

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

A STUDY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

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PART 7: THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

Let's examine the second gift of the Holy Spirit.

*"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the **word of knowledge** by the same Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:8)*

Operating in this gift of the Holy Spirit – or any other for that matter – is exciting because it means you are in God's will and He is choosing to use you for something particular. It is wonderful knowing that the path you're on is sanctioned by God and receiving His blessing in the form of one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

God is omniscient, which means that the Holy Spirit also has the same characteristics. Whatever God the Father has, so does God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

God is not bound by time. He is not linear like humanity and can move at will into the past, present, and future whenever He wants. There are no surprises for Him. From our perspective, God lives in the supernatural, but from God's point of view, He is just living in the reality of His normal existence.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

Mankind lives in the moment with knowledge of the past, but we cannot see into the future. The good news is that the Devil, fallen angels, and demons are also limited in such a manner. If Satan could see into the future, he would never have pushed the Sanhedrin to crucify Jesus.

*"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."
(1 Corinthians 2:7-8)*

A prime example of the *word of knowledge* is found in the Book of Acts when the apostle Peter encountered Ananias and Sapphira. He did not know that this married couple had sold a piece of property and wanted to donate the proceeds to receive recognition and praise. However, they felt the entire amount was too much, so they decided to keep back a portion while pretending it was the full amount.

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts 5:1-2)



We don't know exactly when and how the *word of knowledge* was transferred to Peter, but it is clear through his response that he had been briefed by Holy Spirit and knew this unscrupulous couple was lying. Peter patiently waited for Ananias and Sapphira to implicate themselves before springing the trap. It is equally clear that the Holy Spirit had informed Peter that a death sentence would be meted out by the Godhead.

Ananias was not given a chance to defend himself or try to explain what he had done, Peter spoke, and as soon as he was finished proclaiming the death sentence, Ananias fell down dead.

“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.” (Acts 5:3-6)

Sapphira was given a chance to repent and tell the truth, but Peter already knew that she would repeat the lie, and he subsequently pronounced a death sentence on her as instructed by the Holy Spirit.

“And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.” (Acts 5:7-10)

When the news spread among the church members, great fear fell on them when they realized that the Holy Spirit could and would reveal hidden truths to the apostles. A hidden lie could usher in death, because Ananias and Sapphira had accepted Jesus as their Messiah (they were born again), and this created a deep and instant respect within the community for God's holiness.

“And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.” (Acts 5:11)

When this incident took place, Saul of Tarsus had not yet encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, nor had the first letter to the church at Corinth been written.

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I am not sure if the apostle Peter understood that he was operating in the *word of knowledge*, but this event had a strong impact upon the church members.

RELATED GIFTS

The *gift of prophecy* and the *word of knowledge* are closely related and these two gifts of the Holy Spirit usually work together. An example of this is when the prophet Agabus was informed by the Holy Spirit about the fate of the apostle Paul.

“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” (Acts 21:10-11)

Even though Agabus was well-established as a prophet in the early church, Paul emotionally rejected the message, knowing it was from the Holy Spirit. It is ironic that Paul would later explain the gifts of the Holy Spirit; he did not heed the Holy Spirit's warning and led to great suffering.

Paul was out of God's will when he arrived to Jerusalem and yielded to the desires of James and other leaders to perform a cleansing ceremony with four Jewish men that was no longer necessary because of the new covenant.

The ritual lasted for seven days, and on the last day, Jews from Asia recognized Paul and started a riot because they knew about his preaching of the Gospel message. Wanting to contain the man they hated so fiercely, Paul was surrounded and almost beaten to death before the Romans rescued him.

Paul ended up in prison in Caesarea, where he was kept for two years, until finally being shipped to Rome. He almost died on the way when the ship encountered a storm and he ended up on the island of Malta. Paul was under house arrest for two years in Rome until he was acquitted in court.

Not obeying the Holy Spirit led to a severe beating in Jerusalem and four years of confinement. It is obvious that the third person of the Godhead wanted Paul to avoid Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit certainly did not want Paul reverting back to temple ceremonies.

GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is obvious that Paul grieved the Holy Spirit and Paul recognized this fact with his letter to the church at Ephesus.

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30)

During a raging storm that lasted for days, God wanted to send a message to Paul, but since the Holy Spirit had been grieved, God sent an angel with a message that Paul and everyone on board would live.

“But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.” (Acts 27:21-26)

SEMINARY

In my personal life, I have received the *word of knowledge* many times. When I surrendered to enter full time ministry in 1969, I was told by my pastor that I needed to attend seminary since I had very little Bible knowledge. I was a member of a Southern Baptist church and the Southern Baptist convention featured six seminaries across the United States. As my wife and I prayed for guidance, the Holy Spirit told the following in a clear voice: *“Send an application to all six seminaries and one of them will accept you. Attend that seminary.”*

I obeyed the Holy Spirit and that is how I ended up attending Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California. Looking back after 56 years in the ministry, this was the right place and I am still in California.

PASTORSHIP

I came to a standstill in 1974 after working as an evangelist. All the doors had seemingly been closed to me and my wife and we found ourselves living with my brother and his wife. I was destitute and lived upon the grace of my brother.

One day the Holy Spirit told me to visit the seminary and put my name on a roster for temporary preaching positions for churches needing a pastor. In just a few days I received a phone call from Win Oakes, a deacon at Lodi Baptist Church, inviting me to preach on Sundays. I accepted his offer without hesitation and started to supply the requested preaching.

I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit while in seminary and this led to several crusades in Europe where I prayed for the sick and witnessed God do amazing miracles. It was something straight out of the Book of Acts as people were saved and demons were cast out. Those experiences shaped me into the man I became and it was heartbreaking when I was subsequently rejected by the leadership at Lodi some six months later.

The area missionary visited the church prior to the vote and told the congregation that I was a bad apple. He refused to provide any details, but assured the voting members that I was not the man they wanted. I needed a two-thirds majority vote and only received a simple majority. Nevertheless, three weeks later, some twenty-five members

of the church broke away and called me to be their pastor and that is how Lodi Christian Center came into being.

RADIO

A year later in 1975, the Holy Spirit spoke to me early in a morning and instructed me to start a weekly radio program. I had no experience in such an endeavor and did not have any equipment, but in faith I stood up the next Sunday morning and told the congregation about the Holy Spirit's directive. I estimated it would cost \$10,000 to get the necessary equipment and pay for the first year of broadcasting. A businessman in the congregation approached me after the service and told me that he would fund the entire amount.

There was a local Christian radio station in Lodi and a few weeks later I purchased the equipment, set up a studio in our home, and for the next 25 years was on the radio five times a week in the morning.

NEW CHURCHES

In 1976, the Holy Spirit told me to move to Sacramento and start a church, Christian Life Ministries.

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church where I am currently the pastor was born supernaturally in 1984 at that time when I was ministering as an evangelist/Bible teacher. I resigned from Christian Life Ministries in 1982 due to rebellion in the congregation and felt burnt out as a pastor. A friend felt that I needed some time off and I was given a sum of money to attend Oral Robert's pastors' conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was refreshing to meet other pastors and listen to the different speakers.

On the flight home, I was sitting at a window seat and looking out somewhere over Texas when a booming voice inside of me said, *"I want you to start a new church."* I knew it was God speaking to me and in my mind I responded that I didn't want to go down that road because I was still hurting from the shutdown of Christian Life Ministries.

The voice came back a second time with the same message. I know that when God speaks, it is time to listen and obey. I asked God to provide the name of the church and the Holy Spirit simply said *"Resurrection Life of Jesus Church."*

The following Sunday found me preaching in a home Bible study in Sacramento and I laid out a sign-up sheet for the new church in the kitchen. I told the people what had taken place on the airplane and asked those present to sign up as founding members. I was surprised to discover afterwards that everyone in the group added their names.

We did not have a church building, and a few weeks after the church had been founded, I was awakened one morning by the Holy Spirit and instructed to drive to a certain street where I would get further directions. After breakfast I got in my car and got to the correct street and saw an office building with a huge banner advertising a leasing option. The voice came back and told me to write down the phone number on the sign, return home, and call the number to get an appointment. Keep in mind this was before cell phones were prevalent. A real estate agent answered and agreed to meet me. I drove back to the building and he showed me the space that was available. Then he said, *"Let me call the owner of the building and have him come and talk to you."*

A short time later a man showed up. It turned out that Danny Benvenuti was a wealthy developer in the area and that his wife was a regular listener to my daily radio program. Danny told me that the space was not good for a church, but that he had another place that was a much better location. We drove over to that place, and when we had walked around, the Holy Spirit told me this was not the place. Danny was not offended and told me to find a place and he would pay for the cost of turning it into a church facility.

A few weeks later my wife was out shopping and she came by a place that was for lease. She got the phone number to the agent and I called to set an appointment. Surprisingly, the agent did not think it was a good location for a church, but also represented another customer with a much better facility.

The agent took us to a newly built strip mall with a center that had not been leased out with an unfinished interior. God told me loud and clear that this was the place He had prepared for me. I drove home and excitedly called Danny and within an hour met him at the strip mall. We walked through the facility and he agreed to build the place out.

Danny talked to the owner of the strip mall and also arranged to have his office draw up blueprints to be submitted to the county for a building permit. He also paid for all building materials to make a sanctuary, two bathrooms, Sunday school rooms and a church office area. A month later we moved in and had a dedication service with Danny and his family as our guests.

WEBCASTING

I will close with the following story. In 2007 I flew to upstate New York to minister to a family, and during my week with them, they spoke to me about webcasting the service in a live format so that others could join remotely. I thought it was a great idea, but we had no equipment and I knew nothing about cameras and how to make it happen.

When I returned home, I received word from the Holy Spirit that this idea should come to fruition. Faithfully, I announced it in the church, and with the great talent pool under the leadership of my nephew, Charles, the project became a reality and we started streaming in November of 2008. We are now in our 17th year, and while our local congregation is small, we are able to reach out to the rest of the world.

The *word of knowledge* has been a main factor in my life as a pastor. I would not be in ministry without this gift of the Holy Spirit.

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?