

Message: “Meeting the Holy Spirit Face to Face Part Three”, Week Three of “Meeting the Holy Spirit Face to Face”, presented by Reverend Kristen Lowe on 08-06-2017 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.

The Holy Spirit is mentioned throughout the Bible. But it is specifically in the gospels and the New Testament that we get specific instruction from Jesus about the receiving of the Holy Spirit. As the disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit, they go out and spread the good news. The Christian church is born and continues to bring Christians together today.

On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit dramatically stirs up Jerusalem in a mighty wind and rests on the disciples, Peter, who is filled with the Spirit shares specifically how others can receive the Holy Spirit:

Acts 2:38

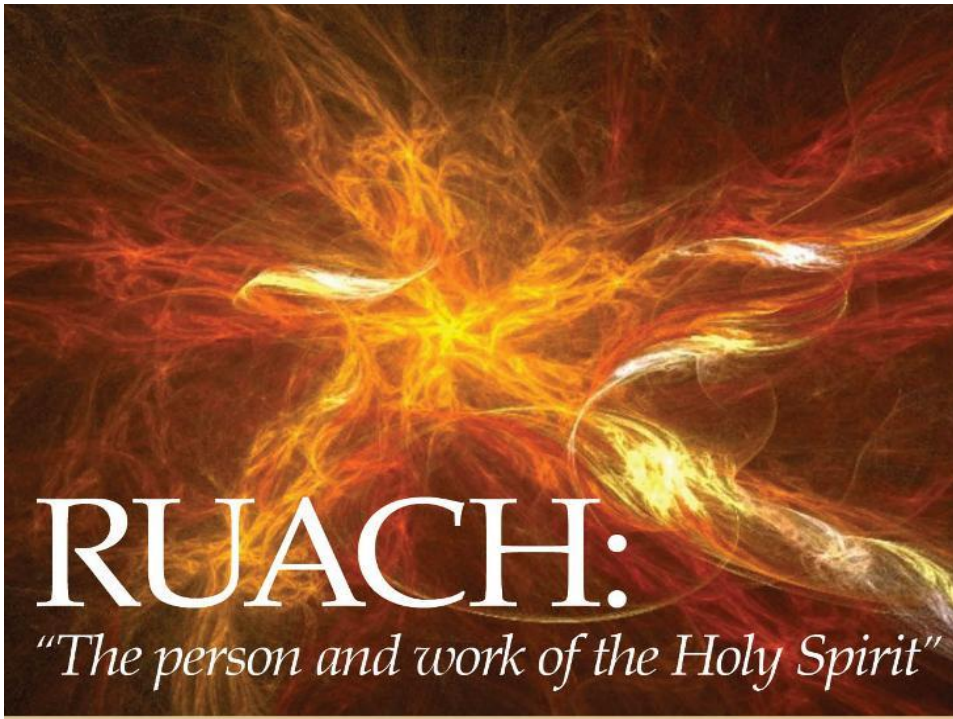
“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’”.

Later, in his letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul reminds the believers that there is more going on than we can see.

Ephesians 6:12-13

For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God's armor now! Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy's attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.

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What would it look like to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What would it feel like? How do we become filled with the Holy Spirit? And how do we know when we are?

We talked about the fact that Just like Jesus, the Holy Spirit is a being, not an it, and that Jesus told his disciples, “I will be with you until the end of time,” which we know doesn’t ever end.

But, the disciples saw Jesus crucified. Strangely enough, Jesus proved his eternal power by rising again from the dead. He walked with his disciples and appeared to hundreds of people for 40 days before returning to heaven.

Before he did, he told them that he would send another. The Holy Spirit. And this Holy Spirit, who is omnipresent, is with each of us. However...

We know that we have free will. We can choose to be in relationship to the Holy Spirit. We can choose to accept, or not accept the gifts from the Holy Spirit. We can choose how much we allow Ruach to fill us.

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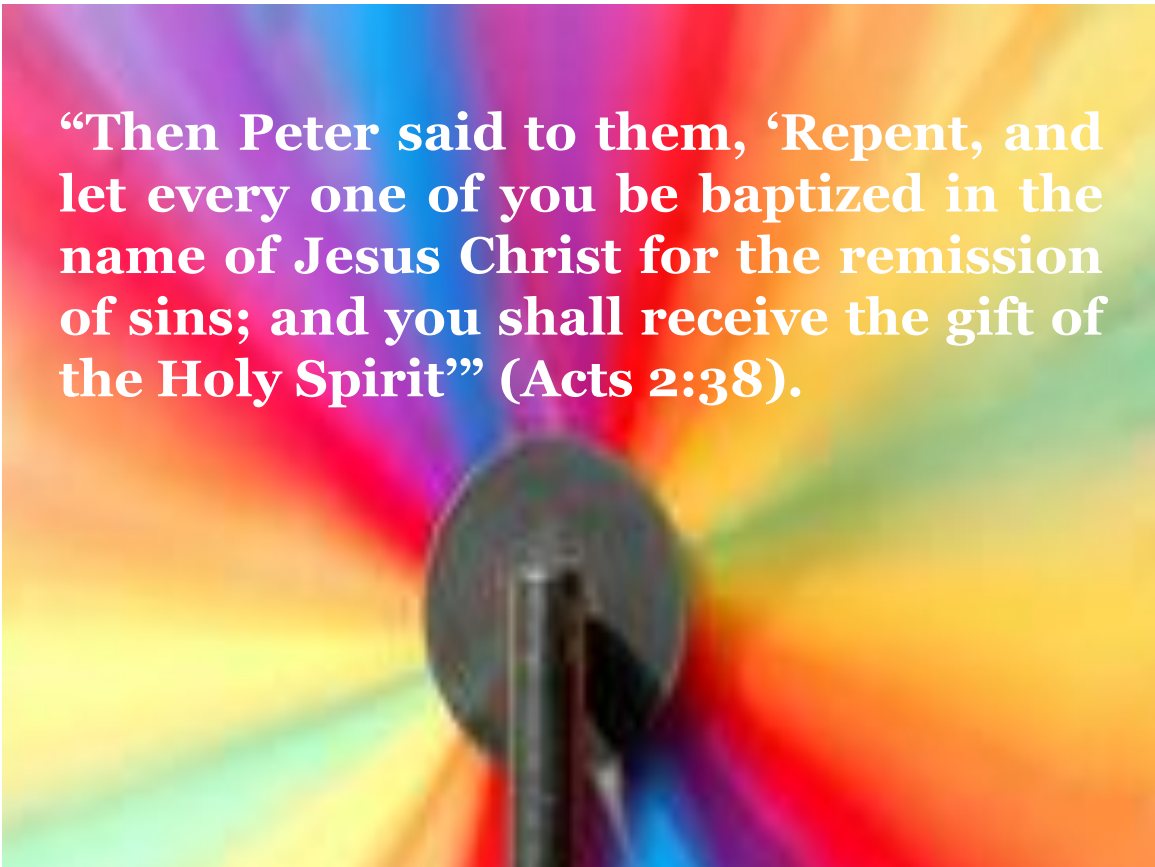
My daughter has always had an independent spirit. When she was little, and I'd try to help her do something, she'd push me away and say, "No! Me do it!" She didn't want my help. As a result, she got dressed, but sometimes there were shoes on the wrong feet or shirts on backwards or inside out.

But then, there were those magical times when she allowed me to guide her. Not do it for her, but guide her. I gave her the power and guidance to do more than she could by herself. She was able to receive my help.

Pinwheel – receiving the breath to propel it.

So, the first step is to receive the Holy Spirit. How do we receive the Holy Spirit?

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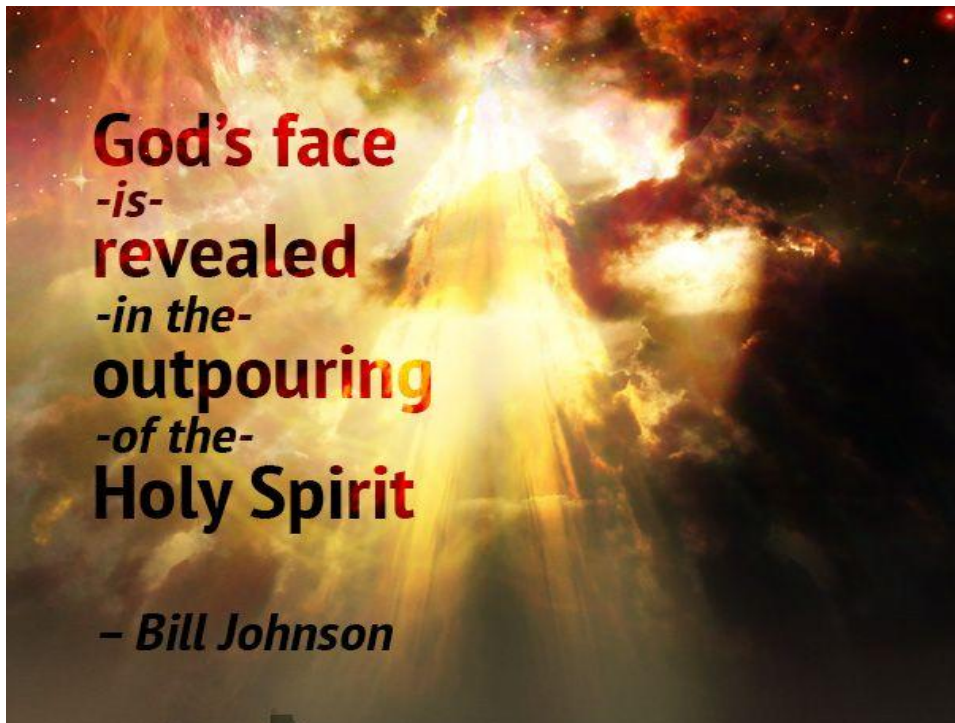
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So, by repenting and through baptism, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Then, we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

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So, how can we be filled with the holy spirit? The Holy Spirit fills up the environment that is filled with worship—songs, praise, the gathering of believers... When we fill ourselves with the Holy Spirit, we meet Ruach face to face.

The Holy Spirit fills us when we live a life of humble service to God, when we put God first in our lives, when we desire God above all else.

One of God's greatest gifts is the filling Holy Spirit, and it provides a lifeline to God by which He gives many of His other wonderful gifts.

The Holy Spirit gives a Christian spiritual power and understanding and makes it possible for us to become more like God and eventually inherit eternal life. So it's important to know how to receive the Holy Spirit, how to stir it up and how to be assured that we have it.

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“Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).

“...stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1:6-7).

In David’s impassioned prayer of repentance, he pleaded with God, “Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11). He knew that if he didn’t keep repenting and seeking God, his filling of the Holy Spirit would diminish. Other things would replace it.

Paul encourages us to “stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:6-7).

What are some evidences of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible lists many things the Holy Spirit enables us to do. Paul wrote that through regular prayer and study of the Bible, the Spirit helps us grow in understanding of God’s plan and our part in it. It writes God’s laws on our hearts and minds, helping us internalize God’s way of life and think like He does (Hebrews 8:10). It enables us to transform or change our minds (Romans 12:2).

There are both gifts that the Holy Spirit gives believers who are willing open to the filling of the spirit. And, there are also evidences of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

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To some people the Spirit gives a message of **wisdom**. To others the same Spirit gives a message of **knowledge**.⁹ To others the same Spirit gives **faith**. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of **healing**.¹⁰ To others he gives the power to do **miracles**. To others he gives the ability to **prophecy**. To others he gives the **ability to tell the spirits apart**. To others he gives the ability to **speak in different kinds of languages** they had not known before. And to still others he gives the **ability to explain** what was said in those languages.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, gives a list of some of the gifts that are given: ⁸To some people the Spirit gives a message of wisdom. To others the same Spirit gives a message of knowledge. ⁹To others the same Spirit gives faith. To others that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. ¹⁰To others he gives the power to do miracles. To others he gives the ability to prophecy. To others he gives the ability to tell the spirits apart. To others he gives the ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before. And to still others he gives the ability to explain what was said in those languages. ¹¹All the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives gifts to each person, just as he decides.

And, we are to recognize, accept and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So what is the evidence of the Holy Spirit within us? Paul tells us that if we are filled with the Holy Spirit, there will be signs. Just like a tree that produces fruit. The evidence is this:

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The believer will burst forth with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. If we ever question how full we are of the Holy Spirit, we can gauge this filling on these things.

It is God's plan for us to repent, be baptized, receive His Spirit and then be transformed in mind to become more and more like Him. By praying for, yielding to and stirring up the Spirit, we will see the spiritual growth that assures us God's Spirit is working in us.

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Let me end with this illustration:



The great violinist, Nicolo Paganini, willed his marvelous violin to Genoa -- the city of his birth -- but only on condition that the instrument never be played upon. It was an unfortunate condition, for it is a peculiarity of wood that as long as it is used and handled, it shows little wear. As soon as it is discarded, it begins to decay.

The exquisite, mellow-toned violin has become worm-eaten in its beautiful case, valueless except as a relic.

Don't cease to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and don't cease to open and use the gifts that you have been given.