

THE GREAT COMMISSION



Paul & Bunty Collins

After His work on the Cross was completed, the glorious event of the Resurrection took place. The Lord Jesus appeared to His disciples and gave them a great commission...

“The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be to you; just as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” John 20:20-22

The Lord declared that He was sending them just as the Father had sent Him. They had a vital purpose to fulfill. The same declaration the Lord declared to them is the same for us who are His believers and His followers today. He breathed into them the Holy Spirit. All three things that are necessary to fulfill this great commission are a ministry of the Holy Spirit.

3-Fold Ministry of the Holy Spirit

The Breath of New Life

In the moment Jesus “breathed on them” He was restoring what had been lost by Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden. The breath of God (the Holy Spirit) had departed from them the moment they had sinned and they had died spiritually (Genesis 2:7,16-17). Repeating what God had done to Adam at the moment of creation, Jesus breathed on His disciples who believed in Him and they were born again of the Spirit.

“Jesus responded and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit” John 3:3-8.

This is the first and foremost ministry of the Holy Spirit for us. With the Breath of New Life we become a child of God, a new creation in Christ. Our old Self and old life is forgiven and put to death on the



Cross in Christ.

“...knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for the one who has died is freed from sin” Romans 6:6-7.

Everything in life now is totally new (2 Corinthians 5:17), and our ultimate destiny is to be with Him in Heaven for all eternity.

The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit becomes the reality in our personal relationship and walk with God (2 Corinthians 13:14). When we were born of the Spirit, like newborn babies in the image of our Father, the journey of growing into the full stature of Christ began (Ephesians 4:13). The Holy Spirit fellowships with us on the way, using the revelation of the Word of God in every experience, good and bad, to teach us, train us and change us, causing us to grow in Christ. The fruit of the Spirit becomes reality in our lives (Galatians 5:16, 22-25). This also becomes a testimony to those around us, giving glory to the Lord Jesus.

“But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

These two aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit are all we need for our own lives. However, that is not the final ministry of the Holy Spirit. He has also been sent to *empower* us to fulfill our purpose - the great commission we have been given by the Lord Jesus...

“And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach and publish openly the good news (the Gospel) to every creature [of the whole human race]” Mark 16:15 (AMPCE).

The Empowering of the Holy Spirit

Before returning to the Father, the Lord gave His followers (which includes us) an amazing promise that would be the means by which we can fulfill the great commission we have been given...

“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘So it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His

name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” Luke 24:45-50.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth” Acts 1:8.

The fulfillment of this Promise began on the Day of Pentecost when 120 believers gathered together in an upper room. The “wind” of the Holy Spirit blew (John 3:8) and flames of fire filled the room and separated into individual flames resting on each one of them. This was the clothing with power of the believers for them all to fulfill the call of God! (Luke 24:50).

The early Christians turned their world upside down in their day (Acts 17:6) because all three aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit was a reality in their lives. It is impossible for us in this our day to fulfill our great commission by the Lord without all three being a reality in us. All three are absolutely essential for us to reach the world.

- ➔ **New Birth** - a child of God in relationship with our Heavenly Father.
- ➔ **Christ’s Character** - the fellowship of the Holy Spirit producing the fruit of Spirit in us.
- ➔ **Clothed with power** - the Holy Spirit working miracles through us, bearing witness that Jesus is alive.

The Evidence!

“If I do not do the works of My Father [that is, the miracles that only God could perform], then do not believe Me. But if I am doing them, even if you do not believe Me or have faith in Me, [at least] believe the works [that I do—admit that they are the works of God], so that you may know and keep on knowing [clearly—without any doubt] that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father [that is, I am One with Him]” John 10:37-38 (Amp).

Miracles are the evidence of who Jesus is! Miracles testify that He has been raised from the dead and is alive. He is the Son of God still doing what He did when He walked on earth.

Witnesses!

Every believer is a witness that the Lord Jesus is the Son of God and that He has been raised from the dead. We have the Holy Spirit in us Who makes us witnesses. He has worked the glorious miracle in our lives, giving us new birth and a whole new life, and now empowering us to demonstrate the resurrection of Jesus in the lives of others.

“He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him” Acts 5:31-33.

The early believers, in obedience to Him, were greatly used to testify to, and to demonstrate, that Jesus is alive. Paul writes to the Corinthians...

“...my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” 1 Corinthians 2:4.

“The signs that indicate a genuine apostle were performed among you fully and most patiently—signs and wonders and miracles” 2 Corinthians 12:12.

...and the writer to the Hebrews declares...

“...This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” Hebrews 2:3.

The Answer to a Needy World

God so loved the world He sent Jesus. Today we are living in a world that is in great need. Jesus' death and resurrection is the only answer. We have the glorious Gospel message that can bring great joy to the hearts and lives of desperate people. Like never before our world needs the demonstration that Jesus is alive. May we all, as believers in the Lord, enter into the fulness of all that He has done for us, the new life He has brought us into, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit upon us. May we, today, fulfill the great commission we have been given.

**May the power of the
Holy Spirit through
us, as believers and
witnesses to the resur-
rection of the Lord
Jesus, demonstrate
that Jesus is alive to
the needy ones
around us**