

# Do Not Be Surprised at the Fiery Ordeal Among You

## An Expository Journey Through **1Peter** **1Peter 4:12-14**

### 44 What Being “Blessed by God” and “Filled with the Holy Spirit” Looks Like

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March 10, 2019

#### **1 Peter 4:12-14**

**12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;**

**13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.**

**14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

To the Glory of God

He didn't talk about it very much. He would hardly ever bring it up. But, as a curious young boy, I was able, sometimes, to sit at his feet and get my father to talk to me about what it was like to fight in World War II. When I first heard that my father, who rose to the rank of Lieutenant, was in the group that followed behind General George Patton into Europe, and was the group that liberated the Polish concentration camp called "Auschwitz", I was so eager to hear about it all.

I asked him many times to tell me, but most of the time he would just brush me off with a remark like, "*Not now*", or "*Maybe later*". But being who I am, I *persevered* until he would eventually open up. I was eager to hear about all the heroism and the great exploits, and how loud the bombs were, and how many people my father had shot and killed.

But, to my amazement, he sat me down one afternoon in June and began to tell me just what War was really like: the horror of it all, the

unthinkable suffering, the women, walking on the side of the road with dead children in their arms, the dead and bloated bodies lying everywhere with the flies swarming around their eyes, the destroyed buildings, and the chaos and the fear. And always, in the background, you could hear a sound that never stopped, day or night, the sound of people moaning and crying and weeping and begging God for Mercy.

He told me that as his Company entered the concentration camp, they saw the emaciated bodies of human beings, who were being slowly starved to death, walking around like zombies, with their black eyes sunk deep into their heads. My father said these people never said a word and they barely looked up because in the back of their minds they were thinking that, at any minute, the US Army that was liberating them from nearly a decade of torture would very soon leave them, and they would have to fend for themselves or be imprisoned all over again.

My father saw the barracks where the lice infested straw beds were, and he told me about the smell that hit you when you first walked in, a stench he never forgot that was a combination of rotten human flesh combined with dead rats and dead people and human waste. And as your eyes became accustomed to the darkness, you could make out on those beds that there were people there, real human beings, who had become too weak to even lift their heads, lying there waiting to die.

They took the Army group into the medical facilities, where highly educated doctors, who had taken an oath to save life, had spent nearly a decade experimenting on those people with electric shock and freezing water, and my father saw the tables where they would flay a man or a woman alive and make lamp shades out of their skin, or make soap with their fat and force the other prisoners to bathe with the soap made from the fat of their own mother or father or sister or brother, or even their own child.

And then they saw the ovens, where approximately 1.1 million people were gassed to death and burned alive and poisoned, or just shot in the head during the reign of Hitler's Third Reich. And on the walls, scratched by fingernails of those doomed to die, were messages to loved ones, and prayers, and even short apologies.

The United States Army took the survivors, and they built nice showers where many of them could bathe for the first time in many years, and they built mess halls that were open 24 hours every day, so that, at any time of the day or night, a survivor could walk in and get a

healthy, nourishing meal. And the chocolate; O the chocolate! My father told me that, somehow, his Company was able to get all the chocolate they could eat. And the American soldiers would hand it out to these men and women and children who had suffered so much.

But my father told me that he was roused from sleep one night as a friend of his wanted to show him something. And even though the mess halls were open and the lights were on and these suffering people could get almost anything they wanted to eat, in addition to all the chocolate they could hold, this man showed my father the sight of these people rummaging around in the garbage cans, and along with the rats, they were eating raw garbage with their bare hands and even licking it up off the ground.

And they contacted the commanding Officer and told him what was going on, and they got a translator and they told the people they could go inside the mess halls and sit down at a clean table with forks and spoons and knives, and they could eat like normal people. And one of the prisoners told the translator that they thought it was all a dream and that it wasn't real, and that at any minute it would be over, and they had scrounged around for garbage for so long they would just as soon continue.

But just before they shipped my father's Company out, he saw a sight that changed his life. He saw a young Jew who had been the father of a large family that were all now dead, my father saw this man bow down at the feet of the commanding Officer begging him to take him back home to the United States so he could live the rest of his life as that Officer's slave rather than send him back to his own country. And my father saw that commanding Officer, a man hardened by several years of watching 19 & 20 year-old boys blown to pieces, put his head in his hands and weep, knowing that he had to send that man to his own home and to certain death.

We need to never forget that in between 1939 and 1945, over 100 million human beings were killed, and over 400 million experienced horrific suffering because people, who knew better, bought into the ancient heresy of Humanism, and the logical *conclusion* to Humanism which is Eugenics. And so, anyone who was not desirable could be exterminated with impunity. And those numbers don't include the suffering incurred by the nuclear bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

You see, when Man becomes his own "god", and when Mankind is "liberated" from the concept that they will all stand before a holy God and give an account of everything they have done in this life, then the only thing that matters is whoever has the biggest gun. The irrefutable Proof that we are all fallen is confirmed when Absolute Truth is ignored, and when the unchangeable Morality that flows out from that Absolute Truth is cast aside, and the result is that educated and cultured and sophisticated, and even "christianized" people, very quickly descend into the morass of barbarity and viciousness and atrocity, where the only Rule is "Might Makes Right".

And it is hard for people today to even imagine an entire Society getting to a place like that. Many times, when I speak about it, I am quickly brushed off with a wave of the hand and a comment that, "*That was a long time ago and nothing like that could ever happen today*".

When we think about all the technology that is available to us today, and all of the comforts we enjoy, and all of the potential that exists to us as Americans, it is hard to think that we would ever see an end to it. In many ways it looks like the future holds *unlimited* opportunities along with equally *unlimited* prosperity. Surely humans have evolved past acting anywhere near like the Nazis or the totalitarians of the past.

And so, we rest comfortably that what Darwin and Star Trek has taught us is true. And that, given enough Time, Money, Education, and Opportunity, and with the advancement of Technology and Science and Medicine and Government, human beings can actually rise to the mountaintop *without* God and *without* the Bible and *without* Truth. Darwin would be so proud of the many people today repeating the mantra that what we do for *ourselves* can cause us to become "better people", and more "humane", and more "socially conscious". And all those ancient barbaric inclinations will be a thing of the past.

And so, we *congratulate* ourselves at how far we have come, and how high we have risen, and how much we have all learned from history. And we say to ourselves that we could *never* descend into the savagery and paganism that those who came before us did. And our affirmation is almost believable..... that is, until we read where, just last month, a Bill that would protect a human baby who has, somehow, miraculously survived an Abortion would be afforded a chance to live. That's all. Just give the already alive and already breathing baby a

chance to heal from the wounds from the abortionist's attempt to murder him, and live. Surely this is simply common decency. Who, among our technologically advanced society of 21<sup>st</sup> Century America could be against something so basic and so right? Because, after all, we have been evolving now for 6.5 billion years, and surely a Bill that simply prohibits the intentional murder of a living human being, who has already been born, would become the law of the land. And then, we grow silent at the news that those who lead us, those we elected to lead us, could not muster enough votes to even pass a Bill like this.

In other words, in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America, a living, breathing baby, **who has already been born**, who has by a miracle, survived being dismembered or burned to death would, by law, be allowed to starve to death or be killed in some other way, and there were not enough people in Congress to say that is wrong! So, in 2019, we, as a nation, have risen to the glorious position of essentially promoting and sanctioning Infanticide! Please don't try to convince me that we have risen above the barbarity and paganism of the past.

Now those of you who know me know that I am not a "conspiracy theorist". I am about as optimistic about the Future as anybody I know. I believe that Jesus wins. I believe that the "Church Militant" will become the "Church Triumphant". And while I have great doubts about my country, I believe that the Church will not merely *survive* what is coming upon the earth, but that it will thrive as the Light of the world and the City set on a hill. I believe that the Church of Jesus will be on the earth when Jesus comes back, and that He will present to Himself the Church made up of sinners from every tribe, and tongue and ethnic group, in all her splendor, as the crowning Achievement of His Life, Death, and Resurrection! I passionately believe that, and I am working and praying and trusting as hard as I can to help make that happen.

And yet, it is fairly easy for me to see that "Western Civilization", an entire Civilization built on the "Ethic of sacred Scripture", is being *systematically* dismantled, piece by piece, right before our eyes. And this 230+ year-old "Experiment with Democracy", that we call "*The United States of America*", is truly under assault. And that greatly troubles me. I am absolutely terrified of a \$22 trillion debt, and the notion that, right this minute, people, who hate us, are doing everything in their power to get their hands on a weapon that will shut down a major US city, or two, or three, or five, which would force the

Government to bring in "Marshall Law", which would, in effect, cancel out the Bill of Rights from being upheld.

You see, without that piece of paper, without those Constitutional *protections* and *guarantees*, it would be fairly easy for a Government, *any* Government, Liberal or Conservative, Republican or Democratic, to pass laws or make edicts or rulings, which in effect, would make Christianity to be a "violation of the law". And when that happens, nothing will ever be the same. I can see how *easy* it would be for an entire group, like Bible-believing Christians, to be, first, singled out, and then ostracized, and then forbidden to hold political Office, or own a business, or have any say-so over the way they can live their daily lives. And then the Government could then confiscate personal property and the bank accounts, and force these people into camps or isolate them or drive them from their land... or just kill them. Then the rulers could take the children away and educate them according to the acceptable standards of their paganism.

And I have often prayed that I would be faithful should this ever happen to me. I have often thought about what I would say or how I would act if this scenario was ever presented to me. Since the day that God opened my eyes and I was able to see the Beauty of the risen Christ, I have prayed that God would prepare me to "**share the sufferings of Christ**". I have often thought about what it would be like to be caught and tortured and killed because of Jesus. Would I remain faithful? Would I be able to endure Suffering like Peter says here?

Now this is not the rantings of some idiot. I don't think like this because I am listening to some creep, who lives in his mother's basement. I think like this because I am a student of history, and because I know that, even though I beg God that this will never happen to us, it has *already* happened to others. And it is happening right now to still more. And because this is *exactly* what happened to the Christians of Peter's day.

And so, as I sit in my chair on some early quite mornings, with all my comforts and securities, I sometimes picture myself being arrested, stripped, and plunged into a tub of ice water. I imagine a time when many of my brothers and sisters, my own family, have already died and I am now faced with my own "moment of Truth". I imagine being forced to kneel at the feet of an angry Jihadist who is determined to cut my head off unless I say the words, "*Jesus is not my Lord*", and "*Jesus is*

*not my Savior”, and “Jesus is not the Treasure of my life.” And as I think about that moment, and whether I would have what it takes to endure agony without renouncing Jesus. I plead with my heavenly Father for the Power of the Holy Spirit, that by the Spirit, God would make Himself and His Son, the Lord Jesus, so *real* to me, and so *glorious* to me, and so *satisfying* to me, that I would be able, when the time came, to remain faithful.*

And Corrie ten Boom, who died in 1983, was a Dutch Christian who helped Jewish people escape Nazi Germany during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and who was herself imprisoned at the age of 52. She had the same question, as a little girl, whether she would be able to suffer without betraying her Lord Jesus. And one day, she told her father:

*“Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ.”*

... and her wise father replied:

*“Tell me, when you take a train trip from Haarlem to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?”*

*“No, Daddy, you give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train.”*

*“That is right,” he replied, “and so it is with God’s Strength. Our wise Father in Heaven knows when you are going to need things, too. Today you do not need the strength to be a martyr. But as soon as you are called upon for the Honor of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the Strength you need — just in time.”*

*“I took great comfort in my father’s advice,” Corrie told her audience. “And later, I actually did suffer for Jesus in a [Nazi] concentration camp. And God indeed gave me all the courage and power I needed- at that hour.”*

When she told this story, this dear soul was illustrating what Peter was talking about here in **1 Peter 4:12-14**. It is one of the most precious Promises about the Work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And it is one of the greatest *Enticements* we have for seeking Jesus with all our heart, before we come to the end of our lives. And I invite you to read it again with me:

**Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

Now this Promise may be a *repeated* experience in our lives, or it might be the *final* Work of the Holy Spirit, right before we die, the *final* Manifestation of the Spirit's Christ-exalting Power in us as we depart this life. But, the Promise from a God, Who cannot lie, is:

**... you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

Peter said we are "blessed". Well, *when* are we "blessed"? When we are prospering financially? No. When we are healed from cancer? No. When our Trial is over? No. When there is peace all around us? No. *When* did Peter say we are we blessed?

- [When] **you share the sufferings of Christ**
- [When] **you are reviled for the name of Christ**

... *that* is "when" we are "blessed". But *why* are we blessed? Are we blessed simply because we suffer? No. We are blessed *because* the Promise of God is that when genuine believers *do* suffer:

**... the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

... which means that the "Spirit of God", Who is the "Spirit of Glory", will come to you and "rest upon you" in the hour of your Trial.

Now, in context, Peter is discussing here the "Suffering" of *Persecution*. But whether you are suffering from Persecution or Cancer, whether you are suffering the "physical torment" of being beaten or the "heart torment" of a betrayal, the *essential* Temptation is the same:

*Will I turn against Jesus in anger, or will I trust Him?*



So, if you receive your Suffering with the prayer and the hope of magnifying Christ in it, whether it is Persecution or Cancer, you will be “suffering as a *Christian*”, and this Promise will be true for you. Because, in the hour of our Trial, the Temptation that satan is whispering in our ear is:

*“Where is your God? He can’t stop this Persecution, He can’t stop this Cancer. So, what good is He? Where is He?”*

... and, according to this text, the Answer that God Himself will give you in that hour is this:

*“I am right here resting upon you. I am here.”*

Now I realize that talk like this is foreign to the average church member. Because what draws the crowds and sells the books is teaching that God the Spirit will come and cause an earthquake and break the chains and open the prison doors, and set us free! And God has done that in the past, and He *might* do that again for us!

But, He might not. But Peter doesn't promise these “scattered aliens”, nor us, that God will move like that. And Peter doesn't teach that Mankind will evolve into rising above imposing barbaric treatment on other people. But, what the Apostle *does* promise is that when Suffering comes to our door, the Spirit of Glory and of God will rest upon us!

But, as human beings, the Reality is that when the shame and the degradation and misery and filth and ugliness and horror of our Trial is heavy on us, we argue with ourselves and say:

*This is the furthest thing imaginable from Glory! This Trial is not “glorious” at all. How could anybody say this Trial was “glorious”! This Trial is “horrible”. This is ghastly.”*

And that is true. Our Trials *are* horrible. They *are* ghastly. But that's not *all* they are. The Spirit of God will simply *not* allow that *assessment* to be the “last word”. Because Peter tells us right here that He is not only the “Spirit of God”, but He is also the “Spirit of Glory”.

## **The Spirit of glory and of God rests on you**

So, just what does this "Spirit of Glory" actually "do" when He comes to us at the moment of our hardest Trial? And what all is involved in Him "resting on us"?

**1. He is the Spirit of Truth and brings to our minds whatever Truth we need.**

**John 14:16, 17, &26; 15:26; 16:13&14**

**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,**

All the forces of darkness will seek to confuse and obscure the Light of Truth in the hour of our Trial. That's what they do. And that is *all* they do. The voices of the world, the flesh, and the devil are *unified* in seeking to make God look *distant*, and *small*, and completely *ineffective*. That is the Goal of Satan and Sin: to make God look totally *useless* and *worthless* and *irrelevant*. And that means that the Work of the Holy Spirit in that hour, the Work of the Spirit of Truth, is *not* necessarily to "deliver" you *from* the Trial, but to "rest upon you" with *whatever* measure of Truth you will need in order to cause you to know that Jesus is *bigger* than the Trial, so you will remain faithful.

Now the Truth is that only saved people care about being faithful. Lost people, and unsaved pew-sitters, and lukewarm church members couldn't care less about being faithful in the hour of their Trial. All they want is for a "Jesus" or a "lord Krishna" or "Allah" to get them out of their Suffering. And they will be happy to praise his name if He does. And they will curse him to his face if he doesn't. But to a genuine believer, to the soul who has experienced the miracle of the New Birth, Jesus is the Treasure of the Universe, and so, being faithful to Him, even at the hour of great Trial, is more important than even life itself.

2. Jesus said, "When the Spirit of Truth comes . . . He will glorify Me (Jesus)".

**John 16:13&14**

**But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.**

We must remember that the "ground" or the "center" or the "goal" of all Truth that the Spirit brings to us is the "Glory" of Jesus Christ: the "Greatness", and the "Excellence", and the "Beauty", and inherent Worth of Jesus. So, the fundamental *essence* of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit is to *magnify* the Worth and Value of Christ in the human mind and heart. Therefore, in the hour of Trial, as God the Spirit rests upon us, He will simply not *allow* us to forget Jesus. In **Matthew 28:20b**, Jesus Himself said:

**... I am with you *always*, even to the end of the age**

... *always*! And that *includes* the final hour of our Testing. And so, the *primary* Work of the Holy Spirit is to cause believers to remember Jesus, and to see Him with the "eyes" of our hearts (**2 Corinthians 3:17&18; Ephesians 1:17&18**), and then to love what we see, even when we suffer.

**3. As God the Spirit "rests upon you", the Spirit will maintain and enlarge your Love for Christ.**

The Spirit of God does not merely reveal the Truth of Christ, but He *illuminates* to our minds and hearts and souls the Beauty, and the Power, and the Wisdom, and the Love of Christ. The Spirit communicates to our hearts the *preciousness* of Christ. He makes us understand that Jesus is *enough* in the hour of our Trial; that He is *better* than all other loves, wants, and desires. Paul said in **Philippians 3:3**, that all genuine Christians:

... worship *in* the Spirit of God ...

... in other words, it is the Spirit Who gives to our hearts a *sense* of the infinite Worth of Christ. It is He Who *causes* us to comprehend and believe that this “*light momentary affliction*” is *nothing* compared to Jesus.

#### 4. He is “resting on you” as the *Spirit of Glory*.

When Peter said, “**The Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you**”, he was talking about two different things:

1. The Spirit causes us to *comprehend* that any earthly “glory” we are losing through our testing is not worth keeping anyway.
2. The Eternal Glory we are about to gain is *infinitely* better.

God the Holy Spirit is the “imperishable seed” that Peter was talking about in **1 Peter 1:23**, by Whom we were born again. And Peter’s point back there was, when the imperishable Spirit enters us, He brings to us this Conviction:

#### **1 Peter 1:24&25a**

***ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER...***

In the hour of Trial, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Glory, will *cause* us to trust that all the earthly glory we are losing here is not worth keeping anyway, and the Glory we are about to gain is infinitely better. The Spirit of Glory will also cause us to experience the Reality of **1 Peter 5:10&11**:

**After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. To Him *be* dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

As “the Spirit of Glory” rests upon you, He will give you a taste of that “Eternal Glory.” He will communicate to your heart the Truth of verse 10:

- If you are torn, you will be restored to *perfect* Wholeness
- If you are crushed, you will stand in *absolute* Triumph
- If you die in utter weakness, you will live in *unshakeable* Strength
- If you sink in quicksand, you find you are on an *eternal* Foundation

As a believer, and as one who has been “made Righteous in Christ”, You have been called to Eternal Glory in Jesus. And the Work of the Spirit of Glory is to *seal* or *settle* or *confirm* that Hope into your heart. (**Romans 15:13**).

**5. In that hour of Trial, the Holy Spirit will overcome your doubts and give you the Assurance that you need.**

**Romans 8:15-17**

**For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.**

The Spirit of Glory rests upon you, in the midst of the loss of all earthly glory, and testifies to your heart:

“You are an heir of infinite Glory! You belong to Christ. You *will* be glorified with Him. You may be sure of this!”

**6. If the opportunity arises in this Trial to speak for Christ, to either your doctor or your persecutor, the Holy Spirit will bring to your mind what you need to say.**

Jesus said:

**Mark 13:11**

**When they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but *it is the Holy Spirit*.**

The Spirit of Glory and of God will rest upon you. And if, in His Wisdom, He wants you speechless, you won't need to say anything. And if He wants you to speak, He will fill your mouth. Count on that. Trust Him.

**7. Finally, in your hour of Trial, as the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you, He will give you *Himself*.**

And in giving you *Himself*, He will give you the Father and the Son. And as that occurs, in the very moment of your hardest Trial, you will *taste*, you will actually *experience* the reality of the Doctrine of the Trinity the living experience of **2 Corinthians 13:14** that says:

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.**

... in other words, you will personally experience the precious, personal Presence of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Now we need to remember that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are *together*, the one, true, and living God. God is "one" in His Essence, in His Substance, or Nature. But this one God is also *eternally manifested* in three distinct "Persons". And, in God's stead, the Apostle Peter promises us that in the hour of our *hardest* Trial, maybe even your *last* Trial, that as the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon you, you will experience each of these Persons in a real and magnificent way:

- The *Father's* Care and Tenderness for His child.
- The *Savior's* redeeming Love to cover all your sin.
- The *Spirit's* sustaining of Faith so that you taste in that hour the preciousness of the Presence of each Divine Person: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

If God promises in **1 Peter 4:14** that the Spirit of Glory and of God rests upon us with this much personal, precious Helpfulness in the hour of our Trial, would we not want to seek after Him with all of our heart? God has *greater* Grace and *greater* Enjoyments for those who seek Him. Six hundred years before Jesus was born, the "weeping Prophet" cried out, in God's stead:

## **Jeremiah 29:13**

**You will seek Me and find *Me* when you search for Me with all your heart.**

And if we add to the Promise of **1 Peter 4:14**, the *wider* scope of the Spirit's Work in our lives, why would we drift through life seeking so little of Him?

- We know from **John 3:5** that it is “**by**” the Holy Spirit that we were *born again*.
- We know from **1 Corinthians 12:3b** that ... **no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.**
- We know from **Romans 8:13** that only by the Holy Spirit can we “**put to death the deeds of the body**” and live. And without this Work of the Spirit, we will *eternally* perish.
- We know from **2 Thessalonians 2:13** that all our effort to pursue “**the holiness without which no one will see the Lord**” (**Hebrews 12:14**) is only possible because *Sanctification* is “**by the Spirit.**”
- We know from **Ephesians 1:17** that the Holy Spirit is “**the Spirit of Wisdom,**” and that we will be hopelessly foolish in this life without His Ministry. We will literally waste our lives on trifles and trinkets without the Spirit of Wisdom.
- We know from **1 Corinthians 12:7** that “**to each [believer] is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**”
- We know from **Romans 8:11** that “**if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**”

... so, without the Holy Spirit, we have:

- ✓ No New Birth,
- ✓ No Confession of the Lordship of Christ,
- ✓ No Victory over Sin,
- ✓ No progressive Sanctification,
- ✓ No spiritual Wisdom,
- ✓ No spiritual Gifts,
- ✓ No Resurrection from the dead.

So, why would we *not* seek such a Person, and why would we *not* desire the “*fullness of an experience*” with this Person? We must remember that God the Holy Spirit *is* a *Person*, not a mere “force”. We know this from **John 14:16**, where Jesus said:

**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;**

... *Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, to be with you forever!*”

Now it is important to understand that Jesus is our *first* Helper. But Jesus said that the Father will send us “*another*” Helper. Not “a” Helper, but “*another*” Helper. So, even as the Apostles knew Jesus *personally* as their *original* Helper in the flesh as Jesus walked this earth with them, Jesus tells them here that they will also come to know this “other” Helper when Jesus ascends into Heaven.

Now today, since we have never literally connected with Jesus as an earthly Man, we “know” Jesus today exclusively “by” or “through” this “other Helper” as He illumines our minds through His Word. And this Helper is *not* a mere *human* Person, but One Who is actually the *Spirit of God*.

From our New Birth (that occurred at a specific point in time) to being a “new creation” in Eternity Future, we owe *everything* “Good” that comes into our lives to the wise *Planning* of God the Father, the merciful *Purchase* of God the Son, and the transforming *Power* of God the Spirit. So, why would we not seek Him with all our heart and all our strength?

Now some would say, “*But we don’t need to seek after God the Holy Spirit, because we already have Him. All believers have the Holy Spirit*”? And that is true. **Romans 8:9b** says:

**... if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.**

... so, yes, *all* genuine believers already have the Holy Spirit. But we have the Holy Spirit in the same way that we also have Faith, and in the same way we also have Grace. And yet, talked to already saved people and said:



## Matthew 6:30b

### ... you of little faith.

... and the Bible teaches clearly that we are to "grow" in Grace and in the knowledge of God.

So, what we must understand is that to have faith is to *trust* in Jesus. And to trust in Jesus is to *treasure* Jesus. And even though it is true at the very moment of our conversion, we have to grow into it in the sense of our understanding and comprehension of what God has already done in our lives. And we also grow in our application of this already true Reality, and we grow in our recognition of it and our appreciation of it.

So, yes, we already have the Spirit. And, yes, we already have Faith, even as we already have Grace. But as believers, we *grow* in our *understanding* of what we already have, and we *grow* in our ability to not only *appreciate* and *value* what we already have, but we also grow in our ability to *utilize* what we already have. So, even though the Spirit is present in our lives, ever working to sanctify us and keep us saved, we may only have a partial *experience* of His Presence.

And that is why, over and over again in the New Testament, people, *who are already saved*, are said to be "filled with the Spirit" or *commanded* to "be filled". And this has bewildered many people through the years. The confusion lies in the fact that we try to "put a square peg in a round hole", and we try to use carnal wisdom to understand spiritual Truths.

It is common today for people to think of "being filled with the Spirit" in the same way as a drinking glass is *filled* with water. But that is not what the Bible teaches. So, due to a wrong understanding of what it means to be "filled with the Spirit", well-meaning people have developed various Teachings (that are all Man-made) about how already saved people can become "filled" and why.

John Wesley began this false Teaching back in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and he called it "The Second Blessing". This false Teaching says that *already saved people* may experience a "second Work of Grace" *after being Justified*, whereby God the Holy Spirit comes to them to "fill and empower them". This Man-made Teaching of the Second Blessing is the "Cornerstone Doctrine" of the entire Pentecostal/Charismatic/ Full Gospel Movement.

The Reality is that without God the Holy Spirit doing a sovereign and internal Work inside the lost person (*before* he wants it and even *before* he asks or seeks for it), nobody would get saved in the first place. So, the Holy Spirit is very busy at work in a person's life while he is still lost.

But being "filled with the Spirit" should be understood as being *controlled* by the Spirit, or being *empowered* or *dominated* or *led* by the Spirit, rather than as a glass being filled with water. And being led and empowered by the Spirit is something that gets *stronger* and more *powerful* as the believer grows in his understanding and obedience.

So, it isn't that believers are "filled with the Spirit" *after* we are saved; that is ridiculous. The Holy Spirit comes to us as lost people, way *before* we ever trusted in Christ. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit that drags us to Jesus in the first place. Like He did at Creation, God the Spirit takes the spoken Word of God and powerfully uses it to remove the veil that is over our eyes so we can behold the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. And as we are gifted to "see" Jesus, it is the Spirit Who *destroys* our arrogance and self-righteousness, and *humbles* us and *empowers* us to "see" ourselves as nothing but lost and fallen depraved creatures of the dirt who are in jeopardy of our souls.

It is God the Spirit that then brings genuine Conviction to us and grants to us both the Power and Desire to repent, and then gives to us the Gift of Saving Faith where we can now trust in this Jesus that our eyes behold. So, God the Spirit is powerfully and effectually at work in our lives way *before* we are justified.

But we are led more *precisely*, and we are empowered to obey *better*, and we are able to *trust* better, and to *love* better, and to see Jesus in His Glory *more clearly* as we are progressively sanctified.

And this is *why* people, who were *already* justified and *already* filled in the Bible are said to be "filled again", or *commanded* to be "filled again".<sup>1</sup> For example, Paul told the *already justified* believers in the Church at Ephesus:

### **Ephesians 5:18**

**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,**

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<sup>1</sup> One of the best illustrations of this is found in the people, who were initially filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in the Upper Room in **The Acts 2:4** and yet they were filled again with the Spirit in **The Acts 4:31**.

Grow in your Faith and in Grace, and *grow* in your *Trusting*, and in your *Believing*, and in your *Depending*, and in your *Obeying*, and in your *Serving*, and in your *Treasuring* of Jesus. That is what it means to be “filled with the Spirit”. And that is also why, already saved people, are told:

- ✓ Don't *quench* the Spirit (**1 Thessalonians 5:19**)
- ✓ Don't *grieve* the Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30**)

... it is because we are to *ongoingly* “seek after” the Spirit.

Okay, so just *how* can I seek after the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit of Glory and God will rest upon me? There are at least four *interlocking ways* that the Bible describes seeking after the Spirit.

### **1. *Meditate* on what God has said in the Spirit-inspired Scriptures.**

God has established a “Life-giving connection” between His Spirit and His Word which is the Product of the Spirit. Jesus said in **John 6:63**:

**It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.**

... or consider the parallel between **Ephesians 5:18&19** and **Colossians 3:16**:

- **Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;**
- **Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**

The Command to “**Let the Word of Christ richly dwell within you**” stands in the place of the Command “**Be filled with the Spirit**”, because *having the Word of Christ richly dwell within us* is the way we are *filled*

*with the Spirit.* So,, if you want to be “filled” with God’s Spirit, pursue the Word of God richly dwelling within you.

## **2. *Believe* what you hear and see in the Word.**

In **Galatians 3:5** Paul asked:

**So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

So, the Holy Spirit is supplied *to* us and works powerfully *in* us as we *hear* the Word with *faith*, as we *believe* it.

- Stephen was described as a man “**full of faith and of the Holy Spirit**” (**The Acts 6:5**).
- Barnabas was “**a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith**” (**The Acts 11:24**).

Those pairings of “faith and Spirit” are *not* coincidental. They serve to define each other. And then **Galatians 3:14** says that we:

**... receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

... so, as we meditate on the Word of God, faith comes by that Word (**Romans 10:17**), and *in, by, and through* this faith, we *experience* the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit. So, we seek after the Holy Spirit by meditating on the Word, and believing what we hear and see in the Word.

## **3. *Hold fast in Obedience* to what you have heard and believed.**

One of the disciples asked Jesus in **John 14:22**:

**Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?"**

... and Jesus answered him:

**John 14:23**

**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.**

For those who love Jesus and keep His Word, there is a special *intimacy* of Love that is given by the Father. And the Father and the Son draw close with *unusual* fullness and sweetness. And they do so “by the Spirit”.

So, if anyone keeps God’s Word, if anyone *holds fast* to it as a Treasure, in humble and joyful Obedience, he will not quench the Spirit, or grieve the Spirit, but will know the Fullness and Sweetness of Fellowship with the Father and the Son “by” the Spirit.

#### **4. *Desire* the Spirit.**

In all this meditating and believing and obeying, we must *desire* all that God is for us and has for us in Him. This is what it means to *thirst* for Christ.

#### **John 7:37b, 39**

**... If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.... But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**

... so, as we thirst for Jesus, we are seeking the Holy Spirit. As the Psalms teach:

#### **Psalm 36:8b**

**... You give them to drink from the river of Your delights**

#### **Psalm 42:1&2**

**As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God?**

#### **Psalm 63:1**

**O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

So, the Promise of God to you in your Trial is:

**the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**

... and that will prove to be worth *more* than all the money in the world at that hour. So, don't wait to see His Fullness, seek after Him!

Remember, this is your Father! And His greatest Gift to you is *Himself and His Son*, through the Spirit! And we will experience this more and more as we meditate, believe, obey, and desire Him more than life itself.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.