

# The Spirit-Filled Church

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**Acts 1:4–8 (NKJV) “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me;’<sup>5</sup> for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’<sup>7</sup> And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.’<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

Jesus commanded His disciples not to proceed with ministry until they were endued with power from on high. If the disciples needed the Spirit's presence and power back then, how much more do we need Him in the days of darkness in which we live!

In the Old Testament the Day of Pentecost marked the day that God gave the Law on Mt. Sinai. In the New Testament it marked the day that God poured out His Holy Spirit upon His church. On that day, the church became Spirit-filled. Every New Testament church is to be known as a Spirit-filled church. If there has ever been a time when the church needs to be known for being Spirit-filled, it is now. So, what is a Spirit-filled church?

Before stating what a Spirit-filled church *is*, let me state clearly what it is *not*. A Spirit-filled church is *not* a signs, wonders, and miracles church. Although signs, wonders, and miracles can *characterize* a Spirit-filled church, these things are not the *essence* of a Spirit-filled church. The church at Corinth had all of the gifts of the Spirit but was rebuked by Paul for being a carnal church. So what is a Spirit-filled church?

First, a Spirit-filled church is a church made up of *Spirit-filled members*. Its members are believers who are born again by the Spirit of God. (John 3:5-8) They are believers who have received the Promise of the Spirit through faith in Christ the moment they believed. The Presence of the Holy Spirit abides in them. 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NKJV) says, “*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*” Spirit-filled members are those who understand that they are God's property: “*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*” (1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV) They live a life of faithful submission and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. They understand that God has the right to determine what they put in their body, on their body, and what they do with their body. Spirit-filled members are not flesh-controlled or flesh-led but Spirit-controlled and Spirit-led. (Romans 8:5-9) Spirit-filled members produce the fruit of the Spirit rather than the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-23) Their life is characterized by holiness because the *Holy Spirit dwells* in them. A church full of flesh-controlled and flesh-led members is not a Spirit-filled church.

Second, a Spirit-filled church is a *love-filled church*. It is made up of members who love one another the way Jesus loves them. Jesus said that the world will know that we are His disciples by our love. (John 13:34–35) Love is not just a noun. Love is an action word. Love *is* as love *does*. 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (NKJV) says, “*Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;<sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;<sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;<sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.*” Love is sincere: it is without pretense and hypocrisy. Love is caring; it is full of compassion. Love is edifying; it builds people up rather than tearing them down. Love is giving; it shares God's blessings with others. Love is forgiving; it lets go of the past for the sake of the future. Love is redeeming; it seeks to turn a bad situation around for good. Love is restoring; it works to make damaged things better than they were before. A church without love is not a Spirit-filled church.

Third, a Spirit-filled church is a *word-filled* church. The Spirit and the Word agree. The Scripture alone is our authority for truth and practice. Any personal claims to being “led by the Spirit” are subjective and suspect until measured against Scripture. The Spirit will not reveal something that is contrary to the Scripture. The Spirit will not speak something contrary to the Scripture. The Spirit will not do something contrary to Scripture. The Spirit will not lead a person contrary to the Scripture. A Spirit-filled church will guard the purity of the work of the Holy Spirit by testing the spirits according to the Word of God. (1 John 4:1ff) A church that does not teach and preach the Word of God is not a Spirit-filled church.

Fourth, a Spirit-filled church is a *hope-filled* church. Hope is a desire with anticipation of fulfillment. The believer’s hope is not built upon fanciful wishes. Biblical hope is based upon the promises of God. A Spirit-filled church is filled with the expectation that God will keep His promises. A Spirit-filled church ministers hope to the people who enter its doors. A church that does not offer hope is not a Spirit-filled church.

Fifth, a Spirit-filled church is a *faith-filled* church. Faith is living like God’s promises are true. Hebrews 11:1 (NKJV) says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” A Spirit-filled church inspires faith and victory in its members rather than poisoning them with the negativity of doubt and unbelief. A church without faith is not a Spirit-filled church.

Sixth, a Spirit-filled church is a *prayer-filled* church. Jesus said that His Father’s house will be called a house of prayer. A Spirit-filled church understands that God is their Source and that apart from Him they can do nothing. They are committed to prayer because they realize that prayer is the channel through which God fulfills His heavenly will in the earth. A prayer-less church is not a Spirit-filled church.

Seventh, a Spirit-filled church is a *power-filled* church. The Spirit-filled church is filled with the evidence of changed lives, victorious living, bold witness, and supernatural demonstration. A church without God’s power is not a Spirit-filled church.

Eighth, a Spirit-filled church is a *joy-filled* church. A Spirit-filled church is filled with joy because its members possess an unshakable inner delight in the Lord. They demonstrate an inner strength grounded in knowing that the Lord is with them regardless of the circumstances. A joyless church is not a Spirit-filled church.

God intends every church is to be Spirit-filled. Is your church Spirit-filled? If not, ask yourself, “Am I showing evidence of being Spirit-filled?” When every member of the church is led and controlled by the Holy Spirit, then this world will see and experience a Spirit-filled church.

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