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Life Giving Water!

1st in a series of 3

For the next several weeks we will be talking about the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? What do you know about him? We find him mentioned in the very beginning of the Bible in...

Slide #8 Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the water.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He is a person. He is not a 'thing' or an 'it' or a 'power'. He is the 3rd person of the Trinity. His is not a spook or a ghost or an alien. He is a person and he needs to be treated as such.

It's interesting that the NWT, the scriptures translated by the Jehovah's Witnesses, who don't believe in the Trinity, reads,

Slide #9 Genesis 1:2 NWT 'And God's active force was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.'

They have removed the person from the Holy Spirit, to them he has become an 'active force' because they don't believe in the...Three in One, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

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Both the Hebrew of the OT and Greek of the NT define Holy as sacred and consecrated and it has to do with being hallowed, dedicated or set apart.

Both the Hebrew of the OT and the Greek of the NT define Spirit as wind, air or breath. So the Holy Spirit can be defined as 'Sacred Air'. Therefore he is like air... all around us and within us. He is omnipresent!

In the OT the Holy Spirit inspired rulers like Samson and came upon him with such great power that he was able to do things that he could never have done otherwise! He ripped a lion apart with his bare hands, killed thirty men when a deal went sour, snapped ropes like they were threads and destroyed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey.

The Holy Spirit came upon and changed people like Saul and caused him to prophecy. He impacted speech and spoke through David. He anointed prophets and empowered them to preach the Good News and provided rest for his people.

In the NT things changed. Before Jesus died and was resurrected he promised his followers that when he went home to his Father... he would send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. It's not that the Holy Spirit left and needed to return... but rather he was coming in a new way.

Now the Holy Spirit would live within us, and he would fill us, and possess us, and own us, because we were

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bought with a price by Jesus. In fact now we can be baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the OT the Spirit of God came upon people for a period of time and completely at God's discretion. Now the Holy Spirit can live within all of us, all the time, at our invitation!

Slide #10 The Holy Spirit is... God come beside us, to work in us, in ways that will bring through us... things that could never be... otherwise.

There are two things that I wanted for my daughters ever since they were born. This isn't all I wanted for them and these two things are by far not the most important things... but nevertheless... I wanted them to accomplish two things.

1) I wanted them to learn how to swim. So that in case they ever got dumped into the water somewhere... they would survive.

2) I want them to learn how to drive stick shift. I know this may seem silly to many of you who have always lived in an automatic world, but I wanted my daughters to be capable of driving any vehicle... if the need arose.

So my kids have heard about, ridden in, or driven stick shift cars all their lives. As they came of age, one by one, they would get the dad talk on stick shift cars.

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Slide #11 And I would go into great detail at the dinner table and explain to them what the drive train of a car looks like and I would use cups and saucers and plates or whatever was in front of me, to explain to them how pistons go up and down and turn the crank shaft of the engine. And I would explain how the power goes from the engine to the transmission to the drive shaft to the differential to the wheels.

And I would explain that in order to change gears there needs to be a break in the power... and the break in the power comes from disengaging the clutch. And I would explain how a clutch works by holding up two dinner plates... but this morning... thanks to Mike Donnell... I have an actual clutch assembly... so I need two volunteers.

The engine is here and on this end of the engine is the flywheel... and as long as the engine is spinning... the fly wheel is spinning.

This is the pressure plate which is connected to the fly wheel, so as long as the fly wheel is spinning... the pressure plate is spinning the same way.

This is a clutch plate and the clutch plate is in between the fly wheel and the pressure plate but it is connected to the transmission by a shaft and it only spins when the clutch is engaged which forces the pressure plate, against the clutch plate, against the fly wheel and now everything is spinning... including the engine, the fly wheel, the clutch plate, the pressure plate, the

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transmission, the drive shaft, the differential and the wheels.

The bottom line is this... the clutch breaks the power of the drive train by separating the plates and allowing the shifting to take place without grinding. When the clutch is in, or disengaged, the plates are apart. When the clutch is out, or engaged, the plates are together, they are locked in and the power is direct.

In an automatic transmission... the lock in is never there because it is fluid driven and consequently fuel mileage is compromised.

If you're here today and you are a mechanic and if I'm wrong... please don't tell me... because I don't want to know... because I have told all my daughters this from the beginning. And I have encouraged them to get stick shift cars and they have... in fact my youngest daughter named the car she drives... sticky.

The beauty of a stick shift is that it locks in... it becomes fully engaged... so that when the engine spins... everything spins!

Slide #12 So we have titled these messages 'Locked In', because I want us to learn how to get locked into the Holy Spirit of God... so we can become fully engaged with and completely connected to the Spirit of God...so that when the Spirit of God moves... we move... and when the Spirit of God stops... we stop!

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Slide #13 So that we can experience... things that could never be otherwise!

Over the next three weeks we are going to explore six symbols of the Holy Spirit... two each week. A symbol is a sign or a representation of the real things. Most weddings that I have performed have what is called a ring ceremony. Megan and Justin Tekely just got married two weeks ago and they placed rings on each other's fingers and then repeated after me...

Meggan, (Justin) I give you this ring as a symbol of my love for you,

And they did this because it is a symbol, a well known symbol that everyone in America understands. Not everyone respects the wedding ring... but all of us understand what it symbolizes and this is why I wear a wedding ring because it makes a clear statement... I'm married! It's not my marriage... but it is a symbol of my marriage.

So this morning we are going to look at two of the six symbols of the Holy Spirit from the scriptures.

Slide #14 The title of the message this morning is 'Life Giving Water'... because both of the symbols that we will be looking at this morning are water symbols.

Slide #15 Last week we were challenged by 'World Vision' to make clean water an option for everyone around the world because there are still 1 billion

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people that are without clean water. Water brings life and I quote...

Slide #16 Access to clean water has a more dramatic effect on life than any other humanitarian intervention. Clean water can change everything for a child. It brings health, nutrition, education, a vibrant community, a hopeful future.

Over the past twenty years, World Vision has helped provide clean water for more than 10 million people. The cost is less than a penny a day... we can afford this! This past year TL gave \$10,066.44 to the bucket offering! And this morning we are going began giving to World Vision.

Invite the ushers up for the Bucket Offering:

Anyway... back to the message. John the Baptist once said...

Slide #17 Mark 1:7-11 "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Slide #18 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

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There are a number of benefits that happen when we are baptized and if you have never experienced believer's baptism, I invite you this morning to consider it... so that you can experience these benefits.

Let's go to our notes.

Slide #19 Benefits of baptism:

1) There is this divine approval.

What did the Father say? 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.' These are the very same words that every son and daughter craves to hear from their father. In fact some children spend a lifetime... wishing desperately that their father would speak these words.

2) There is this tearing of the heavens. Mark writes, 'he saw heaven being torn open'. There is this parting... after we are baptized we have access to the heavens in a way that we would never have otherwise.

3) There is this overflow of ministry and mission in our lives.

Slide #20 Luke 4:14-15 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

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It all started with the baptism, the baptism of water, and in the process the Spirit descended on him like a dove and from that time forward the Holy Spirit began to lead him to minister to people. Water is a symbol of cleansing and refreshment and overflow... and therefore it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Slide #21 Acts 2:17-18 In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

This is Peter's first sermon at Pentecost and on this very special occasion the Holy Spirit was poured out in a new way and the believers assembled were filled with the Holy Spirit. Peter is quoting from Joel chapter 2 and it goes like this.

Slide #22 Joel 2:22-29 Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.

Slide #23 The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. 'I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten — the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts

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and the locust swarm—my great army that I sent among you.

Slide #24 You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the Lord your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the Lord your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.

Slide #25 And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Let's go to our notes.

Slide #26 Symbol #1 The Holy Spirit will pour rain on us. (The Painting)

Rain refreshes where there is dryness. Rain restores where there is loss. Rain turns the brown things of life to green. All of us here this morning have experience drought in some way. All of us have experienced the destruction of the locust in some way... whether the great locust or the young locust or the other locust or the swarm of locust... we have experienced the locust. Remember the series last winter... How to get through what you're going through!

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We have experienced the nibbling away in our lives by things that drain us and tear us down. For some of us it may be a slow fade... like Casting Crown sings... for others of us it may be abrupt... like Kendall told us last week when his brother woke up one morning and found his wife as cold as ice... and his life changed forever!

We can be assured that if we have the Holy Spirit... he will come on us like rain and will come as a promise of hope on a barren land and the Holy Spirit will rain on us with the spring rains and the fall rains and will come upon us with abundant showers.

Do you need refreshing today? It doesn't necessarily mean that you have backslidden or that you are living in sin or that you have rejected God... but maybe you are feeling dry today and are desperately in need of the rain of refreshment.

Slide #27 John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."

Slide #28 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Let's go to our notes.

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Slide #29 Symbol #2 The Holy Spirit will open rivers in us. (The Painting)

Notice these two symbols. First of all the Holy Spirit will rain down on us and refresh us and secondly the Holy Spirit will cause rivers of living water to flow out of us. In other words, we can become channels of refreshment to other people and other places... wherever the water of the Spirit is needed.

Maybe you are dry this morning... bone dry and desperately in need of the rain of the Holy Spirit? Maybe you are well watered but bloating because there is no place for the waters to flow to?

Slide #30 Dick Halverson, former chaplain of the senate, once said, 'everywhere you go this week is someplace Jesus needs to be and the only way he can get there is through you.'

We heard this last week from Kendall Keeler. God is present here, in the car, in the bathroom and in our cell phones. This is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So how can we receive the rain of the Holy Spirit in our lives? How can we become rivers of living water to others? Luke 11:9-13 Jesus said...

Slide #31 Luke 11:9-13 "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. For everyone who

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asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Slide #32 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?"

Slide #33 If 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!"

One word... ask!

I remember back in the day when it became cool for guys to have longer hair... and I wanted to let my hair grow... and there was one problem... and her name was Esther... and she was my mother. She cut my hair and she was the one who decided how long my hair would be.

And I remember trying to work up the courage to ask her if I could let me hair grow...and it took a while because I just knew she would say 'no'. And one day I finally asked... and I will never forget her response... she just looked at me and shrugged and said... OK and I was shocked! And I learned that day the value of the ask! If we desire to be locked into the work and movement of the Holy Spirit... we need to ask.

When we ask for the Holy Spirit we can't get anything else! It's just not in God's nature to give us anything

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else. He is our Father and a father wants good gifts for his children. He will give us the Holy Spirit and he will open up the floodgates and a mighty river will flow out of us... but we need to ask.

Folks listen to this song and invite the Holy Spirit to refresh you and flow from you. Ask... just ask!

Slide #34 Video Clip: Open up the Heavens

Wrap Up: We are going to learn more about the Holy Spirit. He wants to invade our lives but we need to ask him.

So over the next several weeks we are going to be looking at what it means to be locked into the Holy Spirit.

In two weeks, on Sunday morning January 25, we are going to invite you to fast with us... for a special time of inviting the Holy Spirit to fill us, change us and baptize us. I don't know what all that week will bring... but I know that God has something great in store for us.

Benediction:

The Spirit flows.

The Spirit washes.

The Spirit baptizes.

The Spirit is poured out.

So it is that those carried about by the Spirit swim in the flow of a mighty torrent.

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They are saturated, even soaked with the Spirit of Christ.

It is our privilege to live in these days.

Go and may the Spirit within you, drench your world.