

# The Powerful Presence of the Holy Spirit

## 1 Corinthians 12:28-31

Pentecostalism began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. The Charismatic movement embraces some of the tenants of Pentecostalism, but does not identify with any particular denomination. In general, Pentecostals and charismatics believe in a second working of the Holy Spirit for the purposes of presence and power.

Since the rise of Pentecostalism to today, only some 120 years, there has been no other portion of the Church that has grown faster, particularly overseas. Whenever you hear of the growth of the Church in Africa, it is largely the Pentecostal and Charismatic arms that are being spoken of.

According to the Pew Research Center, Pentecostals and Charismatic Christians numbered over **584 million** or a quarter of the world's **2 billion** Christians in 2011.

John Huggett, an Anglican minister and a member of All Saints Church, Crowborough, East Sussex, writes:

Prophecy, tongues and interpretation, words of knowledge and wisdom, discerning spirits, an inrush of faith, miracles and healing gifts are all valuable. Though some Christians especially are given these, all are encouraged to seek them (1 Corinthians 14:1).

As well as being an inner working of the Holy Spirit, baptism in the Spirit is an outward manifestation into the realm of that which can be seen or heard. It is often accompanied by physical manifestations such as great heat, the sensation of a current of power passing through the body, a feeling of intense joy, sometimes the healing of a physical ailment, and frequently speaking in tongues. ... there is a vivid awareness of the immediate presence of God, and many find that their baptism in the Spirit marks a turning-point in their Christian lives, initiating a greater concern with spiritual matters and deeper Christian commitment.

Faith Church and the PCA, as a denomination, are what you would call – non-charismatic, or cessationist. That means that we are not seeking what are commonly called, the charismatic manifestations of the Spirit. Many of those gifts are referred to by Paul in I Corinthians 12.

Paul's main point in I Corinthians 12 is to not let the gifts be causes for division. He wants the Christians to demonstrate love and unity with one another. Every Christian

today, at some point, must wrestle with the general validity of the Charismatic movement.

Do I need a second “baptism” of the Holy Spirit?  
Should I be seeking the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit?  
Am I quenching the work of the Holy Spirit in my life?  
Should I be a charismatic?

I am going to structure this sermon under three primary questions:

1. Do I yearn for presence of the Holy Spirit?
2. What should I expect the presence of the Holy Spirit to look like?
3. What are the means by which I gain more of the presence of the Spirit?

Do I yearn for the presence of the Holy Spirit?

One of the driving forces for the charismatic movement is the hunger and thirst to experience God more deeply. There is a thirst in the Christian for more of the presence of God. This is a good desire. I would even say that to have little or no hunger for God’s presence is a strong indication that you are probably not saved at all.

**Psalm 42:1-2** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?<sup>1</sup>

**Psalm 63:1** O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

**John 7:37-39** <sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as<sup>1</sup> the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" <sup>39</sup> Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Some of the most zealous and sincere believers I have ever known have been charismatics. It is hard to be critical of someone who exceeds you in spiritual fervor.

Paul criticized his fellow unsaved Jews, not because they lacked zeal, but because their zeal was misplaced.

**Romans 10:2** <sup>2</sup> I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

I am going to argue something similar of my charismatic and Pentecostal brothers and sisters.

I applaud their zeal. I might even say that their zeal challenges me.

But I do not believe the expression of their zeal is according to the truth of God's Word. Nor would I encourage anyone to travel down the road that the Pentecostals have led us. I say this with strong conviction. But I also say it with great caution. I do not in any way want to be a cause of stumbling to anyone who feels affinity to the Charismatic movements.

I also believe that non-charismatics can use their denial of the tenants of Pentecostalism as a screen to hide their relative lack of fervor. "I am just not into strong expressions of emotion." "I love God in a different way." Maybe. But maybe you just don't really love God all that much.

After we lay out in greater detail the next point, you will be in a better place to search your heart: Am I truly yearning for the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life? Do I rely upon and yearn deeply for the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and help me to know God?

Is my yearning reflected in a fervent prayer life?

Far too often, I must confess, my yearning is not what it ought to be.

## 2. What should I expect the presence of the Holy Spirit to look like?

According to Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement, sincere Christians are in desperate need of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Working of the Holy Spirit. The first work of the Holy Spirit occurs when a person first believes and is saved.

But there is need for a second working of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this is called being "baptized with the Holy Spirit." The Christian needs this Holy Spirit baptism to overcome sin, to have power for witnessing, and to be effective in Christian worship and service.

Without this second work, the Christian will continue to be defeated in his Christian walk, and he will be ineffective as a witness for Jesus Christ. Baptism with the Spirit will provide power, power that was otherwise unknown to the believer.

Along with this increase of power, the Holy Spirit will also grant various outward and visible manifestations of his presence. These manifestations are the gifts, charisma, of the Spirit. Some of these gifts are listed for us here in I Corinthians 12.

Look at I Corinthians 12:7-10. (Nine specific gifts are listed.)

### **1 Corinthians 12:7-10**

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

8 To one is given through the Spirit  
the utterance of wisdom, and to another  
the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,  
9 to another faith by the same Spirit,  
to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,  
10 to another the working of miracles,  
to another prophecy,  
to another the ability to distinguish between spirits,  
to another various kinds of tongues,  
to another the interpretation of tongues.

Of these nine gifts, how many are we actively exercising here at Faith Presbyterian Church?

Depending on how you define them, it is possible that the utterance of wisdom and the utterance of knowledge and the gift of faith are continuing gifts for today.

But the gifts of healing, working of miracles, the ability to distinguish between spirits, prophecy, tongues and the interpretation of tongues are all gifts that we would argue have ceased in the church.

Paul gives a second, somewhat overlapping, list in vv. 28-29.

<sup>28</sup> And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

We would acknowledge teachers, and those with the gift of helping, and administrating. But we would exclude apostles, and prophets, and those with the gift of miracles and healing. And again, those with the gift of tongues.

To make the claim that so many spiritual gifts present in the New Testament era are no longer present today merits some explanation, especially if we aspire to be biblical.

Paul makes clear in this passage that not every believer will have all of the gifts. The body is supposed to function as a body and to be interdependent upon one another.

<sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

<sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

<sup>31</sup> But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

If Paul argues that not all Christians will have all the gifts, he also wants every Christian to desire the gifts, especially those gifts that are most beneficial to the growth of the whole body of Christ.

Paul exhorts the Corinthians to “desire the higher gifts”.

How can we possibly follow Paul’s command if the higher gifts “those of apostleship and prophecy” are no longer in existence?

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements arose out of a yearning to experience the fullness of the Spirit and to return the Church to its New Testament expression.

They believed that the reason that the Church was not experiencing the fullness of the gifts described in I Corinthians was due to its refusal to believe in and encourage them. One reason for this, it was argued, was that the Church leadership was more interested in its own power and control than it was in the uncontrollable power of the Spirit.

The established Church had done exactly what Paul had commanded them not to do: **1 Thessalonians 5:19-20** <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies,

**1 Corinthians 14:39** <sup>39</sup> So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

Rather than continue in the ways of modern religion, this new movement would return to the spiritual life of the New Testament. The common experiences of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts and in the book of Corinthians would once again become the norm among God’s people.

So, under the general question “What should we expect the presence of the Holy Spirit to look like?” we need to more specifically ask, “What were these gifts that Paul lists here in Corinthians?”. And then, “Are the present day experiences of the charismatic movement consistent with what was occurring in the New Testament?”

In my opinion, if the gifts that existed in Corinth continue to be in existence today, then it is the duty of every Christian to follow Paul’s commands to seek them in our lives. No Christian is to experience all of them, but we should all desire them.

But, if the present expression of the spiritual gifts are NOT identical to the gifts in Acts and Corinthians then to seek them is fraught with danger, and should not be encouraged.

I am not persuaded that what is occurring today, whatever it is, is what occurred during the time of the Apostles.

My hope is to encourage people to see the clear differences, and then, let them evaluate for themselves whether they should be seeking manifestations of the Spirit that are new and different.

I regularly seek fresh and more powerful workings of the Holy Spirit in my life. But I do not seek the charismatic gifts.

Let's begin with the gifts of healing, miracles and prophecy.  
Paul lists these gifts in vv. 9-10.

to another gifts of healing  
by the one Spirit,  
10 to another the working of miracles,  
to another prophecy,

But if we compare the gifts themselves with Paul's list at the end of the chapter, we can see that the gifts were very much connected with offices in the Church.

<sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

<sup>30</sup> Do all possess gifts of healing?

For instance, Paul was an apostle. But apostleship was not itself a gift. Rather, it was an office that necessarily came with gifts.

Paul called himself an apostle abnormally born, because normally an apostle had to have walked with Jesus during his earthly ministry and been a witness to his bodily resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22)

Paul was not a disciple during Jesus' earthly ministry. And when he did see the resurrected Christ, it was later than the other apostles.

Apostles were also teachers.

And apostles were also prophets.

A prophet was not necessarily an apostle, but an apostle was a prophet. Why?

Because apostles received the direct word of God for God's people.

They did not always predict the future, but they did receive direct knowledge from God.

Peter was given direct insight into the hearts of Ananias and Saphira. That was prophetic insight.

The Apostle John was given the book of Revelation, which declares itself to be prophecy. Paul received personal and miraculous guidance from the Holy Spirit on his Missionary Journeys.

It is also clear that when God appointed someone to be an apostle, he also gave them the gifts of healing and miracles. There was no such thing as an apostle who did not have the gift of healing and the gift of miracles.

Paul makes this clear when he writes: **2 Corinthians 12:12** <sup>12</sup> The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.

Although the apostles did not completely eradicate all sickness and raise every dead person, their abilities were not rare and sporadic.

**Acts 3:6-8** <sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" <sup>7</sup> And he took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. <sup>8</sup> And leaping up he stood and began to walk, and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

**Acts 5:14-16** <sup>14</sup> And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, <sup>15</sup> so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. <sup>16</sup> The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Paul certainly possessed the gifts of healing and miracles.

**Acts 28:8-9** <sup>8</sup> It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. <sup>9</sup> And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured.

**Acts 20:9-12** <sup>9</sup> And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. <sup>10</sup> But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." <sup>11</sup> And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. <sup>12</sup> And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

What is clear from this partial summary is that those who were apostles possessed gifts of healing and miracles and prophecy. This does not mean that they were at every moment receiving revelation, or healing sicknesses, or casting out demons or raising people from the dead. But it was obvious to the whole church that these men were different from other members of the Church. They had specific gifts that accompanied their apostleship.

Do we see such gifts upon individuals today? I humbly ask for you to find such men. Even those who profess to have the gift of healing, can only claim a very small percentage of "true healings."

I am not saying that God does not ever miraculously heal – apart from ordinary means of medicine. I believe he does. I believe that we are called to pray for healing. I believe we are even told to seek the prayers of the elders for healing.

But I know of no man who possesses the gift of healing like we see on the pages of the New Testament.

So, if there is someone out there who has some “lesser” gift of healing and miracles let us still acknowledge that what he possesses is something other than the New Testament gift. Let’s not be deceived into thinking that what is occurring today – whatever it may be – is a return to the New Testament era. It is not.

I will make a similar argument when we get to chapter 14 concerning the gifts of prophecy and tongues.

Not every prophecy was written down and included in the canon of Scripture. But the NT prophets spoke the Word of God. They did not simply get impressions. They did not receive partially true prophecies. Their prophecies were not something less than the authoritative Word of God. What they spoke was just as authoritative as the Scriptures are to us.

The early Pentecostals saw their gift this way. Prophecy was new revelation with as much authority as the Bible.

But most of the charismatics today recognize the necessity of placing the authority of Scripture above that of prophecy. They thankfully accept that the Bible is without error and the infallible source of guidance and truth for our salvation.

But during the time of the apostles, the Bible was not completed. Prophets received “new revelation” from God. It was authoritative revelation. And some of those prophecies became our New Testament.

But God is no longer giving New Revelation. We have the Final Word of God on the pages of the New Testament. It is not lacking. We are not missing some of God’s revealed will.

To “despise prophecies” is not to despise new revelation, but rather to despise the truth of the prophecies that God has already given to us in the Scripture. Do not despise the Bible?



Charismatics still want to have a place for “new prophecies”. But since they thankfully accept the primacy of Scripture, they make an argument that some of the prophecy of the NT did not rise to the level of authoritative Scripture. It was from God, but it contained error as well. Agabus was an example of such prophecy – generally right, but also containing errors in the details.

I deal with this extensively in my sermon in that section of the book of Acts. The final conclusion is this: There is no evidence that the writers of the New Testament believed in some form of lesser prophecy. There are only true prophets and false prophets in Scripture.

**2 Peter 1:20-21** <sup>20</sup> knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**Revelation 1:3** <sup>3</sup> Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

So, to redefine the Bible regarding prophecy so as to fit with our modern experience of the gift of prophecy is all backwards. It would be far better if charismatics would simply accept that what is occurring today is not what occurred in the NT era. It is something entirely new.

But that is exactly what they do NOT want to do. The whole point is to connect their present experience with what occurred in the early church.

The clear truth is that the ministries of apostles and prophets were “foundational” for the church.

**Ephesians 2:20** <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

With the foundation having been built, their offices and their accompanying gifts have ceased.

But, while genuine apostles and prophets have ceased, the existence of false prophets have not.

**2 Peter 2:1** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

**1 John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

And, according to Deut. 13, it is not out of the question that false prophets possess the ability to themselves do miracles.

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5** "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup> and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' <sup>3</sup> you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>4</sup> You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. <sup>5</sup> But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil<sup>1</sup> from your midst.

Again, I am not judging every Christian who claims to have the present gift of prophecy. But, if they want to say that they are returning to the New Testament, then they need to display an authoritative Word of God.

What is happening in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements is something "other" than what occurred in the NT. This alone should give people pause.

But if we should not expect a return to the New Testament Era, what should we expect from the working of the Holy Spirit?

We should expect the Holy Spirit to increase our hunger and thirst for the prophecies already given – namely, the Bible.

To seek new revelation from God is to necessarily take from the revelation already given. Rather than seeking new revelation, God's people are called to diligently search the Scriptures and in them to learn to know Jesus and walk in obedience to his will. In every

movement of man to know God, he is utterly dependent upon the Holy Spirit working to illumine his mind to see the truth objectively laid down in the Scriptures.

Greater working of the Holy Spirit should result in a deeper and more fervent love of the Bible.

WCF 1.6 The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.(1) Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word:(2)

The Holy Spirit was active in revealing the Word of God.  
He continues to be active in illuminating that same Word in the hearts of men.

It is also true that the Holy Spirit is the Agent by which men experience salvation. Jesus purchases our redemption, but the Holy Spirit applies it to our hearts. We should expect that with greater workings of the Spirit in our hearts that we should experience a greater love of true righteousness and love.

Although, at the moment that a person is united to Jesus Christ, the entirety of the blessings of redemption are rightly his, he does not experience all of those blessings at once. He may be given a new heart, but this work of redemption is not yet complete in him. And if he is to make progress in sanctification, he needs to be “further sanctified” by fresh applications of the Holy Spirit to his heart.

WCF 13.1 They, who are once effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are **further sanctified really and personally**, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection.(1) by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them;(2) the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed,(3) and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified,(4) and they more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces,(5) to the practice of true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.(6)

Although the Spirit produces genuine holiness in every true believer, the struggle for complete holiness continues throughout our journey in this world. The battle for sanctification is never over in this life; nor will it ever be rendered easy in our hearts. There is no “2<sup>nd</sup> Blessing” that will entirely overcome all sin.

WCF 13.2 This sanctification is throughout in the whole man,(1) yet imperfect in this life; there abideth still some remnants of corruption in every part:(2) whence ariseth a continual and irreconcilable war; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.(3)

So, true Christians may expect to endure seasons where the strength of sin in them appears more powerful than the strength of the Holy Spirit. But, all who are united to Jesus Christ will, in time, be enabled to overcome sin and grow in grace.

WCF 13.3 In which war, although the remaining corruption, for a time, may much prevail,(1) yet, through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome;(2) and so, the saints grow in grace, (3) perfecting holiness in the fear of God.(4)

What should we expect with fresh workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

- A greater love for and dependence upon the Word of God.
- A growth in our hatred of our sin and love of God's righteousness.
- A bitter war within our hearts throughout our entire lives.

3.. What are the means by which I gain more of the presence of the Spirit?

Christians are to make use of the "ordinary means of grace" to experience more of the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.

WCF 14.1 The grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls,(1) is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts,(2) and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word:(3) by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened.(4)

Since, it was the Church's lack of faith that prevented her from experiencing the powerful presence of the Spirit, the importance of faith is essential if one wants to experience the fullness of the Spirit.

But the very nature of faith has been altered by the charismatics. And we must expose this if we are going to live the lives of faith that God intends.

At the beginning point, faith looks very much the same for a reformed Christian and a charismatic Christian. We both are directed to the finished work of Jesus Christ for salvation. We are called to believe the Promises of God's Word, primarily for forgiveness from sin, and cleansing from its stain. And power to overcome our slavery to sin.

But after this common beginning our paths diverge.

As a Reformed Christian, we are continually seeking further workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives. But as we are seeking these further workings, we are also “waiting”. The Spirit is always faithful to fulfill his promises to us, but He does not often work as quickly, or in the ways, that we might like. Much of our faith is continuing to believe God’s promises and continuing to seek him in the means of grace, even while our present experience is less than we might like.

But not so for the charismatic. The charismatic assumes that God will immediately work in the heart of the believer. The only thing that is preventing this greater work is the lack of faith in the heart of the Christian. If the Christian would only “believe” (implied: more strongly, more purely) then God would pour out increased power.

This is often convenient for the charismatic. If God does not heal, or does not immediately overcome sin, then the cause is always our lack of faith. In a strange way, faith is no longer in the promise of God, but rather circles around and trusts in itself.

When faith is truly present, according to the charismatic, God works immediately. But he not only works to help the believer overcome sin, he also gives some outwardly visible sign that He is indeed working.

If the charismatic ever wonders if the Spirit is continuing to be present, he only needs to look to the outward manifestations of the Spirit’s presence.

The most typical outward manifestation is speaking in tongues. I will deal extensively with tongues in chapter 14. But here you need to see how faith can be altered in the charismatic view.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

For the charismatic, it is the visible sign of speaking in tongues that assures him that he has experienced this second more powerful working of the Spirit. Faith is no longer in the unseen promises of God’s Word so much as it is in what can be seen, the ability to speak in tongues or experience miracles.

So, the charismatic at the same time places too much weight upon faith and then removes the need for ongoing faith in the promises of God’s word altogether.

I will use my mother in law, who passed away with cancer as an example. Some of her charismatic family members, during her sickness rightly wanted her to seek the Lord for healing. But when she was not experiencing healing, they could only see that this was due to her lack of faith. If she had more faith, she would then be healed.

Because she was not healed, she lacked faith for healing. The problem with this is that anyone who knew Brenda, could daily see that she was a woman of deep and abiding faith. She always believed that God could heal her. But her faith was not simply in the healing. She faced death, all the way to the end, with tremendous faith that inspired all who knew her.

She continued to trust God as her Savior and healer, even while she was not experiencing healing. That is true faith. She lived by faith to the last beating of her heart.

The charismatic has altered the nature of faith.  
True faith can be mixed with unbelief.  
True faith continues in the absence of any present experience.  
True faith is placed in the person of Christ and in his promises to all who hope in him.

So, without judging individuals within the charismatic movement, many of which I am sure have surpassed me in godliness, I am convinced that the movement as a whole is an aberration.

Let me explain that word.

a departure from what is normal, usual, or expected, typically one that is unwelcome.

When the Roman Catholic Church departed from the Gospel, the Reformers brought about a necessary correction. The Reformation was needed. It was a return to what the Bible taught concerning Justification by Faith Alone.

So, Reformation – good.

But if the recognition of a problem may have been accurate leading up to the charismatic movement – there was a lack of hunger for the presence of the Holy Spirit – the solution of the charismatic movement was not good. It led the Church in a direction that should be seen as unwelcome.

I do not know what to think of the 500 million charismatics in the Church today. It is not my place to sort out those questions. I have enough trouble of my own, trying to fight against my own sin and walk with God daily.

But I am Reformed, not because I do not want more of the Spirit in my life. I must certainly do.

The Reformed Faith challenges me to yearn for more of the powerful presence of the Spirit.

The Reformed Faith lays out the right expectations for the further working of the Spirit: a deeper love of God's Word, and a continual striving to defeat sin and love God in his holiness.

And the Reformed Faith encourages the right means by which pursue more of the Spirit: the ordinary means of grace – the Word, Sacraments, and prayer.

I am often discouraged by what I see in the American Church.

I absolutely believe that we are in need of revival.

Continuing to wait upon God, when His powerful presence is not always evident is humbling.

May God give us grace to continue.

**Hebrews 10:35-39** <sup>35</sup> Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup> For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; <sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.