

ANOINTED

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With, in, and upon. Using these words, Jesus described three dimensions of personal relationship with the Holy Spirit.

With Us

The Spirit of God is with us — everyone who is alive. He is in the world today, wooing and drawing people to Christ, convincing them of the truth concerning sin, righteousness, and divine judgment. In this context, His whole purpose is to reveal Jesus Christ as Savior.

As you reflect on your life experience, I have no doubt that you can identify specific events and seasons when the Spirit of God was awakening your faith and spurring your convictions. Perhaps through a tragedy, perhaps through a blessing, perhaps through contemplation or conversation, your thoughts were turned to God, and you wondered if He was real, if He had a purpose for your life, if He could help you.

The Spirit used those circumstances to prod your heart and conscience and point you to Jesus as the One who loved you and gave Himself to save you and bring you into relationship with God who made you. As you reflect, can you recognize His presence, His nudge, His whisper, His appeal? Have you yielded to Him to receive the new birth and become a follower of Jesus?

In Us

The Spirit of Jesus is in us — everyone who is alive in Christ, who has been born again. He takes up residence in the heart of every believer, guiding us into all truth, showing us the things of Christ, in order to conform us to the moral likeness of Jesus our Lord.

You see, the truth He leads us to is not merely theological or religious truth, but fundamentally moral truth. He teaches us what is ideal, not so that we may preoccupy ourselves with abstractions, but that we may understand what is truly real and begin to live accordingly.

Once the Spirit of Christ comes in, we begin to change. Our perceptions, our convictions, our desires, our behaviors — all begin to shift. Things we once loved, we may begin to despise. Things we once shunned, we may begin to seek.

As He reveals to us what Jesus is like, He also offers us power to become like Him — power to change, power to overcome dependencies and obsessions and habits. The Spirit of Jesus is in us to make us like Jesus — regarding like Jesus, relating like Jesus, reacting like Jesus. If you are not growing in this respect, you may be resisting the Spirit's lead. Do you need to surrender to Jesus as Lord over your life? Make Him your Leader in all things personal.

Upon Us

The Spirit of the Lord is upon us — everyone who has received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. He rests upon us, clothes us like a service uniform. For we have been anointed to serve our Lord. It is in this capacity that we may do “the works that [Jesus did] and greater works than [those].” The baptism

with the Spirit sets a person apart for God's use, fitting them for God's service. More about this in a moment.

To recap: The Holy Spirit is *with* us to show us *that* Jesus is; the Holy Spirit is *in* us to show us *who* Jesus is; the Holy Spirit is *upon* us to show us *why* Jesus is.

Today, as we look more fully at the subject of serving the Lord, we'll consider the example of the Lord Jesus Himself, as a guide (or road map) for ourselves.

Caveats

A couple of preliminary qualifications:

1) Serving the Lord is not about "going to church," except as that serves a larger purpose.

Arnie was deaf in both ears. Yet, every Sunday morning, Arnie dressed and walked to church for the worship service. He could not hear the song lyrics or the music, nor the prayers or sermons of the pastor. Still he went.

His friend, Roger finally asked him, "Arnie, why do you keep going to the church? You know you can't hear a thing that happens there."

Arnie replied, "Because my neighbors are watching, and I want them to know which side I am on."

Arnie was testifying to his faith by his faithful attendance.

Beyond that, let me remind you that we refer to these Sunday morning meetings as "worship services." Who is being served? We may be inclined to measure the meeting by how *we* are served (what we get out of it), but actually it is our service of worship *to the Lord* that is being measured.

Imagine a seven-foot tall angel, standing in the corner near the piano, with a clipboard in hand, watching as we worship and making notes of how we're doing. How are you doing at serving God with your worship? Are you paying attention? Are you employing your whole heart? Your whole mind? Your whole strength?

Romans 12:1 *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

2) Service that follows the baptism with the Spirit is not about the mere possession of spiritual gifts. *Everyone* who received the baptism with the Spirit is able to speak in unknown (unlearned) tongues (languages). But do you *use* your language in prayer and worship? If you seldom use it, how does that serve the Lord?

The same is true for all of the gifts the Spirit brings. It is foolish to say you have a gift if you do not *use* it in the service of the Lord. Gifts are not badges of spirituality, they are tools of spiritual service.

Jesus' Example

As Jesus stood in the synagogue to read from the scroll of Scripture (Luke 4:16-21), He read from these words of Isaiah:

Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;² to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,³ to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

When He had concluded His reading, He sat down to teach about the passage, and as all eyes were fixed on Him, He said, “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Jesus claimed to bring the fulfillment of this prophecy to the people. He was saying, “The Spirit of the Lord God is *upon* Me.” He revealed Himself as the Anointed One — the Messiah, the Christ — the One set apart for God’s service by the power of the Holy Spirit upon His life. No wonder He had their attention!

Because...

What followed was of greatest importance. “The Spirit... is upon Me, because...” The bare claim was insufficient. Words are cheap. There was a purpose for which the Spirit had come upon Him. Tangible evidence was forthcoming, because the Spirit gives power for service.

This same Holy Spirit comes upon you when you receive the baptism with the Spirit that Jesus gives. The same Spirit, for the same purpose.

John 14:12 *I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.*

“Because I am going to be with the Father” signifies Jesus’ return to Heaven to share the Father’s throne and glory. Once Jesus was so glorified, He poured out the Spirit on His people (Acts 2:33).

This baptism is not our badge. Our badge is baptism in water — a visible token, a public declaration. The baptism in the Spirit is our enablement — invisible, except in its effects.

We have a purpose from above. It is the same purpose for which Jesus came. Isaiah presented seven tasks for us to consider. As we do, let’s ask ourselves how we’re doing in each of these assignments. Are we relying on the Holy Spirit to guide and help us? Are we seeing results?

1. Preach Good News to the poor.

This message is *good* news, not bad news. Some people cannot receive that because their hearts are not “poor” but full of themselves. But the “poor in spirit” will hear us if our news is good. Not only should the news we bring be good, but we ourselves should be good news to others. The Spirit is upon us to that end.

2. Heal (mend) the brokenhearted.

As fishermen dragged their nets along the rocky bottom of the sea, their nets, inevitably, would catch

and tear. Every day's fishing run was incomplete until the nets were washed and mended. There is enough heartache in the world to tear your heart open everyday. So God, at the end of each day, wants to mend your heart to prepare you to go again the next day. We, too, have been anointed to bring such healing to others, just as we have received it from the Lord.

3. Proclaim liberty to the captives (slaves).

Slaves may appear free, but they are limited in what they can do and where they can go. All around us there are "functional slaves" who cannot be who they really want to be because another master forbids them. But Christ has bought their souls in order to set them free. His Spirit in us also proclaims this freedom. We must tell them, so they may find freedom.

4. Proclaim the opening of the prison to those who are bound (prisoners).

The chains and shackles of an emotional prison house have kept millions from living the life Jesus brought, but the anointing of the Spirit unlocks the chains and doors of fears, traumas, and addictions, so that men and women may walk out, living free in the grace of God. His Spirit is upon you to declare this awesome truth.

5. Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (God's favor).

A period of favor — an age of grace — had begun through Jesus Christ. And now, His Spirit rests upon us to keep the announcement alive: "God is for you, not against you. Because of Jesus' death you can be forgiven and freed. God welcomes you. He is not punishing you. Come to Him." It is still true today — Christ's redemption is complete and sufficient — and His Spirit is upon us to announce the truth of His unfailing love.

Not Yet

When Jesus quoted Isaiah's words, He omitted the last two points, because they were *not fulfilled* in the people's presence that day. They are reserved for a future day.

6. Proclaim the day of vengeance of our God.

7. Comfort and console all who mourn.

On that "great and terrible day of the Lord" the destructive "wrath of God" against rebellious sin will rain upon the earth and, tragically, millions will be destroyed. Then Christ will govern the whole earth for 1,000 years of peace and righteousness to display His wisdom and grace, and we will have another ministry of comforting and consoling those who remain, for they will mourn, not so much for their losses as for their foolish rebellion. Then, the wicked dead will be raised and judged and cast into the everlasting "fiery lake of burning sulfur."

It is worthy of note that God's final vengeance lasts but a "day," while this present grace lasts a "year." God's measurements may be different than ours, but the ratio is the same. Jesus has not yet come, because God's favor — His loving entreaty — lasts a *long* time.

But Now

For the present time, you and I have five critical assignments for the kingdom of God. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon us, because we have been anointed to:

1. Preach Good News to the poor.
2. Heal (mend) the brokenhearted.
3. Proclaim liberty to the captives (slaves).

4. Proclaim the opening of the prison to those who are bound (prisoners).
5. Proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (God's favor).

How are you doing with your assignments? Are you praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance? Are you trusting Him to help you with courage and power? Are you seeing results? If not, what can you do to begin to change things?

Ask Him. He will tell you.