



# ONWARD

21 DAY FAST // 2017



WEEK THREE  
DEVOTIONAL

## Day 15 // January 30

*Empowered for Righteousness // Robert Morris*

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

Romans 8:1

The story of the day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 paints a vivid picture of the Holy Spirit coming after Jesus ascended into heaven. When you ask Christians what happened on that day, most are quick to talk about how flaming tongues rested on the heads of Jesus' followers. They might also talk about how Jesus' followers spilled out into the street from the upper room and preached in languages they'd never spoken before. These are amazing miracles, but there's something that took place that few people tend to grasp, and I think it might be the biggest miracle of all.

The day of Pentecost was the first time since the Fall of man that the Holy Spirit empowered men to live righteously. We know Jesus' death and resurrection have put us in right standing with God, but the Holy Spirit actually empowers us to live according to that righteous position.

Did you know that Pentecost is a Jewish feast that celebrates Moses receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai? Consider the magnitude of what God was doing when He sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. From the time the Law was given to Moses until the Holy Spirit came, it was impossible to keep the Law. In fact, Moses didn't even make it to the bottom of the mountain before the children of Israel had broken the commandments. But in Acts 2, during the celebration of God sending His commandments, He sent the Holy Spirit to empower us to be righteous.

Because of the Holy Spirit, instead of being held to the impossible standards of the Old Testament law, we can now walk according to the law of love Jesus speaks about in Matthew 22:35-40.

This is good news because we cannot live righteously without the power of the Holy Spirit. But because of what happened in that upper room on the day of Pentecost, we can now live righteously!

## NOTES

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## MEMORY VERSE

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."*

- Romans 8:1

## PRAYER

*Holy Spirit, thank You for bringing Your presence to us on the day of Pentecost and for empowering us to live rightly before Christ. As I go about my day today, remind me of Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

*Matthew 3:11; 22:35-40; Acts 2:5-13; Ephesians 2:19-22*

## Day 16 // January 31

### *He Baptizes Us // Robert Morris*

*Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*

Luke 24:49

Have you ever been out to dinner and the waiter comes by after the meal to ask if you saved room for dessert? Most of the time, people say, "No, thanks." When Debbie and I are out to dinner, I'll peruse the dessert menu and find something that looks really good. When the waiter comes by, just before I order the hot fudge brownie with ice cream, I'll look at Debbie and notice a certain look on her face. She doesn't have to say anything to let me know I shouldn't order that dessert. That's when I tell the waiter, "No, thanks."

This is a funny illustration, but it's similar to the way many Christians view the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In fact, many Christians aren't even aware of it. The Bible says there are actually three separate baptisms that can take place in the life of a believer. There's the baptism of the Holy Spirit, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first one, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13, happens when we get saved. The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. Essentially, the Holy Spirit introduces us to Christ.

After that, Scripture tells us to get baptized in water, which is the outward expression of what has taken place within. It signals that our old nature has been washed away. The third baptism is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which empowers us to live righteously, and it takes place when Jesus baptizes us in the Spirit.

Jesus was the first person ever baptized in the Holy Spirit and the first person the Holy Spirit descended upon and then remained within. In Acts 2, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would do the same with us, thereby empowering us to walk in a new life.

However, many Christians avoid this third baptism because they think they don't need it. After all, the first baptism—getting saved and believing in Jesus—is all we need to get to heaven. But the Bible says when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are given power from on high. Let me tell you from experience, the Christian walk is much easier with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do you need another baptism? Do you want to be immersed in the Holy Spirit? You don't have to wait. Receive Him today.

## NOTES

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## MEMORY VERSE

*"Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar."* - Psalm 138:6

## PRAYER

*Holy Spirit, thank You for introducing me to Jesus and for bringing me to salvation. Thank You that when we receive You, You help us to live holy lives full of Your power and grace. I receive You today. Immerse me in Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

*Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; 1 Corinthians 12:13*

## Day 17 // February 1

### *Removing The "I" // Robert Morris*

*Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly;  
but the proud He knows from afar.*

Psalm 138:6

I remember the first time I asked Jesus to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. I knew I needed a relationship with Him, but I had a lot of pride. I grew up believing some negative things about the Holy Spirit and was afraid I might turn into one of the strange people I had seen who made being filled with the Spirit look unappealing to me.

When I asked to receive the Holy Spirit, I wanted it to be on my own terms. I remember thinking to myself, I want the power of the Holy Spirit but I don't want to be weird. I wanted Him in my life, but, because of my misconceptions, I wasn't fully open to receiving Him. So when I first invited Him in, nothing changed in my life. My pride kept that relationship from developing. Thankfully, after studying Scripture and realizing who He really is (not spooky or weird, by the way), I humbled myself and opened my heart to the Spirit, and He truly changed my life.

Abraham's life also changed when he encountered the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. In Genesis 17:5, we read God changes Abram's name to Abraham. You might wonder what Abraham's name change has to do with the Holy Spirit. It has everything to do with Him! The new letter in his name is h, and that's significant because in Hebrew, h is ruah, which means "spirit." So his new name symbolizes God pouring His Spirit upon Abraham. Ten verses later, in Genesis 17:15, God changes Sarai's name to Sarah, and I think there's a little detail in verse 15 that says a lot. God removed the i from Sarah's name and added the h. This is a perfect analogy because I think many of us need to take the prideful "I" out of our lives to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Is there pride in your life holding you back from receiving all the Holy Spirit has for you? The Bible is clear that when we humble ourselves, the Holy Spirit can do a greater work through



## Day 18 // February 2

### *He Gives Gifts // Robert Morris*

*There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

Have you ever received a gift you didn't deserve? How did it make you feel? As Christians, we've all been given a free gift. Through Christ, we're given the gift of grace, which puts us in right standing with God the Father. It's a humbling feeling to know that without God's grace in our lives, we can't do anything. Grace is the gift we receive when we are saved, but God gives us another set of gifts when we're baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Paul lists them very clearly in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healings, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. What Paul says in verse 11 is important to understand: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills." He's saying that when the Holy Spirit gives you a gift, it still belongs to Him. God doesn't permanently assign one person the gift of prophecy and another person the gift of healings. The Holy Spirit is the owner, and when we are baptized in Him, He can give us any of the gifts to use at any time—not just one gift.

If the thought of being given one of these gifts sounds intimidating, I want to encourage you. The Holy Spirit gives them to us so we can bless people—not to make them uncomfortable or think we're strange. In 1 Corinthians 12:7, Paul reveals this truth when he says, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all."

There's another truth that's unlocked in this verse. Each of us who are filled with the Spirit can receive a gift. It's not just for the "super-spiritual" people who seem to have it all together. It's for any believer who is willing to humble himself and be used by the Holy Spirit.





## Day 19 // February 3

### *Build Yourself Up // Robert Morris*

*For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

1 Corinthians 14:2

By now you know that I had a little trouble fully accepting the Holy Spirit at first, and a big part of it had to do with speaking in tongues. I was terrified of it! So when Debbie and I were baptized in the Holy Spirit at Shady Grove Church (now our Grand Prairie Campus), I didn't speak in tongues right away. Debbie, on the other hand, immediately began speaking a few syllables.

A few months later, we were getting ready for church one morning and Debbie had a silly grin on her face. "What are you grinning about?" I asked her. Afraid of embarrassing me, she reluctantly said, "I heard you speaking in tongues last night." As it turns out, I was so hard headed that my spirit had to wait until I was asleep to pray!

This humorous story sheds light on the way many Christians view the grace of tongues. The reason I use the word grace is because the word for gift in the New Testament, "charismata," is literally translated "grace gift." In other words, it's a gift we didn't earn. Some people call this gift their prayer language or praying in the Spirit. Many of us grew up in a church where the gifts of the Spirit were either abused or not used at all, and so we may have had bad experiences with some gifts, especially this one. However, I want you to know that when used according to Scripture, the private grace of speaking in tongues is a wonderful thing that brings many benefits to our lives.

First, I want you to know this is different from the gift of tongues, which is a message from God that must be accompanied by the gift of interpretation. One of the biggest differences is that while the Holy Spirit administers the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues as He chooses, we are all graced with a prayer language when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit (even if we don't realize it). And while some don't realize

they have it and others choose not to use it, those who do are activating some amazing benefits.

In 1 Corinthians 14:4, Paul says, “He who speaks in tongues edifies himself.” And Jude 20 says we can build ourselves up by “praying in the Holy Spirit.” When we use our prayer language, we are actually building ourselves up. No wonder Paul was so passionate about his prayer language. In 1 Corinthians 14:18 he says, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.”

If you’ve never had a prayer language but you feel the Holy Spirit stirring you, I’d like to encourage you to get alone with God, spend some time in worship and the Word, and just start praying in a language you don’t know. You might start with just a few syllables. Just as you trust God for other things in your life, trust Him today that your spirit is praying and let Him build you up.

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## MEMORY VERSE

*“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”*  
- 1 Corinthians 14:1

## PRAYER

*Holy Spirit, thank You for offering the gift of a prayer language to all of us. Thank You that You’ve given our spirits a way to connect with You when we may not know how to pray. Show me how to use this gift for my edification and for Your glory. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

*Romans 8:26,27; 1 Corinthians 12:29–31; Ephesians 4:16*

**Day 20 // February 4**  
*Gift of Faith // Robert Morris*

*Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace, be still!' And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. But He said to them, 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?' And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, 'Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!'*

Mark 4:39-41

Have you ever gotten a bad report from the doctor? We've all gotten some kind of bad report in our lives at one time or another. It may have had to do with finances, our job, or our family. But have you ever had the Holy Spirit come in and give you faith for that situation? It's a gift that causes you to say, "I know I'm going through a tough situation, but God just spoke to me about it, and I believe He's going to help me."

That's the gift of the Spirit called the gift of faith, which is one of the dynamic gifts. You might think it's odd that faith can be a gift of the Spirit because every part of being a Christian requires immense faith. The gift of faith is much different from the faith we use every day. It's the supernatural impartation of belief and confidence for a specific situation.

Take the story of Ananias in Acts 9. Before Paul became a great apostle, his name was Saul. He was infamous for trying to destroy the early church and having its members arrested and beaten, and he even participated in the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. So when God called Ananias to tell Saul about Jesus and invite him to receive the Holy Spirit, it might have felt like an impossible situation. Imagine the fear and doubt that must have gone through Ananias's mind. What gave him the boldness to obey God? I believe the Holy Spirit gave him the gift of faith. Ananias brazenly went to Saul, and through his obedience, one of the most influential people of our faith came to know Jesus. God changed Saul's name to Paul, and he went on to write a third of the New Testament.

If you're facing a difficult situation right now—even if it's not as serious as the situation Ananias faced—the Holy Spirit wants



**Day 21 // February 5**  
*My Best Friend // Robert Morris*

*If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

Luke 11:13

There's a story about a poor man who had immigrated to America from Europe in search of work in the 1800s. When he and his family arrived in New York, they quickly found that overcrowding and lack of job opportunities made life there very difficult. After several years of surviving on what little money they could earn, the man learned about opportunities to become rich across the country in California. They saved for months until he had enough money for a train ticket. The train ride would last more than a week, so the man wrapped some cheese and bread in a cloth.

Every day of the journey, he could smell the aroma of the wonderful meals coming from the dining car. He dreamed of sitting in that car eating a warm dinner. After a week, his bread and cheese were gone and there were still several days left on the journey. When the train finally arrived, the dining car steward approached the man and said, "Sir, I hope we haven't offended you, but we never saw you in the dining car." The man replied, "Oh no. Everyone on the train has been so gracious. I just didn't have the money for meals during the journey." The steward looked perplexed and asked, "Sir, were you aware that meals in the dining car were included in the price of the train ticket?" By then it was too late. The man had missed his opportunity for blessing and provision on the journey.

There are so many Christians just like this man. God has set the table for us, but so many of us don't show up to receive all He has for us. Instead, we choose to barely get by on our own.

But the truth is that God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit and it's available to every Christian. Now that you've read through this devotional, if you've never received the Holy Spirit, I pray that you'll ask God for this wonderful gift. Don't spiritually



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