

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8*

Martin Luther in his “Small Catechism” in speaking about the Holy Spirit puts it this way:

*I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true*

How does that work out? In simple terms when I was in high school, faithful to the religious tradition of my church, I was attracted to a charismatic prayer group which had about 40 students in my high school. While you may be thinking that I was drawn by “awesome George Lucas effects of the Holy Spirit, you would be wrong. It when they spoke about Jesus as their Lord and Savior I was hooked, and eventually led to confess Christ at an altar rail of a Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in 1971.

In 1978, as a councilor for the questionable “I found it Evangelistic Campaign”, one of my calls was to a elderly man who had been involved in his Baptist church all his life. He wanted me to visit him (and here I can say I had no influence what so ever) and when I came he made a profession of faith of Christ he felt led to do. “Jesus is Lord” Did I do that? Like one television network likes to say “You decide”. In 1985 a huge renewal conference of the new Presbyterian Church USA took place in Dallas, Texas. Famous preachers are there, but outside of their standard message, the conference fells flat. Then a professor from Princeton Theological Seminary, who was a “stand-in” for the better known president of the seminary who couldn’t make it, gives a message on the Holy Spirit(I was warned that this speaker would not be inspiring). His message turned out to be the most powerful of the Conference. The title? The Holy Spirit: Power for Proclamation (of Christ).

A few years back a member (of one my former congregations) was involved in a spiritual retreat weekend from a group that used our building. Later she recounted how a man was a faithful member of his Missouri Synod Lutheran Church (a very conservative church) announced to his small group that he wanted to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord. He had a solid background. Surely it was the powerful and foundational work of the Holy Spirit that led him to that point.

We should never be afraid to ask the God for the “outpouring” of the Holy Spirit in our lives or in our church. For if we understand the primary work of the Spirit we are effectively communicating and growing in the faith under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

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