

Rivers of Living Water

John 7:37-39 NLT *On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me! (38) Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" (39) (When He said "living water," He was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in Him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into His glory.)*

Jesus is talking about Spiritual things here... having a spiritual thirst that needs to be satisfied... a deep craving that drives people to find a solution...

God is moving - Thirsty people have begun to come to Jesus! Sometimes, when people are thirsty... they will look everywhere... blame their thirst on circumstances or situations... but Jesus says... "Come to Me"

Jesus has promised not only to meet our need, but to give us an abundance of what He calls "living water" so that we can "pour into" others who are desperately thirsty.

God has promised that when we come to Him "rivers of living water will flow from us" and the tie here is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and an outpouring of God's blessings through us! – Called to be a blessing... called to bless our town...

Jesus didn't just come to satisfy your thirst... but to launch a river from within you!

- Only rivers that "flow" will contain life. If you dam up a river, you create a reservoir that could become stagnant and not be of benefit to anyone!
- Rivers can "freeze" over and need to be thawed
- Rivers can dry up and need to be filled with a "downpour of rain"...
- When the Holy Spirit is flowing in our lives, we can feel life within us...and it's exciting! To experience God's presence around us, and in us is a powerful, life-changing experience!
- We want to Let the rivers of living water flow in our lives - that's one of the reasons why we come together to worship God – Feeling the moving of the Holy Spirit within us happens when Christians worship together...
 - o Also, when Christians fellowship together, this same "stirring" or flowing of the Holy Spirit is experienced
 - o When the Holy Spirit begins flowing into and out of our lives it compels us to reach out to others who are thirsty.

* God has been moving in our services - Manifestations of the Spirit - Through the operation of Spiritual Gifts

* We have also seen the reactions of people as God has been moving among us

Let's look first at some of the Gifts of the Spirit – the ones that are linked to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and are really a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in an individual's life and a manifestation of the Holy Spirit when we as believers gather together in our services, or in our homes.

The Holy Spirit is able to “manifest” in the life of any believer who has received Him... even in the life of someone who is a “brand new” Christian that has received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit... the river is already there and needs to be released!

– Overview

1Corinthians 12:1-11 NLT Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. (2) You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. (3) So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. (4) There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. (5) There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. (6) God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. (7) A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. (8) To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. (9) The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. (10) He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. (11) It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

There are other “Spiritual gifts” that aren't mentioned here that develop in the life of a believer as the fruit of the Spirit grows... gifts like leadership and administration and others... these other gifts normally “grow” and are not usually an “instant” manifestation that the newest of believers can experience immediately.

Let's look at these 9 gifts, or “manifestations” of the Holy Spirit that we've just read about ... the gifts that we should expect to see when we gather together... because they are given for our benefit... for the benefit of the Body of believers.

1) The Word of Wisdom - the ability to give wise advice - Speaking the Right word at the Right time - wisdom helps us to make use of Knowledge. Direction from God for a specific situation

2) A Word of Knowledge - a message of special knowledge Speaking an unknown truth
- Information from God

3) Faith - great faith gift of faith – faith that is proportional to the need that presents itself... not limited or restricted by the natural - mustard seed - Faith to move mountains

4) **Gifts of Healing** - plural - more than one type of gifting here – body, soul, spirit - all released through the prayer of faith

5) Gift of Miracles - Miraculous powers - "signs" creative healings/miracles - alter the normal course of nature

6) the ability to prophesy Prophecy - Message or utterance from God while “under the anointing” – The Prophetic word in a public service will always “edify” (build up) “exhort” (encouragement) or “comfort” (healing words) and not bring condemnation, or seek to guide the church into a “different direction” from what has been established.

7) Gift or ability to discern Distinguishing between spirits that are motivating people – whether something is of “God, Flesh or Devil”

8) Gift of Tongues or the ability to speak in unknown languages – Not German, or French or Swahili...these are all known tongues...*Speaking in different Kinds of Tongues – is prophetic and is the “outpouring” or overflowing of what God has put in a person’s heart...could be an expression of praise and worship, or a prayer of intercession... it’s for the “common good” and when manifesting in a Public setting it must be accompanied by the interpretation of Tongues so everyone can understand it.*

9) Gift, or The ability to interpret a message given in Tongues - The Spirit given ability to understand and communicate the utterance in Tongues for the rest of the body.

I’ve described these 9 “spiritual” gifts - Biblical, clear and beneficial to the body.

We see these gifts occasionally in operation, and we say simply Lord, Let it flow.....

* There are other ministry gifts that come from the Holy Spirit -

There are other “Spiritual gifts” that aren’t mentioned here that develop in the life of a believer as the fruit of the Spirit grows... gifts like leadership and administration and others... these other gifts normally “grow” and are not usually an “instant” manifestation that the newest of believers can experience immediately.

Physical reactions to what the Spirit of God is doing...

- Fall down under the power (slain in the spirit)
- Shaking - A lot of people think some of these things are "new" reactions, think about the "Quakers"
- Laughing - Again not a new thing - Expressed Joy & Laughter historical

Extremes are the danger – We can build an entire Theology around one reaction – Can become known as the "Laughter church" or the "holy roller" church...

- * We can put too much emphasis or attention on the reaction and off of Jesus
- * We can begin to expect certain things to happen in certain ways - ...fall down
- * Measure how "good" a service is by the Feelings, laughter etc...

- People respond differently - Not more spiritual to fall or not to fall, God ministers to people in many ways - some are quiet and invisible and some are dramatic and very visible.

- * People are human - step in and out of the Flow
- Don't want to squash a person who is in error...we teach a person who is in error –
- If a Gift is misused or out of order – we gently correct and affirm.
- If a Reaction out of order - gently correct and give guidance -

We don't need to help the Holy Spirit along – we don't need, or want to "make stuff up"

We don't need to be so cautious that we never give the Holy Spirit freedom

God meets with us here because there is personal preparation happening, there has been the equipping, training and releasing of individuals to minister as God directs, We have experienced the cleansing and forgiveness of God in operation, there is an encouragement to the body to minister beyond the body and there is the willingness by individuals to receive from the Lord!

- God cares about your need - wants to meet it - normally He gets our eyes off the need and on Him... So we Glorify Jesus... We lift Him up in our worship and prayer
- Thirsty people come to Him and He meets us...A yielded heart is what He is looking for!
- Thirsty ones who come to Jesus... will be blessed with Rivers of Living water... pouring into you, and flowing out of you... Jesus said it would happen, and it does, if we will allow it!