

BUILT UP BY THE SPIRIT

- A. Introduction: Eph 1:19,20--Paul prayed for Christians that we would know the exceeding greatness of God's power in us. This power is the same power that raised Christ from the dead, the Holy Spirit. We are discussing the Holy Spirit in us so we can learn to cooperate with Him as He works in us.
1. The night before Jesus was crucified He told His disciples that He was soon going to leave them and return to His Father's home. He assured them they wouldn't be left helpless because the Father was going to send another like Himself, the Holy Spirit. Jesus revealed that the Holy Spirit would indwell them and be to them all that He had been while He was with them. John 14:16,17 26; 16:7,13-15
    - a. Three days later, the resurrected Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together. Using the Old testament Scriptures, He explained what had happened over the previous few days and why. Through His death as the sinless Lamb of God He had offered the perfect sacrifice for sin making it possible to remove sin from all who believe on Him. Luke 24:44-48
      1. As witnesses of these things, the disciples were to go into the world and proclaim repentance and remission of sins. Jesus breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Ghost and they were born of the spirit, born from above, or born again. John 20:19-22; John 3:3,5
      2. The Holy Spirit, through the Word of God Jesus shared with them, regenerated their dead human spirits and they were transformed from sinners into sons of God. John 1:12,13
    - b. Jesus spent forty more days with His disciples, instructing them concerning the kingdom of God. Just before He returned to Heaven, He told them to remain in Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Ghost and received power to be His witnesses. Acts 1:1-8
      1. Ten days later, on the Feast of Pentecost, they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:1-4
      2. Subsequently, the disciples followed Jesus' instructions and went out to proclaim the good news of remission of sins through faith in Christ.
    - c. As we read through the book of Acts (the record of their activities as they went out in the power of the Holy Ghost) we see that their converts, like themselves, had two encounters with the Holy Spirit. They were born of the Spirit and then baptized with the Holy Spirit.
      1. The baptism in the Holy Spirit was accompanied by various supernatural demonstrations with speaking in other tongues being the one common to each recorded instance.
      2. Everything written in the epistles about the Holy Spirit in us was written to people who were both born of and baptized in the Holy Spirit. There was no controversy over these issues yet.
    - d. Because there are many varying ideas about what it does and doesn't mean to be born of the Spirit and baptized in the Holy Spirit, we're taking some time to sort this out as part of our discussion of becoming aware of the greatness of the power that is in us.
  2. Rather than approaching this subject from the standpoint of what one denomination says verse another, we're looking at it in terms of the overall plan of God — His plan to have a family of holy, righteous sons and daughters with whom He can dwell on this earth forever. Eph 1:4,5; Isa 45:18; Rev 21:3; etc.
    - a. God's creation was damaged and the plan taken off track when man sinned. The Lord is working to restore His original purpose through redemption, His plan to deliver from sin and corruption all who bow their knee to Jesus as Savior and Lord and transform them into holy, righteous sons.
      1. Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-30--When Peter preached his first public sermon following being baptized in the Holy Spirit, he quoted the Prophet Joel to explain what was happening. In the last days God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh. The last days are the days leading up to the completion of the plan of redemption, the coming of the Lord to cleanse the earth and establish His kingdom on earth (the family home).
      2. The Holy Spirit has come to carry out the process of transforming sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God. He is the performer of the Godhead. He brings to pass in our lives what Jesus provided through the Cross when we believe the Word of God.

- B. The epistles were written in the context of the Book of Acts. They were written to and by people born of and baptized in the Spirit and who spoke or prayed in other tongues. Consider Jude's epistle.
1. Jude was a younger brother of James and both were half brothers of Jesus. (Other children were born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. Matt 13:55)
    - a. Jude didn't believe that Jesus was the Christ (the Messiah) during His ministry. Mark 6:3
      1. However, he was with the disciples in the upper room where they congregated, so he must have been converted after the resurrection. Acts 1:13
        2. He would have been among those gathered together when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. We can presume that he spoke in tongues because Acts 2:4 says all of them did.
    - b. Jude 3,4; 17-19--Jude wrote his epistle to urge believers to contend for the faith because false teachers were threatening the church. He reminded his readers this is what the apostles predicted. Both Paul and Peter warned that false teachers would invade the church before the Lord's return (in the last days). Acts 20:28-30; I Tim 4:1,2; II Tim 3:1-5; 13; II Pet 2:1
      1. Jude 20-23--Jude gave his readers specific instructions as to what they should do. There's much we could say, but note one point in his instructions to his readers.
        2. Jude 20--He told them to pray in the Holy Ghost. Praying in the Holy Ghost or in the Spirit means praying in other tongues. Paul defined it as praying in other tongues. I Cor 14:14,15
    - c. Tongues is a language not known to the one doing the speaking. It's supernatural because the Holy Spirit gives the speaker words which he then speaks out. Acts 2:4--They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. The Greek word is *logos* which means something said, or words.
      1. That's what happened on the Day of Pentecost. A multitude of visitors from many nations with differing dialects had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost.
      2. Acts 2:6-11--These visitors heard fishermen from Galilee speak languages unknown to them. When questioned about it, Peter specifically said: This is the work of the Holy Ghost.
    - d. Back to Jude. Jude told his readers (in the context of conditions present in the days before the Lord's return) to build themselves up on their faith by praying in the Holy Ghost.
      1. Build up in the Greek is made of two words, to build upon. The root word means to build a house or building (Matt 7:24,26). When used figuratively it refers to building up Christians.
  2. It's the same word Paul used when he described one of the effects of praying in other tongues. It edifies or builds up the speaker. I Cor 14:4
    2. Rom 8:29--God's plan for His family is that we be conformed to the image of Christ or be built up into the image of Christ. This means we become like Jesus in character and power, holiness and love. We could do an entire series on this topic. But consider several points relevant to our discussion.
      - a. Being conformed to the image of Christ is a process that begins when we're born of the Holy Spirit and our spirit is made alive with eternal life. It will be completed when our bodies are glorified (made immortal and incorruptible) at the rapture and resurrection of the dead. Phil 3:20,21
      - b. In this life, we're instructed to let the inward changes increasing show up on the outside of us as we take on Christlike thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors.
        1. The Holy Spirit works in us as we believe and obey the Word of God. That's how we were born again and that's how we're progressively conformed to the image of Christ in this life.
        2. II Cor 3:18--And all of us, as with unveiled faces [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in every increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. (Amp)
    - c. Building on the foundation of our faith in Christ and being built up into the image of Christ is a theme we see over and over in the epistles. I Cor 3:10,12,14; Eph 2:20; Col 2:7; etc.
      1. Paul wrote that God has given ministry gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) to the church for several purposes, one of which is to edify or build up the body of Christ (corporately and individually) through sharing the Word of God. Eph 4:11,12; v13--until we

“reach full manhood, and that full measure of development found in Christ” (Goodspeed).

2.

Paul wrote these words to some churches he founded that were getting into error. Gal 4:19--

My dear children—you for whom I am again enduring a mother’s pains, till a likeness of Christ shall have been formed in you (20<sup>th</sup> Cent), outwardly expressed in you (Wuest).

3. The Holy Spirit’s number one goal in you is to build you up into conformity to Christ. Praying in other tongues is a vital part of the process. The unChristlike “stuff” in us has to go. But often, we don’t see it, or if we do see it, we don’t know how to get rid of it

a. Rom 8:26--The Holy Spirit is in us to help us to pray (when we don’t know what or how to pray) with groaning which cannot be uttered in articulate speech (things we don’t have words for).

1. For example, you may believe that your greatest need is for doors of ministry to open up to you. So you pray: God open doors for me. Help me to be patient until you promote me.

2. However, God knows what you need most is to deal with your pride and your unkind treatment of others. But you don’t see it, so you can’t pray about it.

b. When you pray in tongues (or a language you don’t understand) the Holy Spirit can by pass your intellect (and unrenewed mind) and pray perfect, effective prayers through you. He can expose in a gentle, loving way the issues you need to deal with by His power. And He can help you pray in a way that facilitates the needed changes.

C. We need to take a brief side journey. Possibly you’re thinking: Doesn’t the Bible say that not everyone can speak in tongues and that tongues will cease? Therefore, speaking in tongues isn’t for us today.

1. This is where understanding how to read the Bible is so important. Both statements are indeed found in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor 12:30; 13:8). But they’re not independent statements, they’re part of a complete thought. We must consider them in context.

a. While Paul was in the city of Ephesus he was visited by believers from the city of Corinth where Paul had also established a church. They came to report some serious problems in the church and wanted help from Paul. He wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians to deal with these issues.

b. There was envy, strife, and divisions (1:11; 3:3; 11:18,19), fornication (5:1), and gluttony and drunkenness at communion (11:20-22). Believers were suing each other in front of unbelievers (6:1-8). They also had issues with the demonstrations or manifestations of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Chapters 12,13,14 were written to address and correct their misuse of these gifts, particularly speaking in other tongues in public assemblies.

2. I Cor 12:7-11--Paul reminded them that the Holy Spirit manifests in nine different ways for the good of everyone. We could do a lesson on each of these (at another time). But consider these thoughts.

a. There is a public demonstration of tongues and a private one. I Cor 12:10 refers to the public gift.

1. Not everyone is used in this gift. An example would be: Someone speaks out a message in tongues in public in a language no one recognizes.

2. There must be an interpretation (the Holy Spirit gives the interpretation to that person or someone) so that everyone understands what was said. It’s a supernatural sign.

b. From v12-26 Paul, writing to a church that has divisions over which preacher is the best (1:11,12) explains that we’re a body. We each have a place and a function and we all need each other, whether we are the hand or the foot or the eye or the ear, whether we’re an apostles or someone used in these public gifts.

c. Remember, Paul didn’t write in chapters and verses. He was writing a letter. His thought continues into the next chapter: I Cor 12:31-2:1-3--Desire spiritual gifts, but recognize the highest priority is walking in love toward you brother in Christ. That’s most important.

1. I Cor 13:8-13--These gifts serve a purpose now, as God’s plan of redemption unfolds, but they will come to an end when the plan is completed and we are with God in His kingdom. At that time we won’t need prophecy or tongues, or the partial knowledge we now have because we’ll see things clearly as they really are. But the Law of Love will continue forever.

2. I know the text doesn't say all that word for word, but that was the mindset of Paul and the rest of the apostles. We've done many lessons that show this to be the case.

d. I Cor 14:1--Paul then exhorts them: Seek to walk in love and desire these spiritual gifts. But most of all that you may prophesy.

1. There are different levels of prophecy: foretelling where prophets proclaim coming events and forth-telling where prophets proclaim righteousness in the face of moral and spiritual decay. Only people who stand in the office of prophet are used in these ways.

2. There is also a simple gift of prophecy which all believers may do. It is inspired speaking (in the language of the speaker) which edifies, exhorts, and comforts. I Cor 14:3.

3. In I Cor 14 Paul directly addresses their misuse of tongues. In the Corinthian assemblies all had something to share and did so indiscriminately without regard for others resulting in confusion. v33,40.

a. Paul explained that there is a private tongues in which we speak, not to each other, but to God.

And, when we pray thusly we edify or build up ourselves (v2,3). But, when you prophesy you build up the one to whom you speak because he understands what you're saying.

b. In I Cor 12:30 Paul could not have meant that not everyone is supposed to speak in tongues because in I Cor 14:5 he says: I desire that you all speak with tongues. But I especially desire that you prophesy in your public assemblies (remember. that's what he's addressing) since everyone is edified. In fact, tongues with interpretation is equal to prophecy in its effects.

4. v26-28--Paul's whole point to them is: Do things to build each other up, not compete with each other. When you're speaking to people do it in the language they understand. If you speak in tongues to them there must be an interpretation so that everyone is built up. If there is no interpreter, just speak to yourself and God. He uses the word edify five times in this chapter.

D. Conclusion: The Holy Spirit has come to carry out the process of transformation that will restore us to our created purpose as holy, righteous sons and daughters of God who are conformed to the image of Christ.

1. We now have in us a Divine Person, the Holy Spirit who wants to help us overcome the unChristlike attitudes and actions we all have. He wants to build us up into the image of Christ.

a. We cooperate with Him through regular, systematic reading of the New Testament and by regularly praying in other tongues in our own private prayer time.

b. We looked at Jude's epistle earlier in the lesson. In the face of the religious deception leading up to the return of Christ, he instructed believers to build on the foundation of Christ in their life by praying in the Spirit. That's good advice.

c. If you don't pray in tongues regularly, begin to do so. Start with five minutes a day. Increase the time as you get more comfortable with it. You will begin to notice differences in yourself.

2. If you've never been baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, ask someone who has been to lay hands on you in faith as they did in the Book of Acts. Or ask the Father directly to baptize you. He has promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13). More next week!