Asking For More of The Holy Spirit

Rich Nathan
January 15 & 16, 2021
Naturally Supernatural
Luke 4:14-21

It was exactly a year ago today that I handed up leadership of the church over to Eric and Julia Pickerill. And I want to publically thank Eric and Julia for doing an extraordinary job of leading this first year in the midst of a pandemic and so many challenges.

Have ever had an unmistakable God moment? Has something happened in your life that you are 100% convinced could only have happened because God intervened? Can you point to some incident, some answer to prayer that you know would not have naturally occurred through the ordinary course of events that only happened because God intervened?

Some of you have had God-moments in your marriages. Your marriage was dead. You lost all hope. Maybe one or both of you had sought out attorneys. Perhaps there was an affair involved. The only answer for you seemed to be a divorce or separation. But then God broke in. Perhaps he used a counselor. Maybe one or both of you got saved. Maybe God used our Marriage Ministry. But you experienced a miracle. And now your marriage is life giving, better than you ever thought possible! It is actually loving. Feelings have totally changed. Your only explanation for the healing in your marriage is God broke in!

I have talked with people who were planning to commit suicide and suddenly had a visitation from the Lord. Several people I know claimed to have heard an audible voice from God right before they were planning to kill themselves in which they claimed that they heard God say, "I love you. I'm for you." I have friends who are serving the Lord today who would say that the only reason why they are alive is because God intervened. Maybe a few of you listening today would say that. The only reason you are alive is because Almighty God stepped in preventing your death either by your own hand, by an accident, or on the operating room table.

Have you ever had a God-moment for which there is no psychological or natural explanation apart from God breaking in? One of the places I have witnessed God-moments concerns God spontaneously healing people apart from medical intervention. The vast, vast majority of healings that I am aware of comes through medical intervention. Someone has appendicitis and they go into the hospital for the removal of their appendix. Someone has a psychiatric disorder and they are significantly helped through the assistance of a therapist and through medication. Someone has a torn ligament in his or her knee and its repaired through arthroscopic surgery. I thank God that we are living in a time of the significant improvement of the quality of human life through medical intervention. I thank God for the way he uses physicians and nurses and therapists and other healthcare professionals especially during this time of Covid [clap for medical professional]!

I've also seen people healed wholly apart from medical intervention. About 2 decades ago I had the opportunity to watch a woman get healed from cancer that was in her bones. Her boyfriend approached me between church services and asked me if I would pray for his girlfriend, who had cancer in her bones. She was a medical professional. She was about to go the Mayo Clinic for a bone marrow transplant. Her life was hanging in the balance. I said, "Certainly, I will pray for you." They came back into my office. I inquired about their spiritual condition. It turned out that this man had never taken the opportunity to respond to Christ's offer of salvation. He had never received Christ into his life as Savior and Lord. Before we prayed for healing, I saw a miracle worked in this man's life. He prayed a heart-felt prayer of repentance and received Christ as his Savior and Lord. His girlfriend did the same thing.

My faith was really built up at that point. They were both sitting on my couch. I gently placed my hand upon the woman's shoulder. I asked God to come and bring healing through her body. The woman began to bounce on my sofa like a basketball. She was seated, but she began bouncing under my hand. I thought, "That's different." After about five minutes of her bouncing, she settled down, and I again prayed healing for her body and then she left. I prayed one other time for her a few days later at our small group. She did the exact same thing. I asked her if she always bounced when she received prayer. She said, "Absolutely not. This is the only time this has happened."

To cut to the chase, she went in for a very painful operation, in which they drilled into her pelvis to discover the level of the cancer. When they drilled in, they discovered she was entirely cancer free. They called it a spontaneous remission. The woman called it a miracle.

How do things like this happen? Because I am so special? Hardly! I have prayed for hundreds of people who did not even get a little bit better after we prayed. So what happened in this case? What happens when we at Vineyard occasionally see healings? The Holy Spirit broke in! Whenever we see a healing or a deliverance whether it's from long standing addiction or demonic power it's because God the Holy Spirit showed up. People are not healed because we have figured it out where to hold our hands, or because we have learned how to send out vibrations of love through our fingertips! People are healed because we choose to pray and God the Holy Spirit shows up.

One of the marks of the great men and women both in the Bible and in the history of the church is that they all wanted to experience more of the Holy Spirit! They wanted to see more of God's power! They wanted to experience more of the Spirit's holiness. They wanted more of the Holy Spirit's comfort. They wanted more of the Holy Spirit's love. Today as we continue this series entitled Naturally Supernatural its all about seeing God's supernatural power coming as we welcome the Holy Spirit without a lot of hype, in a natural non-emotionally charged way. Today I am going to continue this series on

the Holy Spirit in a message that I have titled “Asking for More of the Holy Spirt”. Let’s pray.

Now, the Jewish rabbis taught that the Holy Spirit had departed from Israel after the last of the Old Testament prophets. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of prophecy, had left after the prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The last words of the Old Testament are bursting with anticipation that one day the drought of the Holy Spirit would be over and the Spirit of God would come again and fall on the land of Israel. The last days would be the Age of the Spirit.

But Jews had to wait 400 years. And during those 400 years the Jewish people suffered first under the Greeks and then under the Romans. They cried out to God for Messiah to come, the one anointed with the Holy Spirit to usher in the future age of the Spirit. And then like a dam breaking, the future age of the Spirit broke into this world. The centuries long drought of the Holy Spirit was over.

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The Holy Spirit and <u>Jesus Christ</u>

You know, <u>everything about Jesus’ life was connected to the Holy Spirit</u>. In the gospel of Luke we read that everything in Messiah Jesus’ life demonstrated that he was the Spirit-anointed one who was ushering in the future age of the Spirit. The drought was over.

The dam was breaking. The Spirit of God was coming into this world like a flood. The future age, the age of the kingdom, that the Jews had prayed for 400 years, the future age of the kingdom broke into this world through the coming of the Spirit-anointed King, Jesus the Messiah.

The Holy Spirit was involved in Jesus' virginal conception. When the Angel Gabriel told Mary that she was going to give birth to Jesus the Messiah, Mary asked, "How could this be since I'm a virgin?" She understood how women got pregnant. Its not like people in the 1st century didn't understand how babies were made. How in the world am I going to conceive a child? I haven't had relations with a man. Here was the answer from the Angel Gabriel, Luke 1:35:

Slide Luke 1:35

The angel answered, "<u>The Holy Spirit will come on you</u>, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Jesus' virginal conception came about by the <u>power of the Holy Spirit</u>. And after a period of relative silence, we read nothing of Jesus' ministry other than him confounding the teachers at the Temple when he was 12 until he was 30 years old. And then we read this about his baptism in Luke 3:21-23:

Slide Luke 3:21-23

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." 23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

The Bible is very clear that Jesus' entire ministry began only after the Holy Spirit empowered him at his baptism. The gospel writers very clearly say that Jesus' Messianic ministry of teaching, healing, deliverance and working justice, began with the coming of the Holy Spirit upon him. This is what we read in Luke 3:23:

Slide Luke 3:23

Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.

Slide John 2:11

What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples put their faith in him.

Jesus did not work any miracles before his baptism. You need to understand the importance of the Holy Spirit, who came upon Jesus at Jesus' baptism, with the carrying out of Jesus' Messianic tasks. See, Jesus did all of his miracles, he carried out his Messianic tasks as a Spirit-anointed man, not as God, not as Deity. You never hear Jesus

say, “Heal the blind man? No problem for me! After all, I created people’s eyes! No problem for me to heal.” Jesus did his entire Messianic ministry as a man who was relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ ministry began when the Spirit of God fell on him at his baptism.

Of course, Jesus is incarnate God. But he voluntarily chose, in his incarnation to not function as God but to function as a man relying entirely on the power of the Holy Spirit!

Why am I making such a point of this and why did John Wimber make such a point of emphasizing that Jesus didn’t do his miracles as God, but as a man relying on the power of the Holy Spirit? The reason this is so important is because if Jesus did his miracles as God then he’s not an example for us human beings. We would read stories of Jesus healing in the Bible and say, “Jesus could do that, after all, he’s God! I’m not God so I can’t do any of things Jesus did.” If Jesus did his miracles as God and not as a Spirit-empowered man, he’s not our model for how we do life or how we might see God breaking into this world. If Jesus did his miracles as God, then we can admire him! We can worship him. But we can’t imitate him because we are not God!

But if Jesus did his miracles as a man relying simply on the Holy Spirit, then he’s a model for how we might see a healing. A child relying on the Holy Spirit might see the same power to heal that Jesus saw. A teenager relying on the Holy Spirit might see the same

power to deliver that Jesus saw. An adult relying on the power of the Holy Spirit might see the same miracles that Jesus saw.

I'm going to look at Jesus' Messianic ministry in just a minute, but I want you to grasp the very fundamental idea that every single thing in Jesus' life was done by the power of the Holy Spirit including Jesus' death. Have you ever wondered how Jesus had the strength to offer up his life on the cross? Was it just pure heroism that he was able to have nails pounded into his hands and a spike driven through his feet, hanging there naked and bleeding on the cross and yet still forgive his enemies? How did Jesus offer his life for us on the cross? By the enabling of the Holy Spirit! Here is what Hebrews 9:14 says:

Slide Hebrews 9:14

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

We could continue in this study of the Spirit's connection to the life of Jesus by looking at how the Spirit of God raised Jesus from the dead, and how Jesus ascended to heaven by the Holy Spirit. Suffice it to say that every aspect of Jesus' life was orchestrated by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit and directed by the Spirit. Jesus was the Holy Spirit-

anointed one. That's why he was the Messiah. He was the one uniquely marked out by the Spirit.

It was by the Spirit that Jesus carried out his Messianic tasks. Everything that Jesus did was in and through the Holy Spirit. Look with me at Luke 4:14-21:

Slide Luke 4:14-21

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." 20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

I want to read to you again verse 16

Slide Luke 4:16

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read,

We have here, perhaps the oldest written account of a synagogue service in history. Jesus was an observant Jew, not just a cultural Jew. The settings of many of Jesus' teachings in the Gospels is a synagogue service. And you might want to underline this little phrase in verse 16 "as was his custom" in your Bibles. On the Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue as was his custom. There is spiritual benefit in gathering together with God's people. It's really stunning for us to realize that Jesus went to synagogue each week, even though he was spiritually so far beyond the other people in the synagogue. He was so far beyond all the rest of the attenders in terms of his knowledge of the Bible, his wisdom, in terms of his intimacy with God. Yet, Jesus attended synagogue every week to worship God with God's people.

Let me press this home for us and apply this to our lives. Many of us during this pandemic have wisely decided to participate with the church online. Some of you, especially if health issues put you or your family at an elevated risk, have chosen to watch our services online. And we welcome that. That's why we host our services online.

But there are others of us who have just gotten into the habit of watching church online. It's easier! I don't have to wake up the kids! I don't have to fight with them about going

to church! I don't have to go out into the cold! I don't have to go out because it's raining! I can sit home and eat breakfast while I'm watching the service. I don't even have to comb my hair!

We need to understand this one truth. The Church, according to the Bible, is now the Temple of God on earth! When God's people gather together, we are the primary place where God dwells on the earth. Getting together with the people of God during a church service is not a religious duty! It's not an obligation as some churches teach! Gathering in church is not a way to prove we are good people or good Americans! Getting together with God's people to worship God to hear God's Word preached, to receive ministry, is a major way that we experience God's Spirit. If Jesus thought it was necessary to gather with God's people so that he might experience God, how much more do we need to gather together with God's people in person to experience God's presence for ourselves? Let me encourage you, if you are watching online because you have gotten out of the habit of attending in-person services, do return and gather as God's people, just as Jesus did!

What else do we learn about Jesus, the one empowered by the Holy Spirit?

Slide Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free

Jesus says that the Spirit of God was given to him for four purposes: to preach good news to the poor, to deliver people, to heal, and to work justice.

We read first of all that Jesus came to preach good news to the poor. I've joked for years that everyone in the world has a message of good news to the wealthy. Companies always have messages of good news for the wealthy. This new Tesla will go from 0 to 60 in 1.8 seconds. There is a new feature for our car. You can drive without your hands. You can climb into the backseat and grab a beer while you're hurtling down the road at 70 mph. You have money and we love you for it! Everyone has good news for the wealthy. You can borrow a million dollars and not have to pay back anything for a year. We have a special valet service just for you at our restaurant! You don't have to walk more than 20 feet before you ingest 4,000 calories!

Who is it that offers good news for the poor? Only Jesus! And the people who call themselves Jesus followers.

Jesus is telling us that a church is not proclaiming the gospel unless that church is also good news for the poor. The gospel is more than just preaching the way that we can go

to heaven after we die. The gospel, at least the gospel Jesus preached, also has to sound like good news for the poor.

The reason why Vineyard Columbus opened our community center 15 years ago, the reason why we've been running food pantries for decades, and ministered to the homeless, and came alongside women with unintended pregnancies, and is now working in prisons throughout central Ohio, and working in high schools in our city, and on and on, is because we believe that as followers of Jesus our proclamation of the true gospel must sound like good news for the poor.

But you know, the Bible doesn't just restrict the term "the poor" to those who are financially struggling. According to the Bible, the poor includes anyone who has no place to look for help other than God! You may have a fat bank account, but you suddenly become poor according to the Bible if your spouse demands a divorce. You can suddenly become poor even though you have a nice house if your daughter becomes pregnant outside of wedlock, or your son gets his girlfriend pregnant. You can suddenly become poor even though you've got a huge insurance policy if you are badly injured in an accident or you discover that you have cancer or some other debilitating disease.

According to the Bible, we are among the poor when we recognize that no amount of our willpower or savvy or strategizing will ever change the situation we're in. When

something shatters our sense of self-sufficiency, where we realize that nothing and no one can help us other than God, we are among the poor!

Listen to me. If you find yourself in a situation where you have no one and nothing to turn to other than God, we are poor according to the Bible and we need to hear the good news that Jesus has come for us! You are precisely the kind of person that the Holy Spirit wants to visit today. You can receive the good news that Jesus came for you!

I said that the Spirit of God was given to Jesus for four purposes in this text: To preach good news to the poor; to deliver people from addictions, from the demonic, from prison; to heal; and to work justice. All of these things were done by the power of Holy Spirit.

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The Holy Spirit and <u>you</u>

Many of us are in the place that the Jewish people were in at the time of the prophets, before the coming of Jesus. We've experienced a drought of the Holy Spirit. Jesus certainly thought it was possible for a Christian believer who already had the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, to gain more of God's Spirit! Indeed, in the gospel of Luke, Jesus commands us to ask, seek, and knock that we might experience a greater filling with the Holy Spirit. We read in Luke 11:9-13 these words:

SLIDE Luke 11:9-13

9“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

10For everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.

11“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?

12Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?

13If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

-We have an amazing opportunity to spend extended time making space for the Holy Spirit in our upcoming conference

-We have a special speaker, Mike Pilivachi who is someone who regularly moves in the Spirit and is a dynamic speaker.

-He has been particularly effective with teens so if you are a middle or high schooler, you want to be sure to participate.

-Mike will be speaking on student night in addition to the weekend conference.

-This is going to be an amazing opportunity for you to engage with God, so mark your calendars and plan to be here.

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HS Conference

Jesus is talking to Christians and saying, “Son, daughter, ask for more of my Spirit.”

One of the great Bible teachers of the 21st century, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once challenged Christians who claimed to have it all, who claimed there is nothing more of the Holy Spirit for them to receive and to experience,

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Got it all? I simply ask in the name of God, why then are you as you are? If you have got it all, why are you unlike the New Testament Christians? Got it all? Got it all at your conversion? Well where is it, I ask?

Many great Christian leaders throughout history have taught that it was possible to have more of God’s presence and power in our experience. These leaders have taught that Christians need to ask for another blessing – an experience of God following salvation that will result in greater holiness or greater power, or the release of spiritual gifts, or some other greater manifestation of God in one’s life. I love Anglican Bishop David Pytches’ response to whether he believed in second blessings. “Yes,” he said, “I believe in the second blessing – it comes after the first and before the third.”

In other words, God has many, many experiences of himself to share with us. My first kiss with my wife, Marlene, was not my last (praise God!). God wants to kiss you again with the Holy Spirit.

- Release Campuses
- Ministry Time

There's a story from the Old Testament book of Genesis that I was meditating on this past week found in Genesis 26. It tells us about the Jewish patriarch, Isaac. Isaac discovered that all the wells that his father, Abraham, had dug got filled up by some of the people that lived in the land, the Philistines. Isaac and his men had to dig out the wells again that had gotten filled up over the years so that they could drink water for themselves.

I was thinking about this picture of Isaac digging out the wells that got filled up over the years. I thought, "You know, that's the way it is for us right now at Vineyard Columbus." A couple of weeks ago, Pastor Eric played the testimony of the founder of the Vineyard movement, John Wimber. We heard all the wonderful things that John Wimber saw happen in his life and his church in the 1980s and 1990s. For some of us who were around in those days, we got to drink and experience the Holy Spirit in a remarkable and powerful way. But over the years, the wells that were dug got filled up with dirt. It's incumbent upon every generation to dig out wells for themselves. We can't just hear

the old, old stories. Each of us needs to experience in our lives and in our generation, the power of the Holy Spirit.

It is impossible to be the woman or man that God intends us to be without more of the Holy Spirit in our lives! It is impossible to fulfill Jesus' call to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to preach the gospel, or to do justice without more of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to feel God's love, to know that we are daughters and sons of the living God and to live in that reality without more of the Holy Spirit. Ask God for more. Be grateful, but don't ever be satisfied with what you have experienced of God's Spirit.

Asking For More of The Holy Spirit

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January 16, 2021
Naturally Supernatural
Luke 4:14-21

I. The Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ

II. The Holy Spirit and you