

30. Learning the Meaning of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

In our last topic, we saw that each Christian has different gifts, different ministries and different ways of working. That means that no two Christians do things exactly the same way. The reason for that is due to the fact that the Lord has a different ministry for every Christian. As we each yield our lives to the Lord, we will see that He works through our lives in a way that is different from any other Christian because He has prepared a unique ministry for each of us as Christians. Today, we are going to learn how to help our physical and spiritual children explain the meaning of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and see why the Spirit makes each one of us unique.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, we read, “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” In our physical body, we have many different parts or members. This includes things like arms, legs, fingers, ears and many other parts. In the same way, we see that we are all different in the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Christ is one body; but because there are many different Christians, His body has many different parts.

We also see how each person becomes a part of the body of Christ. We see that the Holy Spirit baptizes each person into the body of Christ. This happens at the moment of salvation. To fully understand what this means, we need to understand the difference between the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3:11-12 says, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” We see three different kinds of baptism in these two verses. First, is the baptism of John by which a person showed that he believed the message of John and had repented of his sin.

The second baptism in these verses is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. We see that John promised Christ would baptize us with the Holy Spirit. That meant Christ would place the Holy Spirit in each Christian at the moment of salvation. In John 14:16-18, Christ told the disciples, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” Here, we see that Christ made it clear that He would baptize us with the Holy Spirit. This happens at the moment of salvation. The third baptism in Matthew 3:11-12 is the baptism of eternal judgment in unquenchable fire for all those who reject Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12:13, we see the results of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Here, we see that it is the Holy Spirit who places us in the body of Christ, the church, at the moment of salvation. This

baptism makes us one in Christ. This happens whether we are Jews or Greeks (Gentiles). This happens whether we are slaves or free. Galatians 3:27-28 says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 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.”

We all share the same Holy Spirit so we are all united as one in Christ. This is why Ephesians 4:1-3 says, “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” We are to have the attitudes mentioned in these verses in order to maintain that unity. When Christians are not experiencing true unity, each Christian needs to examine his or her own life to make certain that there is no sin in his or her life that is destroying that unity. When there is disunity, confession of wrong attitudes by the various Christians is the basis for restoring and maintaining that unity.

As Christians, we need to realize that we are to learn how to function as one body. 1 Corinthians 12:14-15 says, “For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body?” Here, we are reminded that the body of Christ is made up of many different parts. Christ is the One who chooses what ministries He has for each one of us. The Holy Spirit gives us the particular gifts that will make it possible to carry out those ministries. The Father gives each of us different activities so that all of the work of the Lord is completed.

The person who is like a foot is not to feel that he or she is not a part of the body because he or she is not a hand. This reminds us of the fact that the Lord designed each Christian for a particular kind of ministry. The Lord gives each of us the things that we need to carry out the ministry that He has designed for us. We are not to be upset because someone else has a different ministry than we have. In the same way, we are not to be upset because we do not have the gifts that are needed for that ministry. Instead, we need to ask the Lord to show us the ministry that He has for us. Then, we can rejoice because we are able to do exactly what the Lord has designed us to do. As we yield to the Lord and carry out the service that He has designed us to do, our lives will be filled with joy.

We go on to read in 1 Corinthians 12:16-18, “And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,’ is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” Here, we see that our physical bodies have many different parts. Each part is necessary for our human bodies to function effectively. We need our feet but we also need our hands. We need our eyes but we also need our ears. We do not expect our ears to do the walking or our feet to do the seeing. Instead, in our human body, we use each part of the body to do what it was designed to do.

It is the same way in the body of Christ. “Uniformity” means that *everyone does the same thing at the same time*. When a group of soldiers are marching and the officer in charge says, “Right face,” the soldiers all turn right. In contrast, “unity” means that *every part works together by doing*

the thing that they were designed to do. In the human body, the eye sees, the ears hear, the nose smells and the feet walk. That is exactly the reason why Christ made every Christian different. We have all been designed to do different things in the body of Christ.

That is why 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” If the Holy Spirit has given us speaking gifts, then we are to speak the very words of God and not give our own opinions. If the Holy Spirit has given us serving gifts, then we are to serve in the ability that God has supplied in our lives. We are not to seek our own glory. Instead, we are to serve the body so that God is gloried by whatever we say or do.

We also see that our physical body would not function properly if the whole body were an eye, an ear or a nose. We need every one of those parts of the body because each part has a different thing to do to cause our human body to work effectively. In the same way, the church needs the ministry of every Christian to work effectively. Mary anointed the feet of Christ with precious ointment. Judas complained and said the money should have been given to the poor instead. Christ responded in Mark 14:8-9, ““She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”” What Judas saw as a waste, Christ saw as a message to the entire world about the importance of the ministry of each individual Christian.

The action of Mary explains why verse 18 says, “But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” God has a perfect plan to complete in the world. That plan includes the ministry of every Christian. For that reason, God has made each of us as Christians different from any other Christian. The Lord gives us different spiritual gifts, a heart for different ministries, different abilities, different personalities and different experiences in life to prepare each one of us for the particular ministry that the Lord has prepared us to do. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that the baptism of the Holy Spirit means that each Christian has an important ministry. This will help other Christians to understand that God has given them a purpose in life that will give eternal value and meaning to their lives. God wants all Christians to understand that the Holy Spirit has made them unique because the Lord has a different ministry for every Christian that will give each one great joy. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain the baptism of the Holy Spirit.