

*Holy
Spirit*

The
Need

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An Amazing Fact: Every day approximately 44,000 lightning storms occur throughout the world, with lightning striking the earth 6,000 times a minute. The average lightning stroke is six miles long and travels about 30,000 times faster than a bullet. The temperature of lightning can reach 50,000 degrees Fahrenheit, hotter than the surface of the sun! In addition, lightning has enough power to lift an ocean liner six feet in the air.

A “Positive Giant” is a lightning strike that hits the ground up to 20 miles away from the actual thunderstorm. Because it seems to strike from a clear sky, it is known as a “bolt from the blue.” These flashes strike between the storm’s top “anvil” and the earth, carrying several times the energy of a normal bolt.

It is also a myth that lightning never strikes twice in the same place. For example, the top of the Empire State Building averages over 20 hits per year. In like manner, the Bible predicts the Holy Spirit will come upon the church again in the last days with the same light and power as the days of Pentecost.

INTRODUCTION

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Shortly after becoming a Christian, some of my believing friends would ask, “Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” I wasn’t quite sure how to answer. At the time, I always envisioned the Acts 2 experience where the dead were raised, the sick were healed, and Christians walked around with ethereal glowing tongues of fire hovering above their heads. So I never felt worthy to say, “I’m baptized in the Holy Spirit.” As far as I knew, I wasn’t able to raise the dead or heal the sick. So the best answer I could give was, “I have the Spirit, but I’m not sure I have ‘the baptism.’”

I don’t think we can afford to be confused on this matter, because the church is prophetically overdue to receive a major, history-altering baptism of the Spirit. I want to be filled with that Spirit when He comes, and I want you to be filled too. Even more important, our churches need to be baptized with the Spirit. Frankly, this generation hasn’t experienced what a church can do when it is full with God’s Spirit, the way the apostles were filled on

Pentecost. It's going to happen again, and soon, and we need to be ready for it.

So what exactly is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and how do we know if we have it? And if we don't have it, how can we get it? I'd like to explore the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a little more depth in the hope that you'll be inspired to seek this wonderful blessing from the Lord.

CHAPTER ONE

Degrees of the Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit simply means having the fullness of the Spirit. Before experiencing that fullness, you must already have some of that Spirit residing in you. In other words, you have to have some vital relationship with Jesus to expect to be filled with the Spirit. It wasn't pagans or gentiles who received the baptism at Pentecost. And it wasn't the Jews who fought against Christ. Rather it was those who had been walking side by side with Jesus for three-and-a-half years. They were ready for it.

Just as you can have varying intensities of relationships with people, you can have a relationship with the Holy Spirit in varying

degrees. Did Jesus have the Holy Spirit before He began His ministry? Of course He did, but the Holy Spirit came down to Him in a special measure at His baptism. Still, “God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34). This means that Jesus had a limitless supply of the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, did the apostles have the Holy Spirit before Pentecost? Yes, because Jesus sent them out to preach. Would He have done that if they didn’t have the Spirit? However, they received a special fullness of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, often called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, at the time of Pentecost. John the Baptist prophesied this in Matthew 3:11: “I indeed baptize you with water ... but there is One coming after me who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

CHAPTER TWO

A Repeatable Blessing

The Holy Spirit not only comes in different degrees, but His baptism can come more than one time. For

instance, in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit is poured out on the disciples, and then again in Acts 4 and 5. We're told that it was so powerful that the places in which they spoke the Word shook at the foundations.

In the parable of the 10 virgins, half of them were not prepared for the great wedding feast. What distinguished those who were ready from those who were not ready? The amount of oil in their vessels. *Every* virgin had oil, which represents the Holy Spirit. But some had more than others, and those others simply didn't have enough. It's not enough to have the Holy Spirit in your life. Instead, you must have enough of the Holy Spirit in your life. Some Christians are satisfied to have a thin relationship with the Lord, but the Lord longs for us to be filled with the Spirit.

Indeed, as we approach the end of time on this planet, the filling of the Holy Spirit is our most desperate need. Right now, the vast majority of the membership in our churches are groping spiritually in the dark because they don't have an adequate presence of God, the Holy Spirit. Think about how many problems we bring on ourselves because we don't have

enough Spirit. Those five virgins ended up in the dark and outside the feast because they simply ran out of oil.

CHAPTER THREE

Evidence of the Holy Spirit

In 1 Thessalonians 4:4, Paul enjoins, “That every one of you might know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.” Our bodies are temples to be filled with God’s Spirit. Out on the ocean, sailboats can be blown around by the winds. They go whichever way the wind goes.

But an iceberg is sort of a paradox in that it might be heading south while the wind is blowing 50 miles an hour north. That’s possible because 90 percent of the mass of an iceberg is not seen and the current it’s in is not seen either. It’s going a different direction.

Likewise, something deeper for the Christian is controlling them when they have the Holy Spirit. If we are being controlled by whichever way the wind blows, our carnal nature is prevailing, that’s not the Holy Spirit leading your life. When you are rooted in God and led by His Spirit, you don’t go whichever

way the wind blows. In fact, you're being led against the wind, but you're going with the current of God's Spirit.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Latter Rain

According to the Bible, Jesus is the sower of the seed. In the Hebrew agricultural economy, they depended on a regular climate and seasons to water the crop. When the time was right they would sow the seed, and in the fall they would get what they called the former rain, which would sprout the seed and enable it to grow through the winter months. Then in the springtime they would receive the latter rain. This would fatten and ripen the crop, and it would be harvested shortly after.

The apostles in Acts 2 were experiencing the former rain, the time when God launched the New Testament church. He poured out His Spirit and thousands were baptized. The seeds that Jesus had been sowing through His life sprouted and began to grow almost uncontrollably.

We have yet to see the latter rain, which is the special outpouring of the Spirit that prepares the last-day church for the great harvest when

Jesus comes again. In Revelation, Christ is pictured not only with a sword in His mouth, but with a sickle in His hand. This shows that He is coming to harvest the believers of the world. So we need this second outpouring to prepare the world. In the same way that the former rain fell on those who already knew about Christ and had a relationship with Him, so the latter rain is going to fall on God's people.

CHAPTER FIVE

Seeding the Cloud

Now that we know what it is and how much we need it, how do we prepare our bodies, hearts, and minds to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and not be left out? How are we going to be ready for the latter rain?

For one, we need to “seed the clouds.” It is said that a technology exists today that enables humans to make clouds rain. Pilots fly a plane through an existing cloud over lands experiencing drought. While in the cloud, they emit a gas laden with sodium particles into the atmosphere. Moisture droplets in the cloud attach to these sodium particles and form a raindrop.

Once it gets started, it ignites a chain reaction throughout the cloud to form a downpour.

Jesus has given us the promise of the Holy Spirit and the latter rain, but we must seed the cloud to make it rain. We must ask for it through fasting and prayer because God's Spirit won't force himself on anybody. But looking through the lens of the latter rain, Zechariah 10:1 speaks volumes: "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain." It is the time of the latter rain; we're due, so God is telling us we need to be asking now.

CHAPTER SIX

Seeking the Spirit Earnestly

If our most desperate need is the Spirit, then how deeply, earnestly, and sincerely should we seek after it? Christ taught, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." When Solomon said "that I might have wisdom," he was asking for the Spirit, whose gifts include wisdom. When Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit, what was he really asking for? It wasn't as though Elijah had a special brand name of the Spirit. No, Elisha was asking for the Holy

Spirit, seeking even a double portion with all of his heart.

The writer Ellen Write explained, “A revival of true godliness among us is the greatest and most urgent of our needs. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord” (*Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 121). It takes an effort to seek after God, not because He isn’t willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. So when we pray for the Holy Spirit, we’re really asking God to prepare our vessels to receive Him.

White adds, “Our Heavenly Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than our earthly parents to give good gifts to their children, but it is our work by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us his blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.” Would you like a revival? You can only expect it in answer to earnest seeking, fasting, and prayer. Historically every revival can be traced to somebody or a group praying. When Pentecost took place, the disciples were praying together in the upper room.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Be Willing, Be Humble

There is more we can do to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We should prepare our vessels, our minds, and bodies for the glorious honor. We also need to have a willingness to obey God in all things. Peter says, “And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5:32). This isn’t to say that we have to be perfect. “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes” (Ezekiel 36:27). You can’t teach someone that they’ll receive the Spirit only if they’re perfect, because it’s God Spirit that teaches you to obey Him. However, you must be willing to surrender your will to His.

I imagine that when the disciples received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they were on their knees in the upper room confessing their faults and praying for one another. By doing that, they made room in their hearts and humbled themselves, and God filled them with the Spirit.

Jesus also said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” This is a very well-known verse, but I want you to read a few more lines in:

“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He might abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:15). We must be willing to obey Jesus to receive the Spirit. It can’t be put any clearer.

We must also humble ourselves. People who boast that they have the Spirit while they’re walking in high-handed disobedience to God are liars. “He who says, ‘I know him’ and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.” It’s a dangerous thing to be found a hypocrite. It was embarrassing to the church when, many years ago, a number of televangelists got into moral trouble with various vices. It was made very public, circulating in all the newspapers and on television.

Every one of them spoke in tongues during their programs as evidence that they had the Holy Spirit, and then the media pulled back the veil and we all found out that they had disobedient lives. It made me wonder, Was that really the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is a very powerful person, and God cannot trust that power to those who will abuse it because of pride. Samson certainly had the Holy Spirit, but he ultimately abused that power and paid a price.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Empty Yourself

A part of humbling ourselves for the baptism of the Spirit means emptying ourselves of self. We are never further from God than when we feel self-sufficient. Jesus said to the church of Laodicea, “You think you’re rich and increased with goods. You have no room in your hearts for me.” God cannot fill those who are already full. Recognizing this need goes a long way to prepare our hearts.

When Elijah prayed down the rain, the people humbled themselves when the fire came down and consumed Elijah’s sacrifice. They didn’t just kneel on a knee or even two knees. They fell on their faces before God. They cried out, “The Lord, he is God!” It is the most abject form of humbling yourself, like when David fell on his face to seek forgiveness for his sin.

If we humble ourselves, God will lift us up. If we empty ourselves, He’ll fill us up. When we acknowledge our emptiness, humbling ourselves low, the Lord will send in the rain. If you remember, the disciples were full of themselves during the Last Supper, arguing who was

greater than another. They didn't get the Spirit that day, even though they really needed it. Jesus prepared His vessel. He emptied Himself of His royalty and washed His inferiors' feet.

Instead, the Spirit only came to them in the upper room when they recognized their need, put aside their pride, and emptied their vessels. Their hearts were prepared for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Once you are empty, you're going to be hungry. One of the most important ways to prepare your vessel is a need to hunger and thirst for God. "O God, You are my God; early I will seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and a thirsty land where there is no water" (Psalms 63:1). Do you know that you're thirsty? You ought to know that you are parched dry. If you do recognize your need, He'll satisfy it in ways you can't imagine. Isaiah adds, "For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground" (44:3). We need to empty ourselves and know that we're hungry and that we thirst for the Spirit of God. "He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty" (Luke 1:53).

CHAPTER NINE

Found in the Word

The filling of the Spirit often happens in concert with the proclamation of the Word. If you want to be filled with the Spirit, you need to connect with the Bible. “While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word” (Acts 10:44). The Holy Spirit will come in answer to prayer, and He’ll also come when you hear or study the Word.

It could potentially happen here right now, as you read these Bible verses. As our hearts are stirred by God’s Word, they’re also being prepared. The Bible is a cultivator, a holy tiller that breaks up the fallow ground and prepares us to receive the seed. It can happen in public settings, like in Acts 10, or it can happen privately in study and prayer.

Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit come upon you while you were studying on your own? You hear or read a passage of Scripture and, all of a sudden, the presence of God becomes so real to you. Jesus says, “The words that I speak to you they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). Christians miss a lot of opportunities

to experience the filling of the Holy Spirit because we're so often not reading about Him.

Someone said, "If you have the Spirit without the Word, you'll blow up. If you have the Word without the Spirit, you'll dry up. If you have both the Word and the Spirit, you'll grow up." The Word of God in connection with the Spirit nurtures us. We need the two of them together.

CHAPTER TEN

Gather Together and Forgive

This is probably going to sound like a commercial for church, but the fact is, a practical prerequisite for the filling of the Spirit is getting together in God's name in God's house. Hebrews 10 says that we shouldn't forsake the gathering of ourselves, "all the more as we see the day approaching."

Again in Acts 2, it says that the disciples were all in one accord and "*in one place*." God waited to fill them not when they were out at the market or in their separate homes, separated from one another. He waited until they were collected in one place, honoring and worshipping Him. Obviously, this doesn't mean that

God cannot pour His Spirit on you as an individual wherever you happen to be, because that has been documented in the Bible.

But if I read my Bible right, the latter rain experience is going to come down much like the former rain, in a time and place where God's people are assembling together to humble ourselves, and praying and putting aside our differences. They may be small groups; they may be big groups. In Acts 2 it was 120 people, but they were all together. "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).

We also find examples in the Old Testament. In Numbers 11:24, God was getting ready to baptize the leaders of Israel with the Spirit. "So Moses ... gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and he spoke unto him, and the Lord took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders." God said, "Gather the people together" to the tabernacle, and He took the Holy Spirit that He

had given Moses and gave it to the people as a corporate body.

It bears mentioning that two individuals, Eldad and Medad, didn't feel worthy to come with the 70 elders. They stayed in the camp, thinking that Moses' spirit was too good for them. But the Holy Spirit fell on them too. So it can happen to individuals that might be separated, but they also were humble; in fact, I believe their humility is the reason why Moses documented them individually.

But don't miss the point: We need to not forsake the assembling of ourselves because that is one way God will baptize us with His Spirit. Besides, wouldn't it be a tragedy to have the latter rain experience fall upon your church on the day that you stayed home? Wouldn't you feel awful? I'd feel terrible if I missed it! Trust me, you want to be there, so take every opportunity to go to church and fellowship with your Christian family.

While we're together, we need to forgive one another if we're ever going to expect the filling of the Spirit. We often have unsightly blisters in our vessels that render us unfit to receive the Holy Spirit. When we harbor, cherish,

and feed the anger and resentment that we have for other people, we grieve the Holy Spirit. As Jesus forgave us, so we ought to forgive one another. It's important to have an attitude and the mind of Christ. When Acts 2 says that the disciples were in one accord, it means they might have been divided before. They had put aside their differences, forgave one another, and became one.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Expect the Promise

Jesus promised, “If I go to the Father, the Comforter will come.” In the days of Elijah, a terrible famine raged for three-and-a-half years. People were dying from starvation, and they were in desperate need of rain—another symbol of God’s Spirit. Elijah prayed for rain just like the apostles prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And he prayed earnestly on his knees until it came.

But he did more than that. In faith, he expected the rain to come. He sent his servant out and asked, “Do you see anything yet?” When they didn’t see anything, Elijah prayed again, and he kept on praying seven times until

they finally saw the cloud coming. It was just a little cloud in the beginning, but that little cloud was all he needed to be sure.

According to Luke 11:13, if we ask earnestly and sincerely, we should expect to receive the gift: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask.”

One of the last things Jesus said was, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). For John, the great commission is to “Receive the Holy Spirit,” for that will lead to preaching of the gospel in a way you can’t imagine. Christ breathed on those who were there with Him, and He wants to breathe on you. The Lord wants you to have the Holy Spirit. Jesus died to purchase you that great gift, so the promise to receive the baptism is sure.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Good Storm

When we pray for the Spirit, we’re really asking for a storm. And God is going to send a storm, so you need to be sure you really want it. When Elijah

prayed for rain, the storm grew so big that he got drenched. “Now it happened in the meantime the sky became black with clouds and the wind, and there was a heavy rain” (1 Kings 18:45). Elijah got caught in a storm and could barely see his way.

When God sends His Spirit, you might get caught in the storm. That could be a good thing; it just depends on what your plans are. If you’ve just planted some seeds and it rains, that’s good news. If you’re planning a wedding, it’s not so good. If you’re praying for the Holy Spirit to be poured out, you better be prepared for your plans to change.

What else happened when the disciples received the outpouring of the Spirit? They were praying in the upper room when the Spirit came to them in the form of tongues of fire. A fire burns; it’s a hot, purging element. The baptism of the Spirit does not come like a gentle wind, but as a loud noise and a fierce fire.

Being filled with the Spirit can also be expensive in terms of the world. After the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, the Bible reports, “Now all who believed were together they had all things in common,

they sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. No man said that ought that he had was his own.” The disciples had to leave many things behind when the Spirit fell on them, some giving up all they had. Peter, James, and John—no record that they ever went fishing again. Andrew, Matthew—they didn’t go back to the tax-collecting booth. Paul lost a promising career in the Sanhedrin. It was expensive for all of them to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Of course, to them it was a worthwhile sacrifice, but you need to be prepared for some struggle.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

God’s Purging Spirit

When the Holy Spirit is poured out, there is very little toleration for even the “smallest” sin in a life and in a church. As soon as someone began to teach inappropriate theology in the newly established, Spirit-filled church, he or she was called on it. When Simon said, “Let me pay for the Holy Spirit,” the apostles came down on him. They asked, “Do you think the Holy Spirit can

be bought as though it's a commodity? It's the person of God! God forbid!"

When the church was Spirit-filled, Ananias and Sapphira told a little half-truth about their offering and they dropped dead. They were active members of the church, but that's what happens when the Spirit of God is present. Accountability soars. Frankly, we'd be having a lot more funerals if God showed that kind of accountability right now—for people robbing Him, being dishonest, and the little things we often wink at now in the church. One of the signs that our church isn't yet Spirit-filled is that we tolerate so much sin in our ranks.

Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit, he will convict you of sin." Your sensitivity regarding sin is heightened when you receive the baptism (some might call you a fanatic for that). You'll recognize your complete unworthiness before God, and that can be a difficult, humbling experience. However, your love will be intensified too, but you won't wink at sin as though it's not something offensive to God. So make sure that you know what you're asking for. Are you prepared to have the Lord do a purging work in your life?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Devil's Fury

But more than that, being filled with the Holy Spirit will attract the anger of the devil. When the disciples began to preach, they were immediately mocked. As soon as the Holy Spirit came upon them, so did the ridicule. Acts 2:13 records, "Others mocking said, 'They're full of new wine.'" Of course, you don't have to roll around on the ground to be mocked. You don't have to babble in tongues to be mocked. You live a holy life, a Spirit-filled life, and you'll be mocked.

They were also imprisoned and persecuted when they received the Holy Spirit. By Acts 3, just one chapter later, they're already in jail. Are you ready to pray for the Holy Spirit and go to jail for it? In Acts 4, angry men "laid hands on them, and they put them in custody." In Acts 8, "At that time a great persecution arose against the church."

Just when the church is filled with God's Spirit, persecution comes. That should be expected. Most of us have easy sailing because we are no threat to the devil. Wouldn't you rather have the smooth sailing that comes from the

approbation of the world? Jesus said, “Woe unto you when all men speak well of you for so they did of the false prophets.” If you’re Spirit-filled, you are going to rile up the resistance of the enemy.

For the disciples, that meant a death sentence. They were killed after the outpouring of the Spirit. Steven was stoned to death, and James was killed by King Herod in Acts 12. Indeed, it became a life-and-death issue. Of the 12 apostles, only one died of old age. But to them it was worth it to be one with God and be filled His Spirit.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Make Your Stand

Would you pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit knowing that it is going to bring a storm in your life? That fact is, you only have two choices. If you’re going to pray for God’s Spirit, be prepared like Elijah to get caught in the storm. I want the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because what else are my options? “He that doesn’t have the Spirit of God is none of His.” It’s either filled with the Holy Spirit or separated from Christ and

flowing with the world to oblivion. You choose which one is better in terms of eternity.

“And it will come to pass afterward in the last days that I will pour out My Spirit” (Joel 2:28). God doesn’t sprinkle, He pours. And what happens when He does that? Just keep reading: “and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.”

The part about the Spirit is certainly beautiful, and it’s amazing that sons and daughters will prophesy, but don’t miss that the blood and the fire and the smoke all come in concert. “The sun will be turned to darkness, the moon into blood before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.”

The great and terrible day of the Lord is not far off. Would you choose to prophesy for God, or be consumed by the tempest to come? We urgently need to have the Spirit poured upon us. “And I’ll show wonders ... and it will

come to pass that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” The filling of the Holy Spirit is there for the asking, but we need to ask.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

What About Your Church?

A church without the filling of the Holy Spirit is a church with a form of religion but no power. Some churches are like a bus that has run out of gas. With all the events they have to get to, the passengers don't want to stop. So a number of them will get out to push. Sure, the bus will move, but it won't go far. People get tired of pushing. Churches are likewise being pushed by members rather than fueled by the Spirit. The bus needs gas; the church needs the Holy Spirit. Churches are designed not to run on people power, but with God's power.

Too many churches have people pushing, because we all have our precious programs. Those programs are making progress, but to what effect? It's like going to a convention where they have new ideas to get members involved and devise new ways to raise money for

church needs. It's good stuff. But the church doesn't really need all that. What it needs is men and women filled with the Spirit. The baptism of fire is the most desperate need of the church.

John Taylor said, "I've never heard of a committee being adjourned because those present were waiting for the arrival of the Holy Spirit." I've never seen a project abandoned for lack of the Holy Spirit. We will abandon a project for lack of funds, but when have you ever seen a church program dismissed because of the lack of Spirit? We'll always wait to start a project until we have enough funds, but we'll move forward even if the Holy Spirit is lacking. We'll go forward Spiritless because, "Well, we've made the plans. We need to move ahead." But how much better off we'd be if we could have the baptism of the Holy Spirit in all our projects?

A church that is filled with the Spirit is an unstoppable bus that will plow through roadblocks. Even if it has a flat or a little oil leak, it can still do its mission. With the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we'd get a lot further in spreading the gospel than where we get with media. The

disciples did much more without media than we're doing with television.

What did they have that we're lacking? The fullness of the Spirit. They turned the Roman Empire upside down, uneducated fishermen without college degrees. But they did have the baptism of the Spirit. What separated the wise from the foolish virgins? Some had full vessels, some were only partially full.

Today rescue workers have infrared detection equipment to use when they're searching the countryside for someone who is missing. A living person puts off a heat signature that helps them locate the lost child or a missing hiker. But for the equipment to work, the person being sought after must be alive. Once their bodies grow cold, nothing is detected.

Jesus said that when He comes, iniquity will abound and the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). If we hope for our Savior to rescue us from above when He returns, we must have the love of the Holy Spirit glowing in our hearts or His procession of angels will simply fly by.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A Prayer

No matter what happens, no matter the backlash, choosing God and His Spirit will give you and your church peace because you know you have chosen the right side. If you don't know how to ask right now, I want to share with you this prayer for you and your church.

Father in heaven, we know that the baptism of your Spirit is our most desperate need. So we're praying for what Solomon asked for and for what Elisha asked for. We're praying that you will show us what it was like when the disciples received your outpouring in the upper room. Our church needs this more than anything, Lord. So please come into our hearts now. We believe this is something you want to give us even more than we want to ask, so fill us with your Spirit that we might walk with Jesus, that we might love and forgive others, that we might have the power to be a great witness.

Everything in the Christian life is strengthened and made possible by having God in us. If you really want the baptism of the Holy Spirit in your life, you can expect it because the Lord wants to give it to you. God will fill you with His presence and will work great wonder through you.

