

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, May 30, 2010
The Importance of the Holy Spirit

The Apostle Paul found some disciples in Ephesus and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Their reply of not even hearing that there is a Holy Spirit caused him to ask what kind of baptism they had. When they told him they received John's baptism, Paul explained how they needed Jesus. They responded and were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit. They also spoke in tongues and prophesied.

I believe Paul's query was based on the incredible impact the Holy Spirit made on his life. He had been a Pharisee, a Jewish scholar, a persecutor of the church because of its threat to Judaism when the Lord Jesus knocks him to the ground with a brilliant light and the words, "**Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?**" Jesus tells Saul (Paul's Hebrew name) his identity and then gives instruction on what he is to do. Acts 9 details this great account where Paul gets a vision that a man named Ananias is going to place his hands on him to restore his sight. He is blind for three days not eating or drinking anything when Ananias arrives and does that very thing. Paul is then baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit. At once he began to preach the Gospel. His life would never be the same.

The Christian life is not meant to be lived by merely following a set of principles, but an intimate relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. Asking Jesus into our heart to become our Lord and Savior makes us a family member. We have all the rights and privileges, but they are not automatic. Nothing is. God required man's obedient response and free choice to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life and avoid the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The choice was essential if we were to be like the one who created us. God could have easily just avoided putting either tree in the garden, but that would sacrifice the depth of person he was making. In similar fashion, we all receive eternal life in Christ when we ask him for it, yet there is a greater desire he has for us, that is, being conformed into his image. This is done by choosing to love him, choosing to serve him, choosing to praise him, and choosing to be filled with his Spirit.

God will bring us to greater depths of knowing him if we will actively seek him. Paul would have it no other way. He wanted more even to the point of death if that's what it meant. He tasted the life that is truly life. He did not want to just have enough to get to Heaven. Paul wanted everything God intended him to have. We can have it too. Ask and you will receive! We will never make any impact on this world for God apart from being filled with the Holy Spirit. Don't fear that he will take you down a path that you will regret. It's a path we were designed to walk on, a life we were intended to live, and an adventure that will far exceed anything we could possibly imagine.

"Lord, I ask you to fill me afresh today."