

# Works of the Holy Spirit in the Believer

By Jim and Carolyn Murphy

Part II

November 1995

The very Creator of this universe lives in us, by His Holy Spirit, and yet most of us are hardly even aware of His presence. In Part I of this article we began an examination of the ways the Holy Spirit dwells within us and works in our lives. We saw that He works in change, through suffering, and through breaking our willful attempts to control our own lives. In this Part II, we continue to look at the multitude of ways the Holy Spirit faithfully works in and through us.

## The Fragrance of the Holy Spirit

Did you know that the Bible says God *smells* the Holy Spirit in us? Some time ago I was in the departure lounge of a Malaysian Airport waiting to board a plane for Madras, India. To my knowledge I was the only Westerner there. Most of the three hundred or more people waiting were Indian. As I sat observing the people, I felt the Holy Spirit showing me the spiritual darkness that enshrouds those whom the Hindu demon-gods have enslaved.

Then an elderly Indian woman walked past me and sat nearby. As she sat down our eyes met. Instantly I saw in her the light of Jesus and sensed the sweet fragrance of the Holy Spirit. Before I could say anything she smiled at me and said, "You're a Christian, aren't you?" I responded, "Glory to God!" We both had a joyful laugh and some good, Christ-centered fellowship.

Isn't it amazing that in a room of hundreds of people we recognized each other? Yet it shouldn't amaze us, for the Scripture says,

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and *through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him*. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. (2 Cor 2:14-16 NIV, emphasis added.)

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is a sweet presence or fragrance within us! To the souls hungry for God and the salvation of Jesus Christ, it causes a sweet irresistible attraction. Paul says, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (2 Cor 4:7 NIV) I'm sure that at least part of that treasure in us is the wonderful, God-pleasing scent of the Holy Spirit.

## Holy Spirit In Evangelism

We see in Scripture several examples of the Holy Spirit leading a believer to share the good news of Jesus

Christ. Often this leading stretches our human concept of the extent of God's encompassing love. The Apostle Peter is an excellent example. Peter, as a devout Jew, had never thought of preaching Jesus to the Gentiles. But Scripture tells us that people from *every nation, tribe, language, and people group on earth* will one day stand before Jesus and worship him. (See Rev 7:9.)

Remember how the Holy Spirit overcame Peter's prejudice against Gentiles in the story of Peter's vision on the rooftop in Joppa? (See Acts 10:9-23.) In Peter's vision unclean animals were placed before him with a command, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." Peter responds, "Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

The voice spoke to Peter three times, and then finally said, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." While Peter was pondering the meaning of the vision, "unclean Gentiles" sent from the Roman centurion, Cornelius, stood at the gate asking for Simon Peter.

Then the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go down stairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." Peter did as he was commanded and we have the beginnings of the Gentile Pentecost!

The Apostle Paul provides another scriptural example of how the Holy Spirit moves in the believer to tell others about Christ. Paul felt restrained by the Holy Spirit from entering Asia and Bithynia. But one night Paul had a vision of a man in Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:9 NIV) After the vision, Paul and his companions went to Macedonia to spread the gospel.

Both of these scriptural examples are rather dramatic. More commonly the Holy Spirit works in less spectacular ways. Often He may simply point out a co-worker, a neighbor, or a casual acquaintance, and gently prompt us to tell him or her of Jesus' salvation. Remember, the Holy Spirit can and does communicate with us. He can send a thought into our mind, or cause a quickening in our spirit in such a way that as we ponder that thought or leading, it becomes more alive within us. As this is occurring, we become more and more certain that it is the Holy Spirit within us who is directing us and not just our own thoughts or feelings.

Let me tell you about what happened to me just a few weeks ago in Africa. I was with a brother at a Catholic retreat center where I was to spend the night and catch my plane the next morning. We had only been there a short time when we met two men from Switzerland. One man was in his mid-thirties and the other was in his early twenties. As we talked, we got mixed spiritual signals from the

older man so I finally asked him, "Have you taken Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?" He said, "Oh, yes, I've done that." (We later found out that this older man had a mixture of ideas including Buddhism, New Age, and so on.)

However, as soon as I mentioned Jesus, the young man said "Oh, please tell me more about Jesus." In my spirit and my mind I knew immediately that he was the reason for the meeting. I "felt," if you will, that the Holy Spirit had arranged this meeting and that this young man had a heart for the Lord. For the next hour we explained the gospel to him. Neither my friend nor I doubted for one minute that the Holy Spirit had caused this meeting so we could share the gospel with a hungry heart.

The Holy Spirit is at work in every believer, to at least occasionally prompt us to share the sweet story of salvation with those we encounter. Then He, the Holy Spirit, does the drawing of the person from the darkness of this world into the kingdom of light. Our job is simply to obey the leading and leave the rest to the Lord.

### **In Things To Come**

John's Gospel records a period of intense instruction by Jesus to the Disciples just before His arrest. Much insight into the ministry of the Holy Spirit is gained in these chapters. (John 13-16) In Jesus' teaching He said, "the Spirit of truth . . . will tell you what is yet to come." (Jn 16:13)

I remember one occasion when the Holy Spirit told me that my employer would soon offer me a specific, new position and that I should take it. In less than a week I was offered the job He told me about! While instances of the Holy Spirit alerting us as to future occurrences are rather rare, they do occur.

### **He Gives Life**

Even the act of our salvation involves the Holy Spirit, though it is made possible through the shed blood of Jesus. John tells us in his epistle "The Spirit gives life." (Jn 6:63) I believe John was speaking of spiritual life, the rebirth in Christ, not physical life. Thus, it appears that the Spirit has an active role in our life-giving salvation. Certainly we know from John 6:44 that Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. . . ." Who but the Holy Spirit, as God's agent, would draw us to Jesus?

### **The Holy Spirit Comes On Us**

When we hear the phrase, the "Spirit came on him" we think primarily of the Old Testament. For example, in 1 Chronicles, the Scripture says, "Then the Spirit came upon Amasai." (12:18) But we also find the Holy Spirit moving

on people in the New Testament. In Acts 1:8 we see these words: ". . . the Holy Spirit comes on you." It is my belief that this statement is intended to imply that when the Spirit "comes on" someone, it is for a special purpose, a special endowment of power. In 1 Chronicles, the Spirit comes on Amasai, and causes him and his men to swear their allegiance to David. This seems to be the case in the New Testament as well. In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells his followers that ". . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." (NIV)

### **The Holy Spirit Guides/Leads Us**

I believe the Holy Spirit very often guides us though we are not aware of it. Scripture says, ". . . those who are led by the Spirit of God" (Rom 8:14), and ". . . you are led by the Spirit" (Gal 5:18).

Luke makes this statement about the Holy Spirit, "Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts." Peter speaks of the prophets who ". . . were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet 1:21) Many times I have seen the Holy Spirit seemingly take full control of a person. This is particularly true of one who is mature in the Lord and who is willing to yield to the Spirit.

I know such a man. Once he was in the lobby of a hotel when the Spirit moved him to walk up to a young woman who was obviously not a Westerner, and begin speaking to her in tongues! He did. To his amazement she understood his speech and was soon crying. She later told him that he was speaking to her in her native language telling her of Jesus' love. As a result of this extraordinary occurrence, she received Jesus as her Savior!

There have been times when I "just happened" to encounter a person unexpectedly who needed a word of encouragement or prayer. There are times when the thought comes to my mind to telephone someone whom I haven't seen for some time. The moment he or she answers the phone I know the Holy Spirit prompted the call. All of us have had such experiences.

### **The Holy Spirit Guides Us Into All Truth**

Jesus said ". . . he will guide you into all truth" (Jn 16:13), and, "I am the way and the truth. . . ." (Jn 14:6) Jesus also told us, ". . . the Counselor, the Holy Spirit. . . will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (Jn 14:26) and, "When the Counselor comes. . . the Spirit of truth. . . he will testify about me." (Jn 15:26)

But we need to understand that He will reveal truth to us only if we fulfill two conditions. The first condition is that we must be willing to **act** on that truth. For Jesus said, "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on

my own." (Jn 7:17 NIV) The principle contained in this statement says, "we must be willing to **obey** truth, or we will not know truth."

The second condition is that we must be willing to hold to His teaching. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples, then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (Jn 8:31-32 NIV)

Over the years I have been faced with situations in which the truth was evasive or hard to discern. I have learned to take such matters to the Lord and leave them there. I ask the Holy Spirit to bear witness in my spirit to the truth in the matter. The Holy Spirit is faithful and, in His time, the truth concerning the issue does become clear.

### **The Holy Spirit Reveals Things To Us**

Jesus said, ". . . the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you." (Jn 16:15) Paul states, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit . . ." (Rom 8:16), "The Spirit clearly says that in later times . . ." (1 Tim 4:1) and ". . . but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." (1 Cor 2:10) Luke said, "It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit . . ." (Lk 2:26)

I am reminded of the time in Acts that Ananias and Sapphira decided to lie to Peter about the price of the property they sold. The Holy Spirit revealed the lie to Peter with powerful consequences. (See Acts 5:1-11)

On a less serious note, I have known of the Holy Spirit's revealing to parents the hidden misdeeds of their children. I know of one teenager who ran away from home to another city. God, by His Holy Spirit, gave her father the street address where she was hiding! He got in the car, drove to that city, found the right house, and found his daughter!

### **The Holy Spirit Speaks Through Us**

Matthew writes, ". . . for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." (Mat 10:20) Mark says the same, ". . . for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit." (Mk 13:11) The context here involves Christians under persecution who are called to account for their testimony of Jesus. Plainly, the Holy Spirit empowers believers at these times; He will stand with us and speak through us.

But there are also other times when He will speak through us, especially when we are witnessing to the lost about the salvation that is in Christ, or the truths of His word.

I recall a time when I was exhorting a young Christian to be careful about what he said with his mouth. I told him that words are powerful and we will be held accountable for them. He asked, "Can you show me that in Scripture?" For a few seconds, I was at a total loss. I knew this

to be a valid biblical principle, but I couldn't begin to locate the Scriptures in my mind. Then the thought came into my mind, "Matthew 12:37!" I said, "Yes, look at Matthew 12:37." We both turned there in our Bibles and saw these words, "For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." I believe this was clearly the Holy Spirit speaking through me warning that young man to be careful of his words.

### **The Holy Spirit Brings Gifts**

The Holy Spirit brings gifts to us: "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. . . To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." (1 Cor 12:7-12 NIV) Hebrews 2:4 says, "and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." (This is not the proper place to explain the gifts listed above. I simply make reference to them as from the Holy Spirit.)

### **Fellowship With the Holy Spirit**

Paul writes to the Corinthian church, ". . . and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Cor 13:14) At times we meet a brother or sister in Christ and there is instant fellowship. The fellowship deepens as time passes. This is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. Fellowship with other believers by the Holy Spirit is one of the most wonderful blessings God has given us.

### **The Holy Spirit Brings Hope**

I have heard it said that hope is the lamp of the soul. We all need hope. Yet, even hope is a product of the Holy Spirit's work. ". . . that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom 15:13) In this verse, Paul prayed, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **as you trust in him**, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom 15:13 NIV, emphasis added). It seems that Paul is telling us that the key to receiving this hope is "trusting in Him."

### **The Holy Spirit Brings Joy**

All of us have experienced the joy of the Lord from time to time. It is so refreshing to enter into that joy. Again, from Scripture we see that even His joy is the work of the Holy Spirit. ". . . full of joy through the Holy Spirit . . ." (Lk 10:21) ". . . and joy in the Holy Spirit . . ." (Rom 14:17)

". . .with the joy given by the Holy Spirit." (1 Thes 1:6)

### **The Holy Spirit Gives Rest**

God has a rest for His people. Isaiah wrote, ". . . they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD." (Isa 63:14) The writer of Hebrews wrote, "It still remains that some will enter that rest . . ." But he went on to say some, ". . . did not go in, because of their disobedience." (4:6) "For anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following their example of disobedience." (Heb 4:10,11 NIV)

It is clear from these Scriptures that the Holy Spirit brings God's rest to those who obey His word.

### **The Holy Spirit Intercedes**

". . . the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." (Rom 8:27) What a wonderful truth this is! There are times for all of us when we just don't have the right words, the will, or energy to pray through a situation. Even then, we can know the Holy Spirit is praying God's perfect will for us. This is so comforting.

### **The Holy Spirit Searches**

"The Spirit searches all things . . ." (1 Cor 2:10) One of the Holy Spirit's works in the believer is that of purification. He is always searching the heart looking for things in us that obstruct the work of the Lord. And, as we saw in Part I of this article, when the Holy Spirit finds that darkness in the heart, He is faithful to act as God's agent to help us rid ourselves of it.

### **The Holy Spirit Drives Out Demons**

Several times in the gospels we see Jesus casting demons out of people. Jesus told us He did that by the power of the Holy Spirit when He said, ". . . I drive out demons by the Spirit of God . . ." (Mat 12:28) In Luke 10:18,19

Jesus gave us that same authority over demons in His name. It is interesting to realize that it is the Holy Spirit who actually drives the demons out at our command.

### **The Holy Spirit Speaks To Us If We Will Quiet Ourselves and Listen**

From the many examples of Scripture shown above it is quite clear that the Holy Spirit frequently speaks to us. Why then are we Christians so quick to say, "God doesn't speak to me"? I believe that it is because most of the time we are not quiet enough to even hear His voice. Or, if the Holy Spirit does try to speak over the noise in our own mind, often we don't recognize His voice. The more time we spend in prayer and meditating on His word, the more we are able to hear His voice as He speaks to us by His Holy Spirit.

### **Conclusion**

The Holy Spirit is indeed working in each of us. He regularly communicates with us. He is God's agent to cause our spirits, souls, and bodies to become more sanctified. This enables us to respond more and more to our call to holiness. It enables us to be part of that "radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." (Eph 5:27 NIV)

And, as part of that radiant church, we are called to spread the gospel. Paul said, "And he has committed us to the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Cor 2:19,20 NIV)

Holy Father, we humbly ask You to make us more sensitive to the work of Your precious Holy Spirit in our lives. Help us to recognize His voice and grant us the ability to be quick to obey Him. For we know that You have sent Him into our very beings to perfect us so we may live eternally in Your presence. Grant also that we become cooperative, able, and zealous fellow workers with Your Holy Spirit to bring the light of Jesus Christ to this dark world. Amen!

## **HUNDREDFOLD MINISTRIES, INTERNATIONAL**

P. O. Box 625  
Blue Jay, CA 92317

Telephone 909/336-9701

E-mail: [jim.murphy@hundredfold.org](mailto:jim.murphy@hundredfold.org) Web site: [www.hundredfold.org](http://www.hundredfold.org)

Rev. Jim Murphy and his wife, Carolyn, of Blue Jay, California, United States, head Hundredfold Ministries, International. They write Christian teaching literature and travel to the Developing Nations of the world teaching Christian leaders. Hundredfold Ministries, Int'l is a cross-denominational Christian ministry dedicated to strengthening the church in the Developing Nations of the world.

Hundredfold Ministries, Int'l provides in-country Bible school courses and leadership training seminars. The classes and seminars are taught by seasoned, anointed teachers. The subject matter is directed towards the development and maturing of Christian leaders. The goal of the Ministry is to produce leaders who will be better equipped to lead and direct national churches.

All of Hundredfold Ministries training material is available from our web site listed above. Pastors in the Developing Nations may receive this material free of charge by going on our web site and requesting it.