

# The Holy Spirit: What Does He Do for Me?

Texts: Acts 2:43-47, Gal. 5:22-23, Eph. 4:11-16

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We get lots of “free offers” in the mail, “junk mail” we call it. I get lots of “junk e-mail” too. If you have e-mail I suppose you have seen junk e-mails with the subject line “Free laptop computer.” So I decided to get me one of those “free laptop computers” and clicked on the message. It was arranged like a survey with a list of restaurants and all I had to do was to select the ones I like, then what magazines I want, and so on for page after page. If you try to skip to the next page without clicking on some offer, it wouldn’t let you. After nearly an hour I finally gave up and never did get my “free laptop computer.” But I did get a ton of “free” junk e-mail. Watch out for “free gift offers.”

We have been talking about the person and work of the Holy Spirit the last two weeks. We heard Peter say that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God to those who believe in Jesus as God’s true Son to forgive their sins. Did they get what they were promised, unlike my “free laptop computer”? Today’s scripture in Acts tells us the results of 3000 people accepting the offer. It says that they were in awe of the power of God demonstrated by the wonders done by the apostles. That sounds good, but how did it impact them personally? It says that they were eating and praying and worshiping together. Wait a minute; weren’t these people the ones who helped get Jesus killed? Now, they are like family with these uneducated guys from Galilee? It also says some were selling their property and pooling their resources to take care of the poor people so everyone was happy. Well, that sounds like a radical change in some formerly really hostile people. And, others were joining their family daily. The Holy Spirit did something powerful there; **For Real!**

Now, that may be all fine and good, but it was a long time ago. Some of us may feel like asking the question, “**This Holy Spirit, What can He do for me, here, now?**” Well, I believe you too will find **this “free gift offer” is for real.**

You may have heard of **Chuck Swindoll**, popular pastor and radio minister, who said:

*By the time I graduated from [seminary], I had many convictions and few questions, especially regarding the Holy Spirit .... But during a lifetime of ministry that has taken me around the United States and to many countries abroad...I've come to realize there are dimensions of the Spirit's ministry...(of) which I know very little... I have witnessed a dynamic power in his presence that I long to know more of firsthand. I now have questions and a strong interest in many of the things of the Spirit I once felt were settled. To say it plainly, I am hungry for more of him. I long to know God('s Spirit) more deeply, more intimately.*(Charles R. Swindoll, *Embraced By the Spirit* (Zondervan,2010), pp.25-26)

This famous minister, who once did not understand, has seen the work and power of the Holy Spirit for himself, and he wants more! Those devout Jews, who thought they knew all there was to know about God, discovered there was much more when the power of the Holy Spirit showed up that day. Their lives were changed. They became hungry for more of Jesus, the living Son of God, filling them with joy and love in their new family. They found out that **the offer of the Holy Spirit was for real!**

We can see God doing three things here through the gift of the Spirit:

1. **Confirms their faith in Jesus by coming in and living in their hearts - ASSURANCE**
2. **Concentrates their growth to become more and more like Jesus – SANCTIFICATION**
3. **Confers his gifts on them, gifts given to be used in ministry to others – MISSION**

1. The presence of the Holy Spirit is what gave John Wesley the **ASSURANCE** that he actually was a true Christian after all his education and mission attempts had not done so. It was not the end of all his challenges, but a big step in the right direction to sending him out preaching Christ to the common people which led to the Methodist movement that transformed England and America.

2. The Holy Spirit is the force in believers' lives that **CONCENTRATES** the growth of the qualities that were in Jesus, qualities like **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**. In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul calls these the "Fruit of the Spirit," the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in believer's lives to grow us more and more like Jesus. This is not the result of **our efforts** to "be good," but happens when we fall in love with Jesus and yearn to be all he wants us to be. The more his Spirit is in control of our lives the more we look like him. This process of growth into Christ-like character is like shedding our old skin, our old habits and behavior, like a snake to get new skin that is more like Jesus. Wesley calls this on-going "lifetime" process- **SANCTIFICATION**. The stories in the Book of Acts demonstrate this process in the lives of the apostles and new believers.

3. The third thing the Holy Spirit does is **CONFIR** gifts on sincere believers, gifts given to be used in ministry to others. There are many gifts mentioned in the Bible even the Old Testament. We saw the gift of tongues, or **unlearned languages**, when the apostles were proclaiming the amazing works of God to all the people. And, when Peter boldly preached to the crowd it was a demonstration of the gift of **prophecy**, literally: **acting as a spokesman for God**. Paul uses the term "signs and wonders" to describe many demonstrations of God's power in his ministry. The passage we read in Ephesians 4 tells us what the Holy Spirit is trying to accomplish through the fruit and gifts of the Spirit: love like Jesus in humility, gentleness and patience, lovingly tolerating each other, unity, peace, building up the body of Christ, mature faith, knowledge, and likeness of Christ. **That sounds exciting!**

**This is what the Church is supposed to BE and DO through the Holy Spirit, where works are everywhere and love is seen in action, and joy and peace abound.**

There is a story about a young man who was about to graduate from high school. His father called him in and asked him what he would like for a graduation present. The son said, "A new car." (Of course!) When graduation day came with all the family proudly gathered around, the father gave him his gift. It was a wrapped box. The son looked puzzled but opened it. Inside he found a beautiful new Bible. The son's face just dropped. He wondered what happened to the car he was expecting. The son, disappointed and bitter, was relieved to leave for college. When he packed up his things he intentionally left the unopened Bible behind. Years passed and their relationship grew more bitter and cold. One day he received word his father had passed away. When he returned to dispose of his things he found the unopened Bible he received at graduation. When he opened it he found a receipt for a new car he had expected to receive at graduation, paid in full, waiting to be picked it up.

Does the Holy Spirit seem a little like the Bible that young man received and never opened, an empty promise? Have you felt or seen the Holy Spirit at work lately? The Spirit is here working in people's hearts drawing them closer to God and each other, growing them stronger, and building them up in his kingdom here in Lorena. Look around; you see adults and youth stepping out of their comfort zone to go to new places and learn to do new work for people they don't even know. That's the work of the Holy Spirit. We see and hear wonderful answers to prayers. I see people in love with Jesus growing like a beautiful garden with sweet fruit in their lives, joy and peace even in troubled times, patience with a new preacher, kindness and gentleness with children in our Child Care Center, and love, lots of love all around.

Is there someone who we find hard to forgive or love? One of the things the Holy Spirit does inside is give us grace to love them, bless them, help them, forgive them which we could not do on our own. Maybe they need us to pray for them or just quietly and patiently listen to them. They need our love too, things that only the Holy Spirit could enable us to do. The Holy Spirit can change us into the kind of person God wants us to be, more and more like Jesus.

Have you, like Chuck Swindoll, longed for a closer relationship with your heavenly Father, but didn't know if it was possible? **Jesus' "free-gift" of the Holy Spirit is the real thing!** It may not look like what we expect, but **He is real** and **He is God**. **Have you opened up your Free-gift yet?**