Erased – Part 1



# The Holy Spirit Acts Through Us

# (John 14:16-17)

In this message series “Erased” we’re going to look at the spirit realm, the unseen realm around us, considering why the world tends to erase, block out, or remove references to the Holy Spirit and the spirit realm in our personal lives. Today more than ever we need to reverse this pattern because there is so much more going on in the unseen world around us than we could ever imagine. And so, as we celebrate Pentecost Sunday we’re going to dig in to the person, the power, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In part one of “Erased”, we’re going to begin by considering the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and how “The Holy Spirit Acts Through Us”. In weeks number two and three, we’re going to look at the spiritual forces of darkness and we’re going to consider our role in spiritual warfare, and then in part four, we’re going to look at our greatest allies, the angels, considering how they play into the natural world that we live in.

I believe this series is going to be so helpful for us, so important, because as we dig into what the Bible says regarding the spirit realm and the supernatural, we’re going to be encouraged in our walk with the Holy Spirit, finding that he is absolutely necessary and essential for us to live a life that’s pleasing to God in every way. And so, today I want to talk to you about the Holy Spirit because it is something that Jesus wanted to make sure we understood. The Bible tells us that before he gave his life on the cross, as he gathered together with his disciples, he said this in John chapter 14,

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17).

Now, this was new, this was uncharted territory back in those days, because this wasn’t the Holy Spirit in the Tabernacle or in the Temple. But Jesus said, “Not only will the Holy Spirit be with you, but the Holy Spirit will also be inside of you.” Now that’s amazing, because that means if you’re a follower of Jesus, you have become that inner sanctuary, the holy of holies, and the very same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of you. And so, now you can talk to God, and you can hear from God, because you have the Spirit of the Living God inside of you. You’re no longer of this world, if you’re a Spirit filled follower of Jesus, you’re a stranger or alien. But that’s not cause for alarm, it’s not a case for the Department of Homeland Security, the National Security Agency, or even X-Files because as Jesus tells us in John chapter 16,

“It’s for your good that I’m going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor (the Holy Spirit) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7).

And so, it’s for your good, and when the Holy Spirit comes, he acts through us, living in us, empowering us, and walking with us. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit will be your counselor, your guide, and your comforter. He’ll give you the power to fulfill what God has called you to do. And so, today I want to share with you how the Holy Spirit acts through us as we invite him to live inside of us.

## 1. Living in Us

This is what the Bible refers to as the new birth experience, that moment of regeneration, when you’re born again, saved, born by the Spirit into the kingdom of God. This is what Jesus spoke to a religious Pharisee named Nicodemus about in John chapter 3. He had come to see Jesus under the cover of darkness not wanting his peers to know that he was seeking counsel from Jesus. And so, Jesus meets him and gets right to the point. He says in verse five,

"No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:5-6).

Jesus tells Nicodemus, just as your mom gave you physical birth, your Heavenly Father will give you a spiritual birth and you’ll be born again. Jesus, recognizing Nicodemus’ flawed theology, pointed out that his religion and all of his good deeds were of no value without having that spiritual birth and being born again. This is that moment that the Bible describes in first Corinthians chapter 12 where the apostle Paul says,

“We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

This is our experience as we’re baptized by the Spirit into Christ, we’re clothed with Christ, having put on the garments of his righteousness. This is a new life, and like Nicodemus, each of us must personally receive Jesus Christ, inviting him to be the Lord and Savior of our lives. This is where faith becomes practical, this is beyond believing, this is not just confessing sin, but daily turning away from sin, so that we can say, “Jesus is Lord; I know him”, because he lives with you and is in you. The apostle John describes it this way,

“You know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him” (1 John 3:5-6).

You see, before a person knows Jesus, before the Holy Spirit lives in us, it’s natural to be controlled by sinful thoughts because without the Holy Spirit we’re vulnerable to our selfish desires, temptations and distractions of this world. But when we come to know Jesus and we’re filled with the Holy Spirit, he lives in us and calls us to live a holy life. Therefore, the Bible says,

“I urge you…to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God…” (Romans 12:1).

Now, of course, God would never ask us to do anything that he also doesn’t give us the ability to do. And so, this is not just wishful thinking, it’s not some high and lofty goal unattainable this side of heaven, but with the Holy Spirit living inside of us, he renews our minds, and we start to think about things that please him instead of the desires of our sinful fleshly nature. And what happens is that you discover that things you once enjoyed doing are no longer any fun, as a matter fact, they may even make you feel guilty and miserable, because it’s the Holy Spirit in you, steering you away from things that are contrary to his nature.

You see, God is holy, and he lives in us and calls us to be holy as he is holy. Therefore, when we’re tempted, and the Bible says there’s this spiritual conflict, this battle within all of us, where the forces of darkness want us to do what we want, and the Holy Spirit wants us to walk in purity and holiness. But we can overcome and win this struggle because the Bible says,

“When you are tempted, (God) will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

And so, there’s always a way out of temptation, because the Holy Spirit lives in us, he’s keeping you from sin, and as you walk with him he gives you the power to overcome the temptations of darkness, to be victorious in this spiritual battle, and it’s for that reason that the apostle Paul encourages us in Galatians chapter 5 saying,

“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Galatians 5:16-17 ESV).

And so, the Holy Spirit lives in us, calling us to live a holy life, and number two he empowers us.

## 2. Empowering Us

This was something foreshadowed long ago by the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, and others including John the Baptist who came on the scene telling the crowds of people,

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

And so, Jesus did come, God sent his son who became a man and lived a perfect life without sin. But he was framed, he was falsely accused, and went to the cross to die as an innocent man. It was there on the cross that he gave himself as a sacrifice, he died in our place, for our sins, as our substitute and was buried. Three days later, early on a Sunday morning, he rose from the dead conquering Satan, sin, death, and hell. The Bible tells us that he appeared for 40 days giving evidence of his resurrection with many proofs. On one of those occasions as he spoke to his disciples and Jesus said,

“I’m going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

On another of his resurrection appearances, this one recorded in Acts chapter 1, Jesus said, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Immediately following that discussion Jesus ascended into heaven, and the Bible tells us that for 10 days the disciples continued praying and waiting for the promise of the Father. Today, as we celebrate Pentecost, we see this promise being fulfilled in Acts chapter 2. Just as the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus at his baptism to anoint him for ministry, here the Holy Spirit comes to empower these first believers so that they can follow in his footsteps. And so, here’s what happens in Acts chapter 2, beginning in verse one. The Bible says,

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1-2).

In this passage we learn that something unusual happened; it was a supernatural event where a “sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven.” Now, maybe it was like when God spoke to Job out of a storm, or that mighty wind that dried a path through the Red Sea enabling the Israelites to pass through on dry ground, and most certainly it was a manifestation of what Jesus spoke of in John chapter 3 saying,

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

But whatever this event was, whatever it sounded like, in Jerusalem that morning it was the “sound like the blowing of a violent wind” that attracted the attention of the crowds that had gathered there for Pentecost. And it was this sound that indicated to those present, those 120 believers that were gathered together, that God was about to manifest himself in a special way. But before they even had a chance to question what that noise was the Holy Spirit descends on them in visible form. “They saw” verse three says,

“What seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:3-4).

In other words, just as suddenly, what seemed to be like the glory of the Lord that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, this ball of fire, appeared over the whole group before separating and breaking up into individual tongues of fire which settled on the head of each of them. The Holy Spirit came to rest on them, empowering the hearts and minds of these first believers so that they might continue his work. As a matter fact, Jesus said it this way,

“Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 14:12).

On that day the Holy Spirit came like a wind and he came like a fire. Two different things, but both of which symbolically represent great power, because they overwhelm and overtake, as an all-consuming unstoppable force; to which Jesus said,

“So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). And so, the Holy Spirit acts through us like that, living in us, empowering us for ministry, and then number three, he walks with us.

## 3. Walking with Us

We’re not alone, abandoned, and helpless; we have the very Spirit of the Living God within us. This is what Jesus promised his disciples in the upper room when he said,

“I won’t leave you as orphans; I’ll come to you” (John 14:18).

You see, when we first believe the Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ, into the church, he’s living in us, we’re part of his body. But then Jesus comes, sometimes immediately, or maybe at some time later as you’re seeking him, praying and waiting on him, and he baptizes you in the Holy Spirit empowering you, and walking with you as you make a difference in your circle of influence. He comes alongside of you, giving you certain supernatural abilities, a gift that is from and by the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that he testifies in this way to his salvation,

“By signs, wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will” (Hebrews 2:4).

As a matter fact, Jesus said, “When the Helper comes, whom I’ll send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he’ll testify about me, and you’ll testify also…” (John 15:26-27). And so, the Holy Spirit is walking with us, he’s our helper, and he’s empowering us with gifts of the Spirit.

Now some of you may be given the gift of wisdom, discernment, or prophecy. Others of you may have the gift of giving, speaking in other tongues, or interpreting other tongues. Some will have the gift of serving, or encouragement, or administration. Still others may have the gift of evangelism, the gift of mercy, the gift of teaching and discipling others. But God gives us gifts like that, and if you’re not using your gift, then there’s something that God wants to be done that’s not being done. And so, he’s gifted each one of us to make a difference; the Bible actually says it this way,

“To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7).

So, these gifts are given to each of us to encourage, building up the entire church in love. Therefore, we don’t want to resist the voice of the Holy Spirit; quenching the presence, power, and prompting of the Spirit, because we need the Holy Spirit’s power to live the life that God wants us to live. That’s why the apostle Paul said,

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose” (Philippians 2:1-2).

Let’s take seriously the call to be his witnesses, daily seeking to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, so that we can effectively testify about Jesus, and make a difference with the gifts that he’s given. When you know Jesus and you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, he’s living in you, he’s empowering you, and he’s walking with you. Day by day the Holy Spirit will give you the courage and wisdom to boldly share about Jesus.

Now, I’m sure that a lot of you are probably just like me, you don’t like talking to people and especially strangers. Then when it comes to talking to someone about spiritual things there’s always that thought in the back of your mind, “I just don’t know what to say,” or “Maybe they will ask me a question that I won’t know the answer to” and so, instead of sharing about Jesus you just sit there quietly. But I promise you, as you seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit, he will fill you, empowering you, and walking with you so that you can share Jesus with a boldness like you’ve never known before.

This lack of confidence was something that even the apostle Paul had experienced, because he was insecure about his ability to speak, you know, he was actually kind of like Moses; but listen to what Paul said in first Corinthians, he said,

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power…” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5).

You see, suddenly, when you have the opportunity to testify about Jesus, the moment you put your faith into action and open your mouth to speak, the Holy Spirit will give you a boldness. You’ll find yourself empowered, speaking truth, even quoting Bible verses you didn’t think you knew; all because the Holy Spirit is prompting you, guiding you, and giving you supernatural boldness. You see, it won’t be because of your eloquence, but it’s purely a demonstration of the Spirit’s power as he enables you to share about Jesus. The Holy Spirit acts through us to be his witnesses and enabling us to live a life that is pleasing to God.

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