

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FAITH

***“Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord”*** (Acts 11:22-24). There were a few good men mentioned in the Bible and Barnabas was one of them. But what makes a man good (of benefit to others)? We can usually identify a “good man” by what comes out of his heart. Luke 6:45 says, ***“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil.”*** Goodness is a “fruit of the Spirit” (Galatians 5:22), therefore, because Barnabas was full of the Spirit, the “fruit” of the Spirit (goodness) was manifested in his life. However, this is not what drew my attention to this scripture. It says that he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and FAITH!

Many of us are looking to increase our faith when maybe we should be seeking more of the Holy Spirit. Hence our focus may be wrong. This verse implies that, because Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit, he had **faith**. When the Holy Spirit is manifest so too is **faith** (not necessarily the “gift of faith”). He is the Spirit of faith. Being full of the Spirit of Faith (the Holy Spirit) allows you to consider and discern reality in a supernatural way - through the eyes of faith. This is necessary if we are going to do the things that Jesus did. Yes, we must “walk in the Spirit and in faith” so that we can live a spiritual life and not a life governed completely by the sensual side of our nature. ***“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh”*** (Galatians 5:16).

In Hebrews 11, the apostle Paul gives us beautiful examples of this spirit of faith: *"By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called', concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." ... By faith, Moses left Egypt, not fearing the fierceness of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him that is invisible. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned. ... By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. ... By faith, the prophets conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword. ... They were stoned, they were cast asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death. ... Of whom the world was not worthy."* All these heroes died in **faith** having not seen the promised Christ. How much more should we, who live after the risen Christ (and Pentecost), establish **faith** as our primary goal? I am convinced that this attitude, as exhibited by these "heroes of faith," was a direct result of them being full of the Holy Spirit. They were propelled to greatness through the **faith** that the Holy Spirit had imparted to them. Therefore, their **faith** was not natural faith - it was supernatural faith!

If we view ourselves only by the light of natural reason, we shall see only our natural qualities and exaggerate and enlarge them. Then, inevitably, when we realise our limitations, we shall become timid and fearful. This approach is very common among Christians. Rarely, however, do we consider the wonderful supernatural treasure which we carry within us. We should ask God to give us revelation and that realisation of the meaning of "inspired faith." Which is, being led by the Spirit of Faith! **"For as many as are** (continually) **led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God"** (Romans 8:14). Can we be led without being full? I don't think so!

The Greek word used in our opening scripture (concerning Barnabas) is *‘πλήρης’* and it is used in the sense of “being filled.” Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit, but he was “full” only because he was continually **“being filled.”** He was continually “being filled” with the several graces of the Spirit, and particularly that of faith. He was continually “being filled” with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and of the faith for miracles. He was continually “being filled” with the doctrine of faith, and of spiritual gifts for the preaching of it. The same divine ability was attributed Stephen. **“They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit”** (Acts 6:5).

To be **“full of the Holy Spirit”** means to be continually filled with the immediate presence of God, to the extent that you are (a) feeling what God Himself feels, (b) desiring what God desires, (c) doing what God wants, (d) speaking by God’s power, (e) praying and ministering in God’s strength, and (f) knowing with the knowledge that God Himself provides. An important way we fulfil God’s eternal purpose for our lives, and bring Him glory, is by being “filled with the Spirit continually” (Ephesians 5:18). **“Don’t be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.”** Here, the present tense of “be filled” also implies a continuous action: *“keep on being filled.”* The comparison with wine indicates this. If you were drunk yesterday, today you would need to be full of wine again to get drunk again. So too, we need to be filled with the Spirit again-and-again, day by day. This continuous action will ensure that we are **“full of the Holy Spirit and faith”!**

Notice, if you want to keep walking in **faith** you must keep on “being filled” with the Holy Spirit! Building faith without the Holy Spirit’s help and inspiration is a fruitless exercise. We need the Spirit of Faith to provide supernatural **faith** in order for us to do what Jesus did (and even greater things). So let us stop labelling ourselves as “faith” people, but rather, let us see ourselves as being full of the Holy Spirit and **faith!**

Then, when we examine ourselves concerning being full of the Holy Spirit and **faith**, we should quickly know the results. It is a question that we should ask ourselves every day, and we should endeavour to do whatever is necessary to be full of the Holy Spirit and **faith**. What can you do - you may ask?

- Don't lean on the nostalgia of past experiences. Seek God for more of His presence and power in your life constantly (Acts 4:31).
- Examine yourself and repent of any known sins (Acts 3:19).
- Spend time with God every day, conversing with Him and meditating on His word (John 15:1-11).
- Place yourself in a position where you need His presence and His power by serving and reaching out to those in need (Acts 1:8).
- Expect to do the very things that Jesus did (John 14:12).
- Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with all wisdom (Acts 6:3).
- Purpose to give Jesus the glory for everything your faith produces (Romans 4:20).

To conclude... If you want to be beneficially good (as Barnabas was), you must be full of the Holy Spirit and **faith**. This is the will of God for you. Why? Because you cannot fulfil God's eternal purpose for your life, and bring Him glory, without His Spirit's presence continually manifesting in and through you. Remember, where His Spirit is, there you will find supernatural faith. And it is that kind of faith that can move mountains (Mark 11:23) and perform miracles!