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THE HOLY SPIRIT

Paul wrote, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, except he hath the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9-11).

Experience with the influence and power of the Holy Spirit has commanded the attention of disciples of Christ since the rise of the Church. This spiritual force has been, and is, one of the central features of the Restoration Movement. Perhaps more has been said—and little really understood—of this wonderful power than any other feature of the gospel message. No doubt we shall constantly learn more of its meaning and use in our lives as we grow toward our full maturity as sons of God.

If the full measure of God’s purpose is to be realized in the human form and spirit, then, as believers and faithful followers of the Christ, we must match ourselves with this creative force, the Holy Spirit. The Father has said, “This is my work and my glory: to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (D&C 22:23b). His purpose is caught up in the unifying and synthesizing force of the Holy Spirit between Himself and man in a perfect spiritual symphony.

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God is love. He is creative. Growing out of this motivation by love to create, there evolved in His creative will a point at which element and spirit could take form. The Scriptures state that the Father, through His Son, Jesus the Christ, created this heaven and the earth upon which we stand (Genesis 1:2-3; D&C 22:21). Worlds without number have been and are being created. Man cannot fathom the vast expanse of space in which other earths and heavens have been and are being placed. We can identify only a few with the aid of powerful telescopes.

The Holy Spirit longs to finish the creative work begun in the life of man. It seeks to fulfill the intent of God’s will in perfecting the life of man. It is with man and in man that the Holy Spirit shall realize its full purpose of creation. The power and glory of the Holy Spirit constantly challenges the agency of man. It is with the creative principle of the Spirit of God that man shall discover and realize his full manhood as a son of God. Man cannot live in the full measure of his being without the full manifestation of God’s Spirit. The degree of its indwelling marks the degree of man’s achievement.

We have an unalterable choice to make in terms of obedience to the perfect will of God the moment we decide to follow Him (see 2 Nephi 1:120-124). Our very life is caught up in the quality of our understanding of the workings of the Holy Spirit which emanates from the throne of grace. The outreach of God is the manifestation of His Holy Spirit. It is holy because it is His Spirit; it is spirit because He is Spirit. The quality of being a son of God is the ultimate for man.

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

While the Holy Spirit is substance, it is not substance as we understand the known elements. It cannot be measured nor identified with the aid of the known elements. It is of a different matter and on a much higher plane. It is a substance which exists separate from the elements. It is the power which seeks to unify the human family into one great fellowship of love. Its purpose is to bring men, beasts, fowl, and fishes into an eternal relationship with God in a glorified earth. We understand this to be the celestial glory.

The Holy Spirit is the power which emanates from the person and presence of God, the outreach of Himself through time and space. It is an obedient Spirit. It responds perfectly to the will of God. It is the lifegiving force by which all things exist and have their being. It is the gift by which man is promised celestial glory in the presence of God and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the manifestation of

revelation within the spirit of man to receive the record of heaven, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, which maketh alive all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment (see Genesis 6:64).

The indwelling of the Spirit of God depends upon the quality of righteousness within man. His Spirit cannot dwell in unholy bodies (see Alma 5:36, 16:235; Helaman 2:59). Man's body is the temple for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). The existence of man is the product of the creative will of God. He intends that the spirit of man shall evolve to the point of perfect union with the Spirit of God. The life of Christ is the perfect example of this possibility. Man must arrive at this essential achievement. The purpose of his being is pointed in the direction of a perfect union with God. It is the object of God's creative purpose.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"The Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit; and everyone that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit cometh unto God, even the Father" (DC 83:7c-d).

To every man is given a measure of the Spirit of God. However, a full measure of the Holy Spirit cannot be given to man except he turns his attention from self to God who made him. In this attention he must reconcile himself to his Maker as a son to a Father. From desire, he must move to faith through the adjusting principle of repentance. The first concrete act of repentance is in the acceptance of the principle and ordinance of baptism by immersion into the Kingdom of God through the Church of Jesus Christ. When a man does this, he is committed to the way of life Christ has designated for man to travel. At least, he commits himself to the keeping of the commandments. Man is then born into the Kingdom of God.

Then there is the laying on of hands for the promise of the reception of the Holy Spirit. It is presumed that through obedience to preparatory principles, in cleansing the body of sin by repentance and faith and baptism by water, men are ready to receive the working principles of the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

What a man does with his life from the point of receiving the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit is his major problem in life. God does not interfere with agency. He inspires but does not assume complete command and control. He is there to help and lead and inspire, but He is not there to give of His power if man has not prepared for the full expression of that power. God and man must work together for the full endowment of the Holy Spirit. Man must attach himself to the ultimate purpose of God in the work of inheriting the Kingdom of God on the earth as well as in heaven. This initial attachment must carry the quality of embracing the truths of Kingdom building.

One of the first effects of the gift of the Holy Spirit is to create in man a vision of the will and purposes of God. His personal experiences which relate exclusively to himself should become secondary to the primary experience of the vision of the Kingdom. When a man seeks first for the Kingdom, then his secondary needs are met (see Matthew 6:38).

The testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, finds its strength when seen in light of the purpose of God, through Christ in leading men into the Zion situation. Zion is the evidence of the Kingdom of heaven on the earth. The Holy Spirit leads men into a "Kingdom-of-God-on-earth" experience through prophetic vision, revelation, and inspiration toward the implementation of the will of God. It does this in the measure of our willingness to go all the way toward God through Christ in the building of Zion. "Blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 3:187).

It is through this gift of grace that we are saved. It is by this gift that faith is given purpose and point. The full measure of the Holy Spirit in man is the fulfillment of the fact of the atonement. It is by the operation in full measure of the gift of the Holy Spirit within man that the fact of the trinity of God, Christ, and man is achieved. This was the burden of Christ's prayer in Gethsemane (see John 17).

The guidance of the Holy Spirit is significant to our personal and collective approach toward God and His Kingdom. If we are going in the direction of Kingdom building, then we can expect the

blessings of strength and guidance. If we honor those through whom ministry should come, then we can reasonably expect to receive the needed leadership of the Spirit.

The exercise of agency in determining and evaluating the course we should take in life is a necessary factor in the leadings of the Spirit of God. We must study the problems at hand to be solved either personally or in the Church. And then, as we petition the throne of grace, the influence and light of the Spirit will come as a warming and prompting feeling.

“You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right; and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right” (D&C 9:3b-c). This feeling registers the rightness of the direction in which we are going, and it indicates the rightness of the course we must employ to achieve the goal. This experience, coupled with the major objective of God through His Church in Kingdom building, gives significance and meaning to our personal experiences.

“Deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God To one is given by the Spirit of God that he may teach the word of wisdom; and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; and to another, exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; and again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles; and again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; and again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; and again, to another, all kinds of tongues; and again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues” (Moroni 10:8-11).

There are diverse methods or gifts through which direction comes in our lives. These are known as the gifts of the Spirit. The important thing is not the method so much as it is the message received through these gifts of God. The message must fit into the pattern of Kingdom building. It must be evidence of intelligence. In this is the glory of God revealed through the Church to the world. Its central testimony is Christ and His Kingdom. The first agent in the revelation of the Spirit is God Himself. He is the first and final determiner of its expression. The earnest longing of our prayers should be that the Church shall continue to implore God for the manifestation of His love and grace through the power and glory of the Holy Spirit.

“If ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:5).

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the relationship between bringing forth the cause of Zion and the endowment of the Holy Spirit?
2. The Holy Spirit is often referred to in other terms. Give at least three found in the Scriptures.
3. What determines the measure of the Holy Spirit that comes to any man?
4. What does the gift of the Holy Spirit do for those who accept it as an “abiding comforter”?
5. What three fruits of the Spirit can be found in the life of a godly man?
6. What is the purpose of the laying on of hands by the elders in relation to the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit?