**

God may teach us to wait on the Spirit before being filled with the Spirit, lest having been filled, we are 'loose cannons' acting in the flesh rather than the Spirit. Jesus warned, **“many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”** Matt 7:22-23. They were called lawless because they had initiated their ministries with fleshly zeal, without waiting on Jesus to initiate and direct their ministry. His response to their ministry was, **'I never knew you.'**

- **Knowing Jesus as our head:**

This brings us to the next point: It is Jesus, who is “head of all things to the Church,” who ministers to His body. He initiates, He directs, and He empowers by the Spirit. Before being filled with the Spirit, it is essential that we have a right relationship with the Lord, as branches to the true vine. It is only when we are united with Him, totally dependent on Him, and waiting on Him to direct and do the actual work, that our spiritual labours will bear fruit. Jesus told us, **“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”** John 15:5-6.

- **We are to incorporate our carnal nature in Christ’s death:**

The flesh [the power of the self-life], and the Spirit, are incompatible, vying with each other for control of the person, the flesh controlled by Satan, and the Spirit by God.

**“For the flesh lusts [wars] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”** Gal 5:16-17.

Before we can be filled with the Spirit we must be emptied of our carnal fleshly nature. Our part in this is to reject our carnal self-nature, and lay it on the altar of the cross so that it can be put to death by the Spirit.

**“For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”** Rom 8:13-14.

The Holy Spirit will not indwell a vessel grounded in impurity, and so it is imperative that we step on the path of the cross, daily consigning the body of sin under the power of **“the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,”** (1 John 2:16), to the death of the cross that it might be put to death by the Spirit. The positive side of this is that we should put on, or clothe ourselves with the nature of Jesus Christ, that we may live in union with Him and by His victory over sin. **“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil its lusts.”** Rom 13:14.

Usually the last part of us under the control of Satan is the mind, and so we must put off carnal thinking and imagining, and put on the sound mind of the Lord, declaring by faith that **“we have the mind of Christ.”** 1 Cor 2:16.

- **We must be taught to wait on the Spirit when ministering to others:**

When ministering to someone who is troubled, we must learn to wait on the Spirit, lest we talk to deaf ears and blind eyes. We must be shown by the Spirit when their flesh is controlling their conversation, and wait until ears are opened. This waiting is a two way process, because in the flesh we tend to be thinking on what we are going to say next instead of being still and waiting on the Spirit to direct our conversation.

- **We must learn to reign with Christ:**

The name of Jesus is invested with great power when used under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Phil 2:9-11.

When it is used wrongly under the inspiration of the flesh, its power may be directed by Satan to produce counterfeit signs and wonders. That is why Jesus said in the former reading above, **“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”** This again shows us the importance of having that relationship with Jesus that allows Him to initiate and direct the work by the Holy Spirit.

- **Presumption:**

When waiting to be filled with the Spirit, there is a tendency to speculate or presume what may happen, and how we may be changed. There may or may not be a perceptible change until we begin to minister, and there is no set pattern for the way it will happen. We must reject all speculation and presumption, and allow God to do His work without our interfering. It is God who sets the boundaries, but it would be safe to say that the more important the work ahead, the more exacting will be our preparation.

- **Humility rather than spiritual pride:**

We may not be aware of spiritual pride until it is disclosed by the Spirit, but when that happens it must be promptly discarded, because the Lord God will not share his glory with another.

**“For how should My name be profaned? and I will not give My glory to another.”** Isa 48:11.

**“But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”** Isa 66:2.

- **We must learn obedience:**

We know that we are to wait on the Lord, but when it doesn't appear to be happening, we consider ways to promote action – like fasting, extra prayers and quiet times. Consider what happened to Saul. Perhaps rashly, he had declared war against the Philistines, who amassed a huge army against him. His army trembled in fear and deserted him, leaving him with only six hundred men. Samuel the prophet was to come and offer a sacrifice to the Lord, but he did not turn up in the time appointed, and so Saul unlawfully offered the sacrifice himself. **“And Samuel said to Saul, “You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.”** 1 Sam 13:13-14.

Later when Saul disobeyed God in not totally destroying the Amalekites, keeping the best of the spoil to sacrifice to the Lord, Samuel rebuked him, saying, **“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”** 1 Sam 15:22-24.

Obedience is of the utmost importance if we are to be trusted in serving the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Learn to appropriate Christ's victory over the world:**

The apostle John wrote **“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”** 1 John 5:19. Satan's corrupting influence has invaded all aspects of our worldly existence influencing politics, social and moral behaviour, the arts, the media, education, and religion. He uses tools like television, music, propaganda, and entertainment, to promote lawlessness, violence, idolatry, and sexual perversion. In this climate a person must learn to appropriate Christ's victory over the world. He said, **“In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”** John 16:33.

Jesus allowed those under the power of Satan and the spirits of the world to crucify Him. But then He made a spectacle of all the powers of darkness, by being raised from the dead, and passing through their midst to be seated at the right hand of God the Father.

**“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the death of the cross by the power of His resurrection].”** Col 2:15.

Spiritually we are united with Jesus in His death and resurrection, and can claim union with Him in His overcoming the spirits of the world. That is why Paul could say, **“But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”** Gal 6:14.

Not only was he free from the power of the world to seduce him, the world with its spirits were dead to him, having no power over him. We too can so testify to our union with Christ in His victory over the world, and learn to walk in it by faith.

## **BE STILL, REST, AND TRUST**

In the face of illness, betrayal, suffering, or persecution, by maintaining an attitude of patience and rest we may keep our souls in a state of orderly peace, without turmoil. This attitude of patient endurance and rest is often difficult, and so there is little wonder that the bible has so many references telling us to be still, trust in God, and wait on Him to bring it to pass.

**“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass”.** Ps 37:5.

**“In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”** Isa 30:15.

**“You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength.”** Isa 26:3-4.

**“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. [He can carry the burden with ease]” Matt 11:28-30.**

**“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Ps 46:10-11.**

**“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought.” Jer 17:8.**

## **TRUST IN GOD’S UNCHANGING LOVE**

The very first thing is to be assured of God’s love for us. No matter what our position is or our circumstances are, God is with us, watching over us, and His love never falters. With that assurance, we are quietened with His love.

**“The Lord your God in your midst,  
The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.” Zeph 3:17.**

**“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.” Isa 63:7.**

**“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” John 15:9-10.**

In ministering to others, it is love that engenders faith, the love of Christ flowing out from us releasing the faith of the person we are ministering to.

**“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.” Gal 5:6.**