

“Reunited and It Feels So Good: Your Spirit and God’s Spirit”
Psalms 51:10-12 and Ezekiel 36:24-28
Pastor Brent McDougal

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God” (Ezekiel 36:24-28, NIV).

God has revealed Himself in two great covenants. There is the old covenant in the Old Testament. That was about promise and preparation. In the new covenant, there is fulfillment and completion. Both have an element of the unfolding of God’s spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit come to us?

A Twofold Blessing

“In one day, three thousand people received a new spirit with repentance and faith. Then, after they were baptized, they received the indwelling spirit as God’s seal of their faith. Through the word of the disciples, the Spirit worked mightily on the multitude, changing their heart and spirit. With the power of the new spirit working within them, they believed and confessed. Then they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit to live in them.” (Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ*)

John the Baptist said, “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11, NIV).

The New Heart and Spirit (“rebirth”)

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

“Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, ‘Rabbi, we know that you

are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.’ Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’ ‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 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 3:1-8, NIV).

Spiritual rebirth is another name for salvation.

Table talk: Let’s share some stories of coming to faith in Christ.

Now, what does this mean for today? Many people have been reborn, but there’s too much of the old life lingering. The house hasn’t been sufficiently cleaned for a new resident to come in and live.

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life...We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin” (Romans 6:4, 6, NIV)

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me” (Psalm 51:10-12, NIV).

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

There’s more than just the spirit of rebirth. The spirit of Christ - the Holy Spirit - comes to live inside of us as a gift.

God says in Ezekiel, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you.” Twice it says that God’s spirit will come to reside in us. God says in Jeremiah 31:33 that God will write God’s law not on tablets of stone, but on our hearts. God created your heart to be God’s dwelling. Your spirit is your innermost self; the Holy Spirit is the innermost self of the Father and Son. Our one desire should be that our spirit - our very lives and souls - become the worthy dwelling of the Spirit of God. That living reality should fill us with confidence and hope.

Table talk: Have you had a kind of “second baptism” of the Spirit after your first baptism by water? What is your experience with the Holy Spirit?