The Holy Spirit and You

A is for anointing

> *It is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*
>
> *(2 Cor. 1:21)*

The history of Scripture is largely about God taking hold of people's lives and enabling them to do things that they could otherwise never have done.

The moment of a person's anointing is such a significant part of God's purposes in human history that it is often recorded in Scripture.

Think of a character from Scripture who clearly demonstrates the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and show what effect He had on them.

B is for Breakthrough

In Acts 10:38 we read that 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil.' What God did for Jesus He loves to do for us, His beloved children.

Many of us think such anointing – and the authority it bestows – as being something for just a few special people, people in Bible times or in far-off places like Korea, Africa or China. Until, that is, something happens to bring the challenge rather closer to heart. It may be the challenge of certain Scriptures that point to a depth of relationship that we are far from experiencing. Or it may be first hand acquaintance with people moving in such power.

Sometimes in life we reach a position where a situation appears completely deadlocked. Take, for example, the case of the disciples when they had been put in prison. On two occasions God sends an angel to set them free from prison. When we pray we set things moving in the spirit realm. Sometimes God sends an angel to accomplish the answers to these prayers.

Can you think of any other deadlock situations broken by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures? Or can you recount any such experiences from your own life?

C is for Character

If you think of the qualities that draw you most to someone, they are more likely to revolve around *character* than gifting. Much of the unseen work of the Holy Spirit is about changing us into His likeness.

I once wrote in a talk, 'the purposes of God in sanctification are designed to last a lifetime. I spelt the word lifetime wrong however, and my spell checker helpfully changed it to, 'the purposes of God in sanctification are designed to last a lunchtime!' That really would be instant sanctification – and there is no such thing!

In what ways can you recognise the Holy Spirit at work in your life leading and prompting you, (through conscience, warnings, rebukes, encouragements etc). He is the *Holy* Spirit, and this work of refinement may sometimes cause us intense pain at the time – but it brings much joy to the Lord and others as a result of it. Try the following verses to ponder in this context: Hebrews 12:7-11, Job 6:1-4 alongside Job 42:1-6, or Psalm 118:19.

D is for Dunamis (Power)

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you . . .

(Acts 1:8)

Think of an example of the Holy Spirit coming in power on someone in Scripture. Can you think of examples of the Holy Spirit coming on you in power in your own life?

The word dunamis speaks of the power for performing miracles, but also the moral power that leads to good character.

When Paul urges us to "be filled with the Spirit", (Eph. 5:18) the Greek command literally means 'be being filled'. Being filled with the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with the power of human suggestion or excitement. It is the Lord Himself who takes the initiative, not overruling our free will, but filling our spirits as we open our hearts to Him and invite Him to work in our lives.

It is very important to keep this principle of 'mutuality' in mind. We are *meant* to do all we can not to block and hinder the Holy Spirit's work in us so that more of His presence may flow in and through our lives.

The Holy Spirit is not given so that we can just bask in good feelings, however. When we soak in His presence (which is a really *good* thing to do) it is to draw up water – but the water is for others, for the blessings and building up of God's people.

If less is happening in this country spiritually than is the case in certain others, should we not be asking questions about what *we* might be doing to hold the Holy Spirit back from moving more powerfully?

Ponder for a moment the implications of Peter's declaration that God gives the Holy Spirit to those who *obey* Him. (Acts 5:32).Would God say anything to you through this about allowing the fear of men to override doing what you know, deep down, to be right?

E is for Enlargement and Empowerment

. . . and you will be My witnesses. (Acts 1:8)

> *When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who goes out from the Father, He will testify about Me. And you also must testify.*
>
> *(John 15:27).*

The Holy Spirit *is* the sustaining presence of God to those who believe in Jesus. Wherever He is accepted, He brings eternal life (cf John 7:39). In John's writings the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter, whom Jesus promised to send. Some versions prefer the word 'Counsellor', a word that beautifully combines the twin themes of counsel and comfort.

Elsewhere he is called the Spirit of grace, the Spirit of life, the Spirit of adoption and the Spirit of holiness. He reveals God's truths to us (2 Pet. 1:21) and makes the life of Jesus real to us. In a word, He is the Helper (John 14:26-27).

Mark Stibbe's book *Prophetic Evangelism* is helpful in challenging us to witness by the Spirit, pinpointing people's area of need.

On occasions, He will lead us to use some episode in our lives as an entirely appropriate testimony for where the other person is up to.

Can you think of times when the Holy Spirit has guided you to initiate a conversation, or to ask a question that unlocked issues that needed to come out into the open?

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