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THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVERS FILLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

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"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Today among believers there are many assumptions about what the life of a person or church filled with the Holy Spirit should look like. There have been many books written about the Holy Spirit and He is the subject of many Pentecostal-Charismatic churches that point out His manifestations.

People in the west, in last 10 years, have been talking about various outpourings of the Holy Spirit; such as laughter, gold dust falling on believers, gold dental fillings, and other manifestations such as animals sounds. I have witnessed some these manifestations in some churches.

As a young Christian I didn't want to reject such manifestations because I believe that when the Holy Spirit comes on a person, or a group of people, it is certain that they will not stay the same and their entire being - spirit, soul, and body - will become shaken with various emotions and manifestations. Because of this, I read the book of Acts several times so I could compare what I had seen to the manifestations of the early church; I was convinced that the book of Acts was the model of the early church.

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After some time I was persuaded that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself in persons and specific churches that desire Him, and was convinced that there were specific signs clearly written in the Bible. If signs following do not exist in the lives of these believers or congregations then one thing is for sure, these people are not filled with the Holy Spirit and are not good followers of Jesus Christ.

► **1. BELIEVERS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT PEOPLE**

One of the most frequent questions I have asked myself when I am in churches where the Holy Spirit is manifested, or when talking with people who testified of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is a matter-of-fact question about their personal lives.

I remember when visiting a church I met a single mother who was converted and experienced some of the above-mentioned manifestations. After a few months I once again visited that church, which was now experiencing all the new

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fashionable manifestations from the west, and learned that this same woman was pregnant. Knowing her life, at first I was happy supposing that she had got married. However, I found out that she had been involved with a young man in the church. She chose not to marry him because, as she said, he was not “from the Lord”. I could understand that, but the problem was that she was pregnant.

In that same Church, only some time later, the pastor’s son committed adultery with a juvenile who became pregnant; many other marriages, also, experienced crises. After several years, that church, which was named “The Early Church” and whose motto was “Where Christ Reigns”, closed down, and the pastor, changing professions, began selling real estate. I am not sure if he has returned to the ministry or not.

The question that came to me after this was: how can it be that a believer or a church can participate in divorce, immorality, financial misconduct, and other similar activities while at the same time profess to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

How many believers and Churches are constantly saying that they are filled with the Holy Spirit while at the same time live bound to old sins, old habits, or a disorderly life?

In Acts, when Holy Spirit was poured out on the believers, their lives were totally changed. They were not just repentant for their sins but also wanted God to forgive them. They continued to live as a people whose sins were forgiven. When God was

speaking through His Word or through other believers, they were “*deeply shaken in their hearts*” (**Acts 2:37**) asking themselves “What should we do?” and they were obedient to what was said to them; they turned from their old way of thinking and acting to become obedient to Jesus.

Today people grow angry when you say to them that they should align their behavior according to Bible. Churches are filled with self-righteous believers who are not willing to listen or change their lives according to what is written in the Bible. Instead of changing, they adopt a certain way of acting that enables them to rise to certain positions or to “survive” 2-3 hours with other believers, when in fact; they are still living like the world. They are manipulative and slaves to hidden sins and pleasures of this world. They act very clever and sometimes even better than some mature believers. However, instead of asking themselves, “What should we do?”, they very often reject advice and continue walking toward their own destruction.

Such individuals are not an example to others; in fact, they stand against the righteous ones, the believers, who want to give everything to the LORD. Very often, using the excuse of “balance” or who knows what kind of responsibilities, they avoid serving in a ministry. As a result, many of them, after some time, disappear from Christ’s’ body chained by bad habits, wrong decisions, and evil unclean spirits.

Dr. Ki Dong Kim, the main supervisor of the Church Sung Rak in Seoul, Korea, the

Church with 100,000 members, in his book “Christ’s Healing and His Holy Signs In My Life”, speaks about repentance and bad habits saying: “Bad habits pollute man’s mind and body and they bring disaster after everything that has been done for our purity. Evil spirits are constantly around us and they use those habits as trolls. Although they repent, Christians very often become slaves to those evil spirits because of their bad habits...unless we, for our own good, repent sincerely with tears and become free from those things, all our efforts with prayer won’t help. Who knows if it will not lead us to final destruction? Repentance must be a living and painful individual experience.”
(Page 122)

Repentance is not just feeling sorry, but sincere changing the way of thinking according to God’s Word! One of the main functions of the Holy Spirit is convict people, “*In regards to sin, righteousness, and judgment*”.

Believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit will truly be changed and set free from sin when they come to Jesus through repentance. I don’t mean that they won’t be tested, rather that they can, with Gods mercy,

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stand against sin and by the strength of Holy Spirit maintain their freedom given to them through Christ Jesus.

Martin Luther once said about repentance, "Not doing it again, that is a real repentance." Convert and repent means to not do the same things again.

Believers filled with Holy Spirit are fully changed people free from bad habits!

▶ **2. BELIEVERS FILLED WITH HOLY SPIRIT ARE WILLINGLY AND FIRMLY DEDICATED**

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." (Acts 2:42)

Greek word for "devoted" is *proskartereo* and it means "to endure, to wait, to stay in one place, to continue by someone, to stick with someone."

In other words, believers from the early church were not under an emotion that lasted only 2-3 months after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, rather they were dedicated to moving ahead in a life with Jesus.

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They were willingly committed. By that I mean there was no need to push or plead with people to follow Jesus, to convince them of the proper interpretation of the Gospel, or to live healthy lives.

These believers were not spiritual yo-yos; one moment down, the next moment up, but were unwavering in their walk with the LORD, in truth, and in living together within the church body as a family. There were not independent individuals!

There are many believers who begin well in their walk with the Lord. They listen and live according to the teachings of Christ Jesus, they respect their pastors and spiritual leaders, look forward to every opportunity to be in fellowship with believers, and can't wait for the next prayer meeting.

I know many who have lived by specific Biblical convictions but after they got married, made a lot of money, or simply after serving God for a season they changed in their convictions and stopped living what they believed.

As a result, these become very self-righteous. They don't want to serve willingly rather they want to attain a position to feed their ego. Very often they don't walk with Christ for any more than few years because they lack perseverance and stability; they live a life of "instant Christianity".

As an example, the church in Sung Rak, Korea requires that a pastor first must go through their 5-year Bible School after which he must serve for another 5 years, not by preaching but

by doing whatever he is asked to do. Following that he must have 5 verified miracles in answer to his prayers, only after these requirements can he be sent forth as a pastor.

Today mere charisma and capability are more important. Many pastors and leaders are lazy; only doing what suits them, however we should also serve in the areas we dislike. In his walk with the Lord, that same pastor, Dr. Ki, has several times pled with Lord to give him the ability to serve in areas he dislikes and in the ministries no one else is willing to do.

Furthermore, believers filled with Holy Spirit are firm in the truth! They do not change their beliefs as the years pass by, but follow what it is written in the Holy Bible without wavering. There is no need to push them to attend church or prayer meetings, whether in the morning, evening, or even to attend the night watch prayer sessions. They are willingly and firmly committed. They do not use various excuses such as: "I got married", "I bought house and a car", or "I have a child and now I can't come because I have important things to do".

It is interesting that in western Christianity it is a trend to have shorter and shorter services. Many weekly activities are canceled so that people can have more time for themselves. Such theology and ways of thinking are centered on man and not on Jesus. Probably, in many churches like that, Jesus would be expelled because He would preach for more than 20 minutes and pray longer than 2 hours for the sick. People would crucify Him because while they are

listening to Him preaching they can only think about dinner.

Today the church has become so selfish that there is no place for Jesus and the real manifestation of His Spirit. People like what is secure, predictable, and common without lot of dynamics.

The Bible tells us, *"every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying in the favor off all the people."* **(Acts 2:46).**

While Church is canceling as many activities as possible to fulfill its own pleasures and selfish desires, often under the excuse of "I want to be alone", the early church, filled with Holy Spirit, met willingly every day as one spirit so they could hear God's Word and pray together in fellowship.

They were all in one spirit, which means that when there was a special service during the week or a gathering of the saints,

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there wasn't one home watching TV, while others were sleeping, still others on a trip somewhere, and some in the cinema or at home watching the football game. They were all in one spirit because they were filled with the Holy Spirit and not with themselves!

Believers filled with the Holy Spirit were also firm in giving. They didn't just give the first two years and then because of debt stop giving. In fact, believers filled with Holy Spirit are faithful in giving even when it hurts to give!

Many believers give their tithe and say: "The rest of the 90% is mine!" They often coldly close their eyes and ears to those who are in need or to the needs of the church. In the early church the people were giving much more than their tithe. *"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had a need."* (Acts 2:44-45).

They were giving everything, as the woman who gave all she had. Jesus said of her that she gave more than everyone else because she gave everything she had. They were not calculating or bound to the 10% while coldly shutting their ears.

Such people you couldn't persuade or manipulate. When they heard of a need they sold their second car, vacation home, or house and gave to those who were in need;

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they gave unwaveringly. They didn't stop after giving once and then testify to all how they given sacrificially for many years. For them it was a lifestyle.

It is interesting how people declare how much money they would give if they had more, yet when they receive more money, get a better job, buy a house, or other material things they give less. The more they have the harder it is for them to give. These people are not filled with Holy Spirit; they think only about themselves and how they can please themselves in this short life on the earth.

In Korea, for example, people were selling parts of their body to help in extend the Kingdom and to build the church. In the west, unfortunately, people are giving from what is left over after they have spent money on themselves.

Believers filled with Holy Spirit give freely; they are willing and are of one spirit, firm in the truth, and in fellowship and prayer together.

▶ **3. BELIEVERS FILLED WITH HOLY SPIRIT HAVE REAL POWER AND VISIBLE RESULTS.**

The Bible clearly shows us *"Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles."* (Acts 2:43)

There were divine occurrences in the ministry, like that of Paul, the miraculous rescue of Peter from the jail, and other unusual miracles that we can read about. *"God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that*

had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” (Acts 19:11-12)

I have seen believers often testify about miracles that cannot be seen, such as a headache, toothache, pain in spin, and other similar ailments.

As I said earlier, many believe in holy laughter, gold dust, or animal sounds as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but there are few real signs and wonders because people are not filled with the real Holy Spirit.

Churches filled with true Holy Spirit, will see dead men rise from the dead, blind men see, and lame men walk. Signs and wonders will be obvious and proven, not false or hidden. I think that even some believers unconsciously make up or exaggerate some healings because they don't want to pay the price for real power; they don't want to fast and pray, but at the same time their stomachs are not starved from lack of food rather from greed for food.

Church, sometimes we are so in the flesh that even if God wanted to move us from where we are He couldn't!

While reading books and testimonies of those people who were used by God, I saw that all of them have one thing in common; they were people of prayer and fasting. They were not praying 10 minutes per day and fasting with juice, yogurt, and soup, rather they fasted even for 40 days and nights and many times even without water so they could engage in warfare with power from on high.

I was ashamed while reading the book about Pastor Dr. Ki Dong Kim, from Korea, about his prayer life and dedication, as well as the dedication of his wife who used to pray for him for seven-eight hours on her knees, because they knew that some things could only be done by the Holy Spirit.

Very often, as a young pastor, he spent 5 hours every day in prayer so he could see God at work. In sharing about his 40 days of fasting and prayer, Dr. Ki describes his experience like this, “The first 20 days I drank water, but it seemed to me that the water was making me tired so I stopped drinking it. The first 10 days it was hard to bear the hunger; loneliness was the worse hunger. Although I was constantly day and night in prayer, the worst agony for me was that I couldn't meet with another human being.” During his time of fasting and prayer, the church was praying every evening for him because they wanted him to come back with greater power. Immediately following that time, through Dr Ki, God healed a 7-year old paralyzed boy.

So it is not strange that churches in the east have results. These results didn't come overnight but through long seasons of persevering prayer and commitment to the Lord.

Believers filled with the Holy Spirit will not only have true signs and wonders but will also have results obvious to all.

Church growth is not growth that happens overnight. For it to happen it is necessary to have strong unwavering commitment to bear the results. Unfortunately, there are



many ineffective churches that have not grown for years; the reason is not that they need more time but because they are not committed to the Lord; sometimes it would seem their motto is, "Take care of yourself you little flock".

They are hiding their futility with various excuses but the reality is that many of them are not even called of the Lord into ministry; they have no favor from people around them because they don't have a quality relationship with the Lord, rather they depend upon their own abilities, talents, and capabilities that cannot give results without the anointing and calling.

"They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the LORD added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)

Believers in the early church were firmly committed to the Lord in truth, prayer, fellowship, and giving; and Lord gave them visible signs, each day He added to the church those who needed salvation. The early church had an obvious growth because she was filled with the true Holy Spirit.

What keeps you from living a life filled with the Holy Spirit? Is it bad habits or sin that saps your strength and keeps you from unwavering commitment and strength of will; do worldly cares and materialism take your heart and time so that serving the Lord is a burden and something that you avoid? Or do you simply wish not to pay the price because you know that you will have to put something behind you? "What should we do?"

We should commit ourselves completely, leave our bad habits and sin behind us, and search for true fullness of the Holy Spirit. We must become firm, all in one spirit, and committed Christians through whom God can show Himself through signs and wonders and extend His kingdom in our towns and in our country.

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