

The Work of the Holy Spirit

His Power, Presence and
Relevance Today.

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The Work of the Holy Spirit. His Power, Presence and Relevance Today.

50th Birthday Edition

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the Holy Spirit who has given me the grace, zeal and anointing to write. He is the keeper of Covenant.

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit; The Holy Ghost; The Spirit of God is the third person of the Trinity. There is so much to learn about the Holy Spirit, though the Holy Spirit is often misunderstood, and seen as a distant and mysterious person of the God-Head (The Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

The Holy Spirit: Breath of God.

The first move of the Spirit can be seen in Creation as the breath of God. As the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, God spoke and things were formed. Genesis records the elements of all creation in subjection and obedience to the Creator.

You may have observed at some point in your life, the closing of prayer with these words,

“...the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

Sometimes the complete verse is used, “the love of God and sweet fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14). This prayer is an earnest

prayer for God's divine presence. All who desire true communion with the Holy Spirit, say this prayer.

David's greatest fear was not the hot pursuit of his enemies, but the loss of the tangible presence of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 51:8). You see, the Holy Spirit is a person, the Psalms give a close-up example of what it means to have the Holy Spirit as a personal friend.

The Spirit's Role as a Helper.

The Work of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the role of a Helper, the One who abides with us forever: the Spirit of Truth, who lives within us (John 14:15-18). When Jesus was about to depart from earth, He knew the disciples would be anxious and troubled. Jesus assured them, as He assures all who believe in Him today, that He is with them always. It may be hard to picture any of the disciples in need of Comfort. We must remember that when God created Man, God also created a companion to be with Man: Woman. In the order of creation, it was clear that Man was never meant to be alone. God said, "It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion." Genesis 2 (MSG)

A Woman is a natural born helper. It is normal for a Woman to be nurturing, not just to her husband

and children, but to the community, and the world around her. The Woman is often the one who holds the community together, she brings a comforting edge to the harshness of society: she naturally fights for the rights of the abused and disfranchised. Woman is innately kind, compassionate, merciful and inclined to be helpful to all in need. She has a listening ear; she has what could be described as an internal antenna to the cries of the weak and hurting.

The nature of the Man is to protect, to provide, to lead, to instruct, to be the head of the home, community and nation. Man is designed to be responsible. The leadership imbedded in Man is inter-generational, in line with the eschatological promises of God. The responsibility of Man extends to every aspect of this life. Man is a natural born watchman. A watchman has eyes to see from a distance. To protect His territory from danger, He watches, both near and far, remotely and into great distances. Man has been given this earth to take over, tend and nurture.

Though man and woman are distinct in their roles, they are united as one in Christ. When God refers to mankind in general, He is not gender specific. Galatians 3:28 puts it this way, “there is no Male and Female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (ESV).

Man and Woman are both representative of the God Head. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit have their distinct offices and roles; yet they work together as one. God spoke on behalf of the GodHead when He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Both the Man and Woman alike are made in the image of God and His likeness (Genesis 1:26).

In respect to who the Man and Woman represent, is important that we view ourselves and others through the eyes of the Spirit. Though unique in their roles, and strengths, the Man and Woman are equal before God.

The Work of the Spirit is to reach each generation of people by the power of God's Word and reveal Christ. The role of the Spirit is to lead and teach, to be that steady hand and faithful friend. The Spirit of God guides us in all truth because The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth.

The Paraclete.

The disciples were consoled with the promise of the “Paraclete.” The Paraclete is simply another term for the Holy Spirit. It means Comforter or Advocate in Greek.

The Spirit abides with us as a Comforter and Friend. In Latin, the word “Comforter” is communicated as “*advocatus*,” which means an Advocate. According to what Christ promised, His followers are consoled with the permanent presence of His Spirit. They are not alone.

The Holy Spirit can be said to be kind, compassionate, merciful, tender and understanding. The Spirit of God is a close friend and companion who instructs and guides. However, the Spirit of God cannot be confined to these attributes. The Spirit of God is also moral and redemptive.

The Spirit of God works as an invisible hand in the supernatural occurrences that take place on earth. Abraham and Sarah had supernatural visitations; Lot was rescued suddenly by angelic power. The Holy Spirit is seen in miracles: Moses performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Prophets of old prophesied and gave instruction by the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit. Elijah

demonstrated God's power by calling down consuming fire by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God works in divine power and strength. Samson had extraordinary strength by the Holy Spirit. Solomon had wisdom like no man had ever seen. Rahab and Ruth had witness in their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the New Testament, the Spirit of God can be seen in the life of Moses, the lone voice and bridge from the Old testament to the New. The Spirit of God is seen at work in the lives of Zachariah and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit from His birth. He received the Holy Spirit without measure after His Baptism, empowering Him for ministry.

The work of the Spirit is evidently seen in the tongues of fire at Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit came upon the early Church, they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. The release of Spiritual Gifts in the ministry of the disciples and the commissioning act of the Spirit in the global move of the gospel (The Great Commission) was done by the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is also seen in the New Testament teachings of Paul: in the internal work of Sanctification in the New Man.

The Work of the Spirit in Spiritual Gifts.

The Spirit of God is a giver of gifts. These Gifts of the Spirit are not in any way confined to times past, as some believe. In the Old Testament, only chosen leaders like Moses and Joshua were gifted with the Spirit. With the onset of the New Testament Church, there was a significant change. God poured out His Spirit in a greater measure and dimension.

This Promise of the Spirit has not been revoked (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17,18).

The Work of the Holy Spirit is to give us New Life. God's Wisdom is revealed by His Spirit. This Wisdom of God is a mystery, and insight into God's mind can only be given by the Spirit of God. It is by the Spirit of God that we understand spiritual realities, the things that the natural mind can never comprehend or understand.

“Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” – 1 Corinthians 2:16

It is The Holy Spirit who works in us so that we have the mind of Christ. As the Bible says, just like no one can tell which way the wind will blow, no one can fully understand the ways of the Holy Spirit.

PART ONE

The Work of the Holy Spirit in Creation.

Have you ever thought about where and when the Holy Spirit first appeared in the Bible? What did the Spirit do and what were Holy Spirit's attributes? What were the Holy Spirit's functions and roles? There is a lot to think about.

The Breath of God.

The first evidence of what is described as the "Holy Spirit" in the Bible is documented in Genesis 1:2.

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” – Genesis 1:2

The Spirit of God, also known as, "The Breath of God," is expressed as lingering and spreading, like mist, rapidly over the surface of the earth. We can feel the power of God in this text. Imagine wind, a storm; the gust of air; energy; power and life in motion. This force of movement, otherwise known as the breath of God," is called "rûach" in Hebrew

and “**pneuma**” in Greek.

When we think about the Breath of God, we need to think about air in authoritative movement. Consider how this air, the Breath of Life, gushed out from the mouth of God. It dispersed and spread out, with unlimited movement, over the face of the earth. Imagine energy, wind, the gust of air, all coming from a powerful source

The account of the Spirit of God in creation is narrated, beautifully, in Genesis 1 and 2:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

The Witness of the Spirit

When you read or hear the words, “Witness of the Spirit,” you may automatically think of the Work of the Spirit in New Testament and today’s Believers. However, there is evidence of the Spirit of God being revealed to the most unlikely people. While the Old Testament bears witness to people who read the ancient scripts and were anxiously waiting for the Messiah, there were others who bore witness in their heart, by the witness of the Holy Spirit. Here are just some of them:

Rahab

The story of Rahab the Prostitute can be found in Joshua 2. Rahab lived in Jericho at a time when her neighbours and indeed all of her country men and women were petrified about the imminent invasion of Israel. Two spies were sent out from Israel’s camp to spy out the land, especially Jericho and by divine providence, they landed at the house of Rahab. These two men found help and refuge in Rahab’s house. The passage gives an elaborate account as to why Rahab helped the spies.

“For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to

Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath.” – Joshua 2:10-11 (NIV)

She did not alert the city or expose them. Rahab's kindness reveals a woman in total godly fear and awe of the God of Israel (Joshua 2:9-14). It is quite clear from the narrative that Rahab had heard about the God of the Israelites by news of Israel's conquests throughout the region of Canaan and beyond. The witness of the powerful acts of God had left an enduring witness in her heart.

It was a superior power behind the children of Israel. You must remember Rahab was a Gentile and would have only known the worship of carved Idols. Her knowledge of Yahweh, the God of Israel, would have been limited to the local gossip about Him. It was the Spirit of God who gave Rahab the courage and fortitude to say,

“...swear to me by the Lord that, as I have dealt kindly with you, you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and give me a sure sign that you will save alive my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.”

Jericho was in Lockdown (Joshua 6:1), every one was confined to their houses, nobody went into the city, neither was anyone allowed out of the city, because of the fear that fell upon them. Eventually, it was only Rahab and her family who were saved when the whole city came under the judgement of God. While Jericho was blinded, while Rahab's eyes were opened. Only Rahab and her family were saved when Jericho got destroyed. Rahab believed in her heart that Yahweh was truly God.

Rahab's actions were a clear demonstration of what she believed in her heart. Her faith could only have been brought about by the Power of the Holy Spirit. The Work of the Spirit is to bring deep witness in the heart and reveal God.

Ruth

The story of Ruth can be found in the Book of Ruth. It is quite remarkable that the writer of this Book was led by the Spirit of God to record her story. The Work of the Holy Spirit in Ruth's decision and choice, just like Rahab's story, is very significant.

Ruth chose to walk away from the life she was familiar with to an unknown destination by the

Unction of the Holy Spirit. Ruth and Orpah spent much time with Naomi, as childless widows, after the deaths of their husbands. At some point, Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem, the land she originally migrated from. Initially, Ruth and Orpah decided to follow Naomi, however, Naomi thought they would be better off without her. She urged them to return to Moab where they would find husbands, have children and not have to suffer the uncertainty that surrounded her life. While it did not take much to convince Orpah to return to Moab and her gods, Ruth followed Naomi, despite her circumstances. What made Ruth make the choice of following Naomi, while Orpah turned back? Considering they both spent the same amount of time with Naomi. Ruth's choice to suffer and follow a defenceless widow could only be her yielding to the Holy Spirit. Ruth looked beyond Naomi's outward appearance and circumstances to the God that Naomi served, Yahweh. It was not really about Naomi, but faith in the God Naomi served. It was God who caused Ruth to yield to His Spirit (Ruth 1: 16-18).

God's sovereign grace is demonstrated in that both Rahab and Ruth yielded to the Holy Spirit. The Work of the Holy Spirit is evident in their choices and decisions. Rahab choosing to help and follow the spies and Ruth choosing to follow Naomi.

Neither Rahab or Ruth could predict the future, they had to make very difficult choices about what they could not see, by faith.

Rahab and Ruth did not know they would be grafted into the *lineage of Christ*. It was all by Grace. Without faith, Rahab and Ruth would not have entered this great inheritance. Anyone who makes the choice to follow Jesus has done so by the Power and Work of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 2:8 reiterates this:

“By grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

PART TWO

The Work of the Spirit in Baptism.

Before I go into talking about Baptism, it is important to highlight the role of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ. It all started before John the Baptist's birth.

The Spirit of the Lord had been silent in Israel for a period of about 400 years. It could be said there was a drought of the Prophetic voice. It seemed as if the Spirit of Prophecy had departed. The prophet Malachi was the last prophetic voice to Israel.

A Sudden Visitation and Message from God.

In the Book of Luke, there is detailed narrative on how the Angel Gabriel appeared to the priest Zachariah in the Temple of God.

Zachariah was a priest and it was time to go into the temple to burn incense to God. Burning incense was not an every day affair. It was an event that took place once in a while. A priest would be chosen to present this sacrifice at the altar, and on this particular occasion, it fell on Zachariah to carry out the sacrifice.

The Casting of Lots

Though the Spirit of the Lord had been silent for over 400 hundred years, the casting of lots was a selecting process for the Priests, to find out who would carry out a particular task.

This method was often used to determine God's will. The casting of lots in this case was the method used to reveal, who among the priests, would burn incense to God in the temple. So, one could say, though the prophetic voice was silent in Israel, the Spirit of God was still at work in selecting Zachariah to burn incense in the temple.

Zachariah was taken by complete surprise when the angel of the Lord appeared by the altar of incense. The incident is described in the book of Luke as follows:

“But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their

God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' – (Luke 1:13-17)

Zechariah, finding the message hard to believe, questioned the Angel on the certainty of his message and subsequently became dumb in the process. It is interesting to note that Zechariah did not go into the temple to pray for a child. It was a prayer long forgotten because Zechariah and Elizabeth were well advanced in years.

Even though God is silent, he still hears our prayers because God in His **sovereignty** visited Zechariah and Elizabeth at the appointed time.

A whole multitude of people prayed outside the temple during the hour of incense, which was the norm at that time, perhaps waiting, without expecting anything unusual to happen. Judging from Zechariah's reaction and response, the appearance of Angel Gabriel surprised him. The words of prophecy Gabriel came to deliver were unexpected; a response to the personal prayer of Zechariah and Elizabeth that had long been abandoned.

Zechariah and Elizabeth's personal prayers for a

child had been heard. It must be pointed out that the child to come would be the fulfilment of Prophecy. According to the Angel, Zechariah and Elizabeth would give birth to a child called “John” and they would be filled with joy and gladness at his birth. John would be great before the Lord, live a consecrated life and be filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. It reminds us that God’s plans and purposes exist before a child is even conceived in the womb (Jer.1:5, Psalm 139:16).

John Filled with the Spirit

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb. He would be a prophetic voice to Israel, turning the hearts of the people to God. In the Spirit of Elijah, John would soften the hearts of parents to their children and give understanding to the disobedient. John would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

According to Prophecy, John would be:

*“The voice of one crying in the wilderness.”
(Isaiah 40:3-5)*

The one to “prepare the way” according to Malachi:

“Behold, I send My messenger,

And he will prepare the way before Me.

And the Lord, whom you seek,

Will suddenly come to His temple,

Even the Messenger of the covenant,

In whom you delight.

Behold, He is coming,”

Says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

*The one to bring healing to the backslider and
“take the stumbling block out of the way”:*

“Heap it up! Heap it up!

Prepare the way,

*Take the stumbling block out of the way of My
people.” – (Isaiah 57:14).*

The Baptism of John

John the Baptist’s description of the coming Messiah gave the crowds who gathered to hear Him, insight into the nature of the coming Messiah. John the Baptist made it clear that Jesus would have a higher call than his. Jesus would baptise with the Holy Spirit and Fire.

As the hearers of John the Baptist came to be baptised, He gave witness to Christ. John the Baptist said,

“I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” – Matthew 3:11-12

Baptised into Christ.

Baptism is a public declaration. The action of being dipped into water and coming up from it, symbolises submission, newness and cleansing. It is the washing away of the old life and the receiving of the new life, purchased for you in Christ. It is a declaration of faith and belief. It is the acceptance of new ideals, new desires and a new understanding of life under the lordship of Christ.

To be baptised into Christ, is to be baptised into a Christlike way of living. While Christ’s divine nature can never be accomplished by any human, His human nature is the pattern God’s people are encouraged to follow. In Christ, you belong to a

new family, to which Christ is the Head. This New Way of living falls in line with God's Word. It is to believe who God says you are: a new person. The old person has no power over you. A new creation is what you become in Christ.

Let us remember, Christ emptied himself. His submission to be baptised by John, rather than the other way around, was part of Christ's humility. Christ's submission would be to death, as Christ was obedient, till the very end (Philippians 2:6-11).

John the Solitary Voice

The work of the Spirit in John was crucial in paving the way for Jesus to come on to the scene. John was the last prophetic voice of the Old Testament and the bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Prophet Isaiah described him well.

John would be that last lone voice, calling out to an obstinate people, who had completely gone astray. He would prepare the hearts of the people, through constant preaching and admonition. John came as a forerunner and a beacon of light, pointing to a greater light. John was like a town crier; a messenger, who blew the trumpet and beat the drum ahead of the Greater Messenger. John pointed to Christ, The Messenger of the New Covenant. John called out to a people stuck in valleys of error, calling them to turn from their wicked ways, pointing them to the One who would show them the right way.

The Lone Voice Crying in The Wilderness

There is a voice crying in the wilderness and it is the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is calling people away from the ways of this world and leading them to Christ.

It is the **voice** of wisdom, described as, “the fear of the Lord.”

It is the **voice** of the One who beats a gong and blows a trumpet to catch the attention of traders on a noisy street.

It is the **voice** of One who shouts at the entrances of night clubs and brothels.

It is the **voice** who speaks to the simple and scoffers, visitors of immoral websites.

It is the **voice** who is silenced when it speaks out against injustice.

The Prophetic Voice

There is a Prophetic voice who speaks when the world is in trouble and spinning out of control. Nobody wants to listen to it because the voice says what is not pleasing to the ear.

There is a Prophetic voice who prophesies against Sin, when everyone else looks on in silence.

There is a Prophetic voice who speaks the Truth of the gospel, in the midst of deception and lies. There is a Prophetic voice who leads disciples on the narrow path, when false hope beckons to the wide path. There is a Prophetic voice who will not be silenced by unbelief and persecution. There is a Prophetic voice who will tell God's people that Christ is knocking at the door.

The Work of the Spirit in Prayer.

Luke 3:21-22

It is notable that when Jesus had been baptised and was praying, the Heavens opened. It was a miraculous sign, as the Spirit of God came down in bodily form and a voice spoke audibly from Heaven. This should motivate and assure every Christian that God's power is present whenever we pray.

The power of God moving the Heavens and His audible voice speaking from Heaven was a sign of God's palpable presence. Even though Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, we still see the evidential work of the Spirit of God in a new way. Jesus was endowed with a special anointing and empowerment for the work He was about to embark on. It was the sign of His Messianic Ministry: The *Spirit* descended; the *Father* spoke (Matthew 3:17); the *Son* received grace, power and anointing. It was a manifestation of the God-Head, all three in One. It was a divine announcement from the Heavenly realm.

The work of God cannot be done on this earth without the Power of God. There is a special grace that falls upon men and women who carry out God's work. Whether in the form of prophetic gifts,

serving, teaching, leadership or showing acts of mercy, none of these can be done without grace and the Power of the Spirit.

The Work of the Spirit in giving us Power Over Temptation and Sin.

As mentioned earlier, the Baptism of Jesus and the miraculous signs surrounding His Baptism, were a sign to the world of a new beginning. Creation would sing a new song.

After the Spirit was released, there was an outpouring, empowerment and glow of the Holy Spirit all around Jesus. The audible voice of the Father was heard. Jesus was commended for the work He would do. Yet, it was after this Baptism that Jesus went into the wilderness and fasted for forty days and forty nights (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:2).

After such a display of God's glory, Jesus still had to spend forty days and forty nights, fasting, in preparation for the Work He was about to do.

During this period, Jesus was tempted. Why did Satan feel he could tempt the Son of God into doing anything? Why did Jesus not just speak the Word and throw Satan off the face of the Universe as described in Luke 10:18. In this verse we see the description of Satan being thrown down from a very high place. If you read, Rev.12:9, the same imagery is used: Satan was "thrown down" to the earth. Jesus could have done the same during His

time of fasting in the wilderness, but He chose not to do so. There is a time and place for every activity in God's Calendar.

Jesus Tested

Satan came after Jesus and tested Him, despite the glory bestowed upon Jesus; the "open Heavens" and the "voice of God."

Jesus' time in the wilderness was not a time of rejoicing in the outpouring of God's Spirit, but a time of separation. It can be described as Jesus soaking in God's presence. It was to prepare Him mentally and spiritually for the Work ahead. Jesus needed to be alone and draw from God's presence and power in a quiet place. He went into the wilderness, a desolate place. He separated himself to spend time with the Father.

Every believer in Christ should learn from this. Whenever there is a supernatural outpouring of God's presence, what should be our response? Should we just go around saying, "I had a divine encounter," or "I was really blessed at so and so's Conference or Meeting? It should be much more. We should be encouraged to pursue God further, with reflection and communion. We should dwell;

abide; remain in God's presence and seek His glorious face.

While Jesus prayed and fasted, His body was at its weakest point. However, though His body was physically weak, we know for certain, His spirit was not weak. With nothing to distract Him, His time was spent in constant prayer and communion with God.

There is so much to glean from this. The Spirit of God will always precede the work of God. The work of God cannot be done without the Spirit of God.

A Focus on Prayer

Jesus set himself apart and fasted for forty days and forty nights to focus on prayer. There is a similar story in Exodus 24:18 and Exodus 34:28, where Moses was called by God to Mount Zion. Moses set himself apart, spending time in God's presence for forty days and forty nights to receive from God.

In this super fast, microwave age, everyone desires instant results. The concept of being patient and waiting for anything has completely gone out of the window. It is sad when this approach is taken towards spiritual matters. The idea that a person can wait on God, in fasting and prayer, is not

welcome in this day and age. I will boldly say, taking time to seek God's face, away from every day distractions and demands, is an outward sign of someone who desires a deeper relationship with God. We are saved by grace and by grace we can, "come up higher." - Exodus 24:12

In this season, God is writing His desires and commands, not on cold tablets of stone, but on warm hearts. Stiff and stony hearts will resist the Spirit of God and reject what He says. Many miss the move of the Spirit, only to present themselves as stumbling block to many hearing the gospel. God wants His Church to move forward with Him.

The Work of the Spirit in Jesus' response to temptation.

Jesus fasting of forty days and nights harmonises with Israel's forty years of testing in the wilderness – Deut.8:2-3.

“And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”
– Deuteronomy 8:2-3

On two occasions, Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights. Fasting was a means by which Jesus, just like Moses, focused on prayer. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He responded with quotations from the book of Deuteronomy.

Matthew, Mark and Luke give accounts of the same story, but I am only going to focus on Luke's narrative. Jesus was tempted throughout His time in the wilderness.

The Lust of the Flesh – Luke 4:3

Jesus was tempted by the Devil to turn stone into bread at a time when He was physically hungry. It is not the first time of testing in the Bible. Adam and Eve were lured into disobeying God by eating what was forbidden. Esau was tempted with food in exchange for his birth-right. Samson was also tempted to reveal the source of his strength. Adam, Eve, Esau and Samson failed, but Christ prevailed.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus denied himself of the authority to satisfy His own desire, rather, He chose to submit himself to the will of God. His trust was in the Father.

Moses and the children of Israel were pushed to the limit during those forty years in the wilderness. They were tested to see what was truly in their hearts. They went through severe hardship and hard times. At times, they were hungry and had no control over the supply of food, even their eating times were supervised. It was about total dependence on God, as they were fed manna from Heaven. Jesus responded to Satan's temptation with Deuteronomy 8:3.

Our wilderness experiences are tools in the hand of God...

Wilderness experiences can be used as instruments to mould and shape God's children. The Israelites had to trust God for daily manna in the wilderness without the ability or power to produce Manna for themselves, they just had to trust God. It is human to always want to be in charge, placing trust in one's own capabilities. God wants us to rely on Him completely.

Jesus showed that He trusted the Father by His response to Satan.

The Pride of Life – Luke 4:5-7

Satan took Jesus up to a very high place and presented the riches and wealth, the glory and authority of this world to Him. Satan boasted about the world being under his dominion. Scripture describes Satan as the ruler of this world (1 John 5:19). Jesus was led up to a place where He could get a full glance of the kingdoms of this world. These kingdoms and the peoples of this world already belonged to Jesus, so in reality, He needed nothing from Satan.

Satan is the giver of false hope. A short bridge to

false promises. God's Word was firmly embedded in Jesus heart (Isaiah 43:6; Daniel 7:14). He did not fall for the bait. The heart is where you will find high desires. In the mind is where you will find high-mindedness. These high places of pride in man can only be pulled down by the Power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lust of Eyes – Luke 4:9-11

Again, Jesus was taken to a high place, but this time, to the highest point of the Church. It is notable that Jesus was taken to Jerusalem, to a view point that overlooked the Kidron valley. Satan's words to Jesus were challenging and taunting, but Jesus knew the Word of God. He knew that Satan had twisted scripture. Psalm 91:11,12 was not written for the purpose of testing God. It was not for Jesus to test God's love by proving God would catch Him while falling. It was not for Jesus to make a show of the power of God, for selfish purposes. Jesus lived a life in total submission to the will of the Father, therefore Jesus obeyed the Father.

Jesus responses by the Spirit

First response:

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” – (Luke 4:4).

Here, Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, quotes the Word of God from Deut.8:1-3.

“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that ***man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.***”

Moses and the children of Israel had to trust God for daily provision and direction on a moment by moment basis. Abraham also lived by faith in the God. He moved around from city to city, dwelling in tents, never knowing where he'd go next, except by the Spirit of God.

Second response:

Satan wanted Jesus to break the first commandment, “you shall have no other gods before Me.” – Exodus 20:3

In response to Satan offering Jesus the authority and glory of the kingdoms of this world, Jesus said:

“Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” - Luke 4:8

God humbled himself and came to earth as a suffering servant. He did not come empty handed, but with a mapped-out plan and purpose of what He was going to achieve. In complete, humility and suffering, Christ would identify with humanity and human suffering. Satan thought He could scuttle God’s plan and change Jesus course from Redemption to selfish ambition. Satan knew that Jesus came down from a glorious Kingdom. Satan was saying, “Why not take the authority and glory of this earth now, it all belongs to you, why suffer and go through the process of pain, suffering and humiliation.”

Third response:

Satan led Jesus to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle, the highest point of the temple, and asked Him to throw Himself down, quoting Psalm 91:11, 12.

And Jesus answered and said to him,

“It has been said, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” Luke 4:12

Satan tempted Jesus’ will, submission and obedience to God. In perfect obedience to God’s plan, Jesus absolutely declined Satan’s offers. There would be a time God’s power and glory would be displayed, but not in this manner.

The Work of the Spirit in Power Over Sin.

The Messianic anointing upon Jesus did not stop the devil from tempting Him in the wilderness. Jesus did not yield to this temptation. The Spirit of Truth, which is the Word of Truth, dwells within God’s people to fight against the wiles of the wicked one.

The Sword of the Spirit

The Sword of the Spirit, described in Ephesians 6:17 is part of the spiritual armour the Christian wears. The Spirit of God empowers the Christian to wear this piece of armour at all times. The guidance, help and power to yield to the promptings of the Spirit, when being tempted, is the privilege of those in Christ.

In the of place prayer, before God's throne of grace, there is spiritual power over sin. In these final days, as the Church marches on, it will be by the yielding to the Spirit that it will triumph. It will not succumb to the order of this world. God's people must believe they have the power to overcome the power of the evil one. The victory and triumph have already been won.

The Work of the Spirit in the Ministry of Jesus.

Luke 4:14 describes how Jesus returned to Galilee "in the power of the Holy Spirit." ESV. Jesus was passionate about setting captives free. He preached and moved about with the power and authority of the Holy Spirit. Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were controlled by the power of the devil. He was triumphant over the

power of satan, because The Spirit of Lord was with Him.

Jesus spoke about Himself in Luke 4:18. It was the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah,

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To
proclaim liberty to the captives, And recovery of
sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are
oppressed.”**

The Work of the Spirit in Spiritual Gifts.

The Promise of the Spirit was not a temporary promise, like something that would be given and then unceremoniously taken away. Evidence of what the Spirit would do, was given by the Prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 36:27. Here, God promised the indwelling of His Spirit, a union that would cause obedience to His decrees. The promise of the Spirit would be received by faith. The fulfilment of God’s promise to Abraham was that: through his seed, all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Everything Jesus said about Himself came to pass. Everything written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms would be fulfilled.

Lukes Perspective on The Work of the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus taught the disciples, their minds were opened to understand the scriptures. It was only when the disciples were filled with the teaching of Jesus that they were released into Ministry and “clothed with power from on high” - Luke 24:49.

It is the Work of Holy Spirit to open up the scriptures and point us to Christ, the Living Word. It is the Holy Spirit who gives the understanding of scripture, leading us into a new way of life than previously lived.

It must be clear that Luke’s account of the Work of the Holy Spirit differs from Paul’s account of the Work of the Holy Spirit. Luke was trained personally by Jesus Christ and this reflected in his approach to his Ministry and Writings. On the other hand, Paul was completely reliant on revelation that came from the Holy Spirit in His teaching and Ministry.

Luke was a physical witness to the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of

Jesus. Jesus lived a spectacular life, characterised by signs and wonders. Jesus turned water into wine, walked on the sea, healed the sick, raised the dead, fed five thousand, caught an unusual quantity of fish, delivered the possessed from demon possession, caught a fish with a coin in its mouth, cursed a fig tree, restored a severed ear... among many unrecorded miracles. Christ appeared and resurrected from the dead, He also ascended into Heaven.

Luke witnessed all this, as well as the supernatural occurrences at Pentecost. The physical signs of healing, words of prophecy, speaking in other tongues, and the flames of fire released at Pentecost all influenced Luke's life and Ministry. Luke himself performed many miracles, witnessed the power of prayer and spoke with Spirit of Prophecy and preached the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Paul's ministry differed from Luke's in that His approach was more towards the Work of the Holy Spirit internally. He relied heavily on direct revelation by the Holy Spirit as He taught on Sanctification and the fruits of the Spirit. He focused on the Work of the Spirit in New Man.

We must understand that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit work as one. Through out Jesus time on earth,

we see His role and the role of the Holy Spirit intertwined. Before Jesus departed, He promised the disciples that they would not be left without a helper. This promise extends to every Christian as I speak today.

In the Old Testament, only chosen leaders like Moses carried the mantle of God's Spirit upon them. Only certain people had the evidence of the workings of the Holy Spirit. Now, according to the fulfilment of scripture, the Spirit is with all who believe. It is a guarantee (2Cor.1:22; 5:5, Ephesians 1:13,14). It is promised by God, that the Spirit of God will work with all God's people and not just a select few:

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
– 2 Corinthians 3:18.

In this dispensation, according to what the Bible says, the Spirit of God will help God's children make decisions and choices in line with His will. The work of the Spirit is to bring God's children into perfect Union with the Father.

The diverse gifts within the body of Christ will be used in a variety of ways for the building up of the

Church. God's people will preach the gospel to the entire world, they shall prophecy, speak in tongues, interpret visions and dreams.

God's people will give words of knowledge, pray for the sick and the testimony of the healed shall bear witness, bringing glory to God.

God's people will operate in the gifts of help and show mercy to others. In whatever capacity the Spirit gives these gifts, it shall be released for the building of the Church (Matthew 10:8; James 5:14).

The Work of the Spirit in Building the Church.

In these last days, God is raising up people who will be faithful and excellent in their calling. God's people will be given a mantle to teach and preach the gospel. Their lives will be dedicated to this work: the building up of the spiritual lives of many.

God will use men and women, young and old, Jews and Gentiles alike to evangelise, preach and teach globally. They will fulfil The Great Commission:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. – Matthew 28:19-20

Time is an invaluable commodity and in these last days, God will raise up multitudes who will give their time and energy willingly.

Among God's people will be a number whose knowledge and expertise will be used to spread the gospel in this digital age. Some will be writers, skilled men and women in the arts and sciences, others will be translators.

God's people with technical skills will build computer programmes and applications. They will be supernaturally filled with knowledge and wisdom for the sake of the gospel.

God's people, with the unique capacities and extraordinary ability will be the hands and feet of Jesus. These people will be given special grace to love the unlovely, help the lost, take care of the sick, show empathy and hospitality towards others.

Some will be peace-makers, reconciling families and nations.

There are others who will be financially prosperous for the sake of the Kingdom. God will give them the ability and financial wisdom to support the Kingdom. These are men and women who may not necessarily have the time to preach the gospel, write books or build computer programmes, but will give of their wealth to ensure the gospel is preached and the work of God continues.

God's people will be men and women of influence. These are door openers, who are well connected and know people in authority. They will use their influence to push the gospel forward.

God's people will be helpers within the Church, supporting Leaders in ministry.

This the work of the Spirit in these last days.

Whoever desires the gifts of the Spirit in these last days shall receive it. (1 Corinthians 7:7; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6; Ephesians 4:11; Romans 12:6-8).

Spiritual gifts will be given to all who believe in Christ; to all who walk in obedience to Him; to all who devote their lives to Him. The power of God will rest upon them.

God will pour out His Spirit of wisdom, insight and knowledge upon His people. Peter summed it up in (Romans 8:28-34).

There are a people, God's people, who have been chosen, even before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless and set apart for God's glory. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11.

The Work of the Spirit is Inter-generational.

It is clear from scripture, that God's plan and promise for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, is an inter-generational promise. The greater measure of it, is part and parcel of God's Covenant blessing through Christ, for this present day.

God's Promise, according to Joel's prophecy of old (Joel 2:28-29), is the same word of promise spoken by Peter in Acts 2:17. The Spirit of God will be poured out upon on **"all flesh."** Not just the Jewish nation, but all nations. Galatians 3:8 says,

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Why is Abraham regarded as the father of all people and all nations? (Genesis 12:1-3, 17:1-8, 18:19, 22:1-18, 26:4, 28:13-14).

The promise of a "seed," the Messiah, would come through Abraham's son Isaac. Sarah gave birth to Isaac, but Abraham received the **Messiah**, Jesus Christ, only by Faith. Abraham did not doubt that God's word would come to pass, even though the

Messiah did not come during Abraham's lifetime.

The promise of spiritual seed, men and women of faith, would come to pass after Abraham died. God acknowledged Abraham for his faith and called him righteous. Indeed, Abraham is the father of all who believe in Christ.

Regardless of the country you come from, the language you speak, your social status, male or female, young or old: all who believe in Christ, are the people of promise.

If you think about this deeply, you will understand why Abraham is called the "father of the faithful." If you contemplate it, you will also realise how much faith means to God.

God views faith in Christ, as right standing before Him. The fact that a person comes to faith in God, is by grace alone.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
– (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God's Spirit poured out on all Flesh.

Acts 2:17

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.”

God's Spirit will be poured out on “all flesh.”

In times past, only a select few walked with the wisdom, power and the authority of God. A good example is Moses. Moses had a mantle that distinguished him from every other person in Israel. It was a mantle of power, wisdom and authority. Whatever He said was received as the voice of God. It distinguished Moses and set him apart from the people. Moses was God's voice on the earth. It was only Moses who went into God's presence to receive instructions on behalf of the people. Moses and the children of Israel lived by the Ceremonial Law, making yearly sacrifices, with constant ceremonies and ordinances. With all the yearly sacrifices, it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to permanently take away the sins of the

people. Christ has given us a better Covenant, allowing all of God's people, not just one person, to enter boldly, before God's throne of grace. In Christ, we have a better Covenant. It is a Covenant of Grace. Christ takes away our sins, once and for all!

CONCLUSION

The cry of every sincere Christian, should be to do God's will. To hear the finality of these fateful words on the last day would be horrendous:

“Depart from me, I never knew you.”
– Matthew 7:21-23

The power to cast out demons, speak in tongues, heal the sick, preach spectacular sermons, prophecy, give great words of wisdom and insight, does not equate to knowing God. A person could spend their lifetime engaged in, “serving God,” without ever knowing God. Until the mind is renewed, it will insist on going its own way and doing what it thinks is right. Even when the mind is convinced that it does good, it doesn't, because Romans 3:23 says:

“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Whatever a person does in their own strength and understanding, “falls short” according to God. This is why it is important to work in harmony, i.e. work together, with the Spirit of God. It is the Work of the Spirit to make sure God's work on earth is done. The fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden ruined the life of every human being. Whoever

acknowledges their sinful nature and recognises they are prone to do wrong, understands their guilty conscience before God. By the Spirit of God, they come to know God, and repent of their sins.

The Resisting of the Spirit

A great collision takes place when the Holy Spirit is resisted. Stubborn hearts and stubborn wills hinder the plan and purpose of God.

By replacing God's ideas with personal ideologies, people are led astray. Strange concepts and ideas will become the overpowering force of the mind that is set in its own way.

The Bible gives us many examples of people who refused to listen God. They refused to let go of their own desires and will. The one thing that greatly hinders the Work of Spirit of God, is the self-will of man.

The Work of the Spirit in the New Man

Until you are mature in the faith, you may not understand the teaching of the New Man. If you have not been a Christian for long or are a seeker, reading about the Work of the Holy Spirit, pray the Holy Spirit give you insight.

The closer you are to God, the more you will desire to do His will. The Work of the Spirit, is demonstrated in a person's desire to give up their self-will, in exchange for God's will. The renewed mind will no longer desire to live by the world's standards.

Galatians 6:14 says,

“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.”

The NLT version says,

“As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul had to speak out against the religious leaders who were placing burdens and yokes upon people in the Galatian Church. They were keen to make a show of their religious practices publicly, so people would admire them and respect them as being holy. However, this was far from the truth, because it was all about creating an outward impression. It was an exhibition of falsehood.

These false teachers in Galatia wanted the new converts to be circumcised, just so that they could boast about having converted them to their own

version of Christianity, which was a combination of the Ceremonial Law and Faith in Christ. Keeping up appearances was more important than embracing the Truth. The actions of these hypocrites had nothing to do with holiness or righteousness. Doing what was right and just in the eyes of God, was not important.

The actions of these religious people were self motivated. They acted selfishly for personal gain. It was about magnifying their influence. It was an act of injustice because these false teachers, went as far as saying that circumcision was necessary for Salvation. They were asking people to become circumcised and go through so much pain, knowing they or their family members, would never go through the same pain themselves. Scripture warns us to beware of religious men and women who inflict others with burdens they will never carry themselves.

The Work of the Spirit in Renewing the Mind.

Again, taking about the Galatian Church, Paul was more concerned about the renewal of the mind, than any false religious practices.

The desire for worldly riches, fame and honour will stand in competition to the desires of the Spirit of God. A change of heart in obedience towards God, reflects the renewed mind. The desires of the flesh will always be at war with the desires of the Spirit, but through prayer and devotion to God, the battle can be won.

The Spirit of God works within to bring about a change of heart. The Spirit of God enables one to make choices and decisions in line with God's will. The Spirit of Sonship, the relationship between God's Children and God, is brought about by the Spirit of God.

The Work of the Spirit in our Spiritual view of Heaven.

Abraham lived as a sojourner, a pilgrim, a traveller on this earth. He had no permanent residence. He moved from place to place by the instruction, guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit. Abraham looked forward to that permanent place of abode, a better place than earth. He looked forward to an eternal home, with eternal foundations. Hebrews 11:10 says,

“He waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Every one who understands the temporary existence of life here on earth, looks forward to this permanent home. Entry into this promised home is through Christ alone.

Just like Abraham, the Believer in Christ is a pilgrim on this earth, just passing through, with no fixed place of abode. The Christian lives with eyes fixed on Heaven. The pilgrim lives in great expectation of the life to come. Nothing on this earth should compare to this great expectation, nothing should stand in its way. The sojourner looks forward to an expected end. The temporary pleasures of life will not have a hold on the person on the journey to

Heaven.

To live with an obscured view of Heaven can be compared to walking around all day with sunglasses on. People wear sunglasses to block out the light, and to block out the light of Heaven, is to look into utter darkness. It is deception in itself.

Earth is a temporary place and this is deeply embedded in the minds of those whose hearts are set on Heaven.

Remember Abraham. He received the eternal promise of Heaven by faith. The sojourner also embarks on the journey to the promised land by faith. You don't need faith to see what is right in front of you. You need faith to see what is unseen. Heaven can only be grasped through the eyes of faith.

The Work of the Spirit is to take us by the hand and lead us in the right way. Without the help of the Spirit, the child of God will surely go the wrong way. Psalm 109:105 says,

“Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.”

The list is endless of the means through which the enemy is set out to distract and derail those on their way to Heaven. The good news is that all

whose hands are firmly placed in the hand of God; all who trust in God, shall be led in the right way. Even when they stumble fall, they shall be dusted off and set on the right path. This is worth shouting about.

Obedience to the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:14

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

God’s people will be led by the Spirit of God. Anyone led by the Spirit of God, walks in **obedience to the Spirit of God.**

Psalms 25:12-14 says,

*“Who is the man that fears the Lord?
Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.
He himself shall dwell in prosperity,
And his descendants shall inherit the earth.
The secret of the Lord is with those who fear
Him,
And He will show them His covenant.”*

In these last days, there will be a people who will walk in obedience to God’s will and walk in His ways. (Isaiah 44:24 Jeremiah 1:5). The Word of God will be written on their hearts, and not on tablets of stone, that can be broken. The most unusual and unsuspecting people will be used by God. The broken, the rejected, the abused and used. A people who the society will deem unfit to move in such wisdom, power and anointing, will put to

shame the wise and mighty.

God's chosen people will not depend on the platforms of others to do what God has called them to do, because the solid foundation of God's Word will be their platform. God will be the One, to equip and commission them, by His Spirit.

God has given us the power to live according to His will, by His Spirit. The mantle of grace that rests upon the shoulders of all who trust in God will be the motivation. They will have the power to do God's will. These are God's chosen people and they will operate by the Spirit of God.

God has not stopped consecrating people from the womb. Moses did not understand His purpose until he was separated from His past and set apart in the wilderness. It was through his wilderness experience that he grew up spiritually. In this day, not just the one, but many, will be called and chosen, by God's grace, to go through their own wilderness experience and become spiritually mature citizens of God's Kingdom. God will bring them to the position where they desire God's will more than anything else. The whole earth is at God's disposal and God will use the instrument of His choice to get His children to fulfil their destiny. To be made ready for any calling in this life takes years of training and preparation. God prepares

people for His service by His Spirit. This includes the training of the mind. It is God who gives wisdom and creates an arena for what needs to be learnt, for the fulfilment of destiny. The Work of the Spirit is to help men and women understand God's will.

God's Spirit is alive and manifest today. The Work of the Holy Spirit would be incomplete if it was limited to the Old Testament and New Testament Church.

I pray today that you will grow in the grace and knowledge of God. May you be dead to this world and its concepts, through your blessed union with Christ. Amen.

Ruth Dickson

