

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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What More Did The Disciples Need?

by Dan Trygg

“He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons, and to heal diseases.” Luke 9:1

“These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: ‘Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; ⁶ but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ And as you go, preach, saying, “‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”’ ⁸ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons.”” Matthew 10:5-8

“The seventy returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.’ ¹⁸ And He said to them, ‘I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹ Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. ²⁰ Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.”” Luke 10:17-20

“And behold, I am sending forth 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 24:49

That last evening, before His crucifixion, and on the night of His resurrection, and yet *again* on the day of His ascension into heaven, Jesus talked about the importance of the Holy Spirit. He was going to be leaving them, but He would be sending the Holy Spirit. **He emphasized how it was to their advantage that the Spirit would be coming** (Jn. 16:7). Yet, we read the verses above, and we can clearly see that the disciples had already experienced great power and authority in their ministry experiences. **What was going to be so different? What was it that the Spirit was going to bring that was more than what they already had been experiencing?** We tend to associate the coming of the Spirit with power, because Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. **What kind of power did the Spirit bring to them that they did not already have?**

In Matthew 3:16, **Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and the Spirit descended from heaven in the form of a dove, and came upon Him.** According to Mark’s gospel, the Spirit immediately drove Him into the wilderness for 40 days, where He was tested by the devil (1:12,13). When He returned from that time of testing, **He came to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit”** (Lk. 4:14). He began teaching and preaching in the synagogues, and people were talking about Him. **His words were different from what they had heard before. They were more powerful and authoritative** (Matt. 7:29), **and He also began to do powerful-acts (miracles), and cast out demons** (Matt. 4:23,24; Lk. 4:36). Large crowds began to follow Him, and people came from all the surrounding areas to hear Him, and to be freed from sickness and demonic oppression (Matt. 4:24,25).

Jesus did not heal by His own power. We find out from Luke 5:17 that “the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal”. In Luke 6:19, it mentions that people were trying to touch Jesus, because “power was coming-out from-alongside Him” and was healing them all. The language is very interesting. It doesn’t say it came out-from His inner being, but came-out from-alongside Him. A couple of chapters later, a woman with a flow of blood snuck up behind Him to touch His garment, and power came from Him and healed her. He did not even know she had approached Him, but He “experientially-knew power had-gone-out away-from Him” (Lk. 8:46). Because He could feel the power leave Him, He turned around and asked, “*Who touched Me?*” He was not even a conscious, active participant in this healing, yet the power of God that was “upon Him” instantly healed her! **It was not “His power” but it was the “power of the Lord” that was with, upon and alongside of Him.** Peter confirms this in his Pentecostal sermon. He spoke of Jesus as “a man attested to you by God with miracles (powerful-acts) and wonders and signs which *God performed through Him* in your midst” (Acts 2:22). Again in Acts 10:38, Peter said, “You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him.” **It wasn’t Jesus’ own power, it was the power of the Holy Spirit upon Him and with Him.**

This is important for us to understand, because Jesus was not the first person to do miracles, nor the last. Doing miracles was even an OT reality. God gave Moses miraculous signs to do, ...turning a staff into a serpent, water into blood, and turning a healthy hand leprous, or back to sound, healthy flesh..., to demonstrate that he truly was sent from Yahweh (Ex. 4:1-9). In addition, the plagues were powerful acts of God that Moses was sent to announce in order to compel Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go. Moses also was directed by God to hold up his staff to initiate the splitting of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16). **Obviously, God was doing the work, but Moses was His representative. Elijah and Elisha also were God’s special messengers. This was confirmed by God’s unusual, miraculous activity in their lives as well.** They clearly understood that **it was God’s power, not their own.** God multiplied flour in a bowl and oil in a jar to feed Elijah and two others for many days (I Kg. 17:10-15). Elisha multiplied bread to feed 100 people (II Kg. 4:42-44). Fire came from heaven in response to Elijah’s prayers (I Kg. 18:36-

39; II Kg. 1:9-12). Both of these prophets raised someone from the dead (I Kg. 17:17-24; II Kg. 4:32-36). God used Elisha to heal a leper (II Kg. 5:1-15). **Jesus, during His earthly ministry, gave authority and power to His disciples to heal the sick, raise the dead and cast out demons** (Matt. 10:5-8; Lk. 9:1,2). *How did they do?* Mark records, “And they were casting out *many* demons and were anointing with oil *many* sick people and healing them.” And **this was before Pentecost!!** So whatever it was that the “promise of the Father” was going to bring, ...whatever power they were to be “clothed with”..., it was **not primarily about receiving the power to do miracles, signs, or wonders**. Those powerful acts and demonstrations of the Holy Spirit *are* still available today, and *still occur*, but that is not what Jesus had the apostles waiting for. In fact, they still play a key role in substantiating the truth of the gospel

What would the Spirit bring after Jesus’ death and resurrection that would be different from what people experienced before the cross? The answer is multi-faceted, and far-reaching. It is not one simple thing. It is not some minor adjustment, or adding some new feature or ability to what we already had or were under the old covenant. No. **The Spirit would bring into being an entirely different reality, a radical transformation down to the core**. We see it in some of the things Jesus had to say to His men that Thursday evening, after the Last Supper and before they left the city. He spoke of how **they couldn’t understand what He would like to tell them, but the Spirit would teach them**. He would remind them of what Jesus said, and lead them into all truth. **The Spirit would be their Helper. Together they could do things that they could never do by themselves**. He specifically mentions how the Spirit would enable them to witness of Him. He and they would testify of Jesus *together*. **The Spirit would powerfully convince people about truth, about Jesus, ...and He will reveal the things of Jesus to His followers**.

This sets up the remainder of the NT revelation. The apostles could not understand what Jesus was going to do for them, so He could not explain it to them. It would have to wait until His work on the cross was complete. After the cross and resurrection, He began to explain how the Scriptures pointed to what He had come to accomplish. Although their eyes were somewhat opened by this explanation, **the fullness of understanding would have to wait until the Spirit could help them understand**. The forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), freedom which the Law could never bring (13:39), access to the Father (Eph. 2:18; 3:12; Heb. 10:19-23); the new birth and transformation of our inner selves (I Pet. 1:3; II Cor. 3:18); and the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Act 1:8; I Cor. 2:4,5) are just some of the basic realities purchased by Christ and communicated by the Spirit. In I Corinthians 2:6-13, Paul explains how he desires to communicate God’s wisdom, a wisdom which the Lord had determined from ages past, but which was obscured from view as a hidden mystery. **God reveals these things through His Spirit. We have been given the Spirit of God so that we might know/comprehend the things freely given to us by Him**. In the next few verses, he mentions how a natural person, someone who is not spiritually reborn, does *not* welcome or receive the things of the Spirit. They appear to be foolishness, nonsense, irrational, intellectually weak things. There is a dullness or blindness that obscures their ability to understand or make sense of them (II Cor. 3:14-16; 4:4). When a person turns to the Lord, the blindness is partially removed. **When a person becomes really spiritually centered and mature, they become more sensitive toward the Holy Spirit**, and will be able to be very discerning. **However, Christians who are still very bound up in living by their own self-abilities, and self-interests, will remain somewhat dull and imperceptive toward deeper spiritual realities**. Their understanding about life, and the way in which they live, remains very similar to the lives of those who do not really know God (I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14).

When we look back at the disciples in the gospels, ...the “pre-cross, pre-Pentecost disciples”..., we see men who are vying for power, who are arrogant, spiritually dull. They often “didn’t get it”, and had to be corrected by Jesus. They repeatedly were chastened for wanting power, instead of being willing to serve. We see men, who after the death of Jesus, were full of fear, hiding behind locked doors. **Although, they had experienced the power of the Spirit upon them, they were not radically transformed by the Spirit inside of them**.

After Pentecost, we see a very different kind of character and level of maturity. Suddenly, they are focused on the purpose and plan of God. They are *first in line* to serve (Acts 6:2). They are courageous and unafraid in the face of opposition and threats (Acts 4:8-13). They boldly proclaim the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. **Their understanding continues to develop, as does their sensitivity to being led by the Holy Spirit**. The signs and wonders continue to authenticate God’s word, but it is the love and generosity of the Christian community that really attracts the good will of outsiders (Acts 4:32-5:13; cf. Matt. 5:14-16).

Christian evangelism and discipleship was never supposed to be just the preaching of the word. **The directive of Jesus was to “make disciples”, to make active, obedient followers of Jesus Christ**. This *requires* being born of the Spirit, being nurtured into a consistent walk in Him, learning to perceive His teaching and leading. It *requires* learning to put off the old man, being renewed in our understanding, and putting on our new spiritual identity and way of living. It *requires* that we invest in our spiritual walk, ...which is another way of saying “our walk with the Spirit”.

He is a living Person, our Helper, the one who enables us to live the life, ...to walk the walk that matches the talk..., to talk the talk that sticks in the heart and convinces the mind, ...to demonstrate through us the life that is Christ.