

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Responding to the Stirring of the Spirit

by Dan Trygg

“Then the Spirit of Yahweh will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy..., and be changed into another man. ⁷ It shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you.” 1 Samuel 10:6-7

“...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The clear testimony of the scriptures is that God motivates and empowers people to do His will by the stirring or agitation of His Spirit. This is plainly declared in both the Old and New Testaments. Doing a cursory search of this concept, I found over 35 examples in the OT which teach or describe the stirring, agitation, infilling, pouring-out-upon, rushing-upon, clothing, empowering, or leading of the Spirit (Ex. 35:21; Jdg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:6-7,10; 11:6; 16:13; 19:23; 1 Chr. 12:18; 2 Chr. 15:1-2; 20:14; 24:20; 36:22; Ezr. 1:5; Job 32:18; Psa. 143:10; Prov. 1:23; Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; 61:1-2; Ezk. 2:2; 11:5; 36:27; Joel 2:28-29; Mic. 3:8; Zech. 4:6; 7:12; 12:10; Mal. 2:15,16). These are just the most direct and clear examples. **Sometimes we get the impression that the infilling or empowering of the Holy Spirit is only a New Testament phenomenon. Not so.** In fact, it is vitally important for us to see and study the examples of the Spirit's working in the OT to more clearly understand *how to respond to the working of the Spirit that is now given to every believer in Jesus*. One of the significant differences between the OT and the NT experiences of the Spirit of God is that the working of the Spirit seems to have been more limited in the period before Jesus came. Now, however, the Spirit is poured out upon *all* who are in Christ. He is the promise of the Father, which is provided to *all of us* who have believed in Jesus (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:38,39; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13).

I got thinking about this as I was remembering some of my experiences with God. **God has spoken to me very clearly on a number of occasions.** As I was recounting some of these recently, I realized that there were other times where God was moving in my life, but there were no words, or a specific message. **These were times when I felt the “agitation” of the Holy Spirit.** Although there were no words, I knew exactly what God was prompting me about. I thought about times when I was impelled to go forward at the invitation in a meeting, or of times when I was pushed to do or say something. **These were “wordless” experiences, but the context made it quite clear what I was to do.** It was like Samuel's counsel to Saul in 1 Samuel 10, “the Spirit of Yahweh will come upon you mightily (the Hebrew actually says “will *rush upon you*”)..., do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you.” As you look at the 35+ experiences in the OT, or the NT descriptions regarding when the Spirit of God came upon someone, or filled someone, it is quite clear that this experience is given to enable us to do something. **There are absolutely no examples of people being filled with the Spirit, and just “soaking it up”.** The “filling”, or “coming upon”, or “rushing upon”, or “clothing” of the Spirit *are always in contexts where the person was empowered or impelled to do or say something.*

People were stirred and moved to make contributions for the tabernacle (Ex. 35:21). Have you experienced that? There is a difference between giving out of obligation or duty, or “as one has purposed in his heart” (2 Cor. 9:7), versus being “stirred and impelled” by the Spirit. **The scripture describes the Spirit coming on four of the Judges, whom God raised up to defend and liberate His people.** The description varied from the Spirit “came to be” upon them (Jdg. 3:10; 11:29), to “stirred, agitated or impelled” them (13:25), to “clothed” them (6:34), or to even “rushed upon” them (14:6,19; 15:14). **This same language was used of the empowerment of kings Saul and David.** The Spirit “rushed upon” them (1 Sam. 10:6,10; 11:6; 16:13; 19:13). This was initially a moment-in-time event that also brought an ongoing empowerment. **The empowerment was for leadership and decisive action.** On two occasions, when the Spirit rushed upon Saul, he was impelled to prophesy (10:10; 19:23). Here, we see that **the movement of the Spirit can enable people to prophesy, or speak as a mouthpiece for God.** There were four other examples of the Spirit coming upon people to impel them to prophesy, or give bold declaration, in the books of Chronicles (1 Chr. 12:18; 2 Chr. 15:1-2; 20:14; 24:20). Each case seems to be an episodic visitation of the Spirit. The prophet Ezekiel reported the same experience (11:5), and the prophet Joel declared that the outpouring of the Spirit would be given to enable *both* men and women to prophesy. God also stirred up, aroused or awakened people in their spirit to take action. He stirred up the spirit of the Persian king, Cyrus, to issue a decree that the Jews could return to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (2 Chr. 36:22), ...and as many as God stirred up in their spirit to go, took initiative to go up (Ezr. 1:5). Cyrus was not even devoted to God, yet God “stirred up his spirit”. **Again, the stirring of the Spirit prompted action.**

Have you experienced the “stirring, or arousal of the Spirit”? Have you noticed an agitation or a “thrusting” of the Spirit, moving you to speak or take action in some way? Can you remember or recount some of these

experiences? What was going on? Did you respond? Did you sometimes *not* step forth to do as the inner impulse was prompting you to do? What was *that* like? What caused you to choose *not* to act? Did you sense that you missed an opportunity?

In John 5, **Jesus told us that He did not initiate ministry on His own.** He said that He was not able (strong, capable, or powerful) to do anything from Himself, unless it was something that He might see, notice, watch, recognize, or perceive the Father doing. Then, what He saw the Father initiating, Jesus would also do. **He would avail Himself to engage with what God was initiating,** and continue what He could perceive the Father doing in a way consistent with His activity. **How would He know what the Father was doing? He said, “The Father loves (delights in) the Son and shows Him all things that He is doing” (5:19,20).**

The word for “shows” here, is the Greek word, *deiknumi*. It means to point out, make known, cause to recognize, teach, or reveal by using any visual, auditory, linguistic or any other internal or external sign or indication.

In other words, **Jesus was tuning in to become aware of what the Father might be doing in His life. He had trained Himself to be watching for any indications of God at work. When He recognized those indications, He would join Himself to engage in that activity.** He would partner with what God was doing.

We are called to that same kind of partnership. We are called to be fellow-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Cor. 6:1). **Jesus Himself said that the Father loves us with the same kind of delight that He loves Jesus,** because we have loved Him and have believed that He came from the Father (Jn. 16:27). **Therefore, we can expect Him to “show” us in ways that are similar to how He was “showing” Jesus.**

The word for a “fellow-worker” means a “joint-worker”, ...ones working-together on a common activity. The Greek word is *sunergos*, from which we derive the English word, “synergy”. God wants to work in and through us to express His heart, speak His words, and do His will.

I think that sometimes we are expecting things to happen in a certain way, and God catches us off guard. When God interrupts, we do not always recognize it as God. As a result, we are hesitant or even resistant to partner with what God is doing. **We need to train ourselves, as Jesus did, to be watching for what the Father is doing in the world around us.** Because He loves us, and wants to partner with us, He will also “show us” what He is doing, just as He did with Jesus. **But, we may need to broaden our expectations as to what form that may take. He may speak to us, ...point something out to us, ...make us aware of something, ...cause us to recognize something that we had not seen before.** He may use something we may see or hear externally, or something someone may say. **Or, as we are seeing from our study today, He may stir us, prompt us, fill us, or impel us to take action or speak a message from Him by the agitation and movement of the Holy Spirit inside of us.**

Again, think of Samuel’s direction to Saul, “...the Spirit of Yahweh will come upon you, ...do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you.” **In my experience, when the agitation or impetus of the Spirit has happened to me, I knew what it was about. I was keenly aware that I was being prompted to take action, or to speak to someone. It was not a “general impetus”.** It was a specific “push” to speak to a specific person, ...or, in one circumstance, to walk to the front of the room and finish out a message that a speaker was too overcome with emotion to complete, and give an invitation for others to come forward. It was not my plan, that day, ...nor was it that speaker’s..., but it was the co-working heart of the Father to recruit me for that purpose. **It was the agitation of the Spirit that was strongly working within me, ...and the need of the moment was obvious.** When I stepped into that “working of God”, He gave me the words to speak. His working was not only evident in the speaker, and within me, but was confirmed by the number of people who came forward at the invitation that day. God’s synergistic work.

Jesus’ words in Acts 1:8 are often recounted as a call to missionary action. “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” While this certainly *is* a missionary vision and charge, we tend to gloss over the practical nature of what Jesus said. “...Y’all (for yourselves) will take/grasp/lay-hold-of/seize power/ability-to-take-action upon the coming-upon of the Holy Spirit upon y’all, and y’all will be My witnesses/testifiers...” **There are three main practical parts to what Jesus was communicating: First, the Holy Spirit would be coming-upon them.** In the context, Jesus had been telling them to “wait for the promise of the Father, which I had told you about, ...you will be baptized/immersed with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (vss. 4,5). There would be a stirring, coming-upon, clothing, rushing-upon of the Spirit that would fill and impel them to action. **Second, they are to take-hold-of, receive, or respond to the empowerment of the Spirit when He comes.** This is the human side of the synergy. When the SPIRIT is at work, WE need to GET TO WORK!! The Spirit comes to *impel us* to words or action. We must *respond* to His initiative by recognizing the need, or call, and partnering with Him. **Third, the implementation of the empowerment of the Spirit would enable them to bear witness of Jesus throughout the world.** God’s intention is that we lay hold of the Spirit’s empowerment to demonstrate the reality of Jesus through our words and deeds. **God wants to motivate and empower you to do His will. Watch for the stirring of the Spirit!**