

We begin with the end of the parable of the Prodigal son. **Luke 15:20** *So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. The father smothered his son with tears and kisses. The son gives his rehearsed confession, but the father makes no mention of the past failures. He overwhelms the son with love and acceptance. Verse 22* *But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet."* This told all those around that his position as a son was fully restored. The robe (righteousness), the ring (authority), and the shoes (no longer a slave) show restoration as a son. We don't have the rest of the story but no doubt his life would have been set on a different trajectory.

It is the same with the Christian. As a result of turning to Jesus, he gives new life and we have a covenant relationship with the Father who "covers us with a robe of righteousness" gained for us on the cross by Jesus Christ. The ring gives us the authority to speak in Jesus' name. The gospel shoes separate us from this world of sin. **Isaiah 61:10** *I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.*

The disciples came to Jesus one day asking for him to teach them to pray. **Luke 11:1-13** He teaches them the basics of prayer and then encourages them to never give up and never give in; ask and keep on asking; seek and keep on seeking; knock and keep on knocking. But then he ends with **Verse 13** *So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

The greatest need for mankind is freedom. Jesus came to set us free. **John 8:36** *So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. Free from what? from...*

- sin and its effects,
- condemnation,
- guilt over what we have done,
- separation from God.

Our relationship with the Father is restored through Jesus. This freedom is real; it is a new reality in life; it is a radical life change that alters the trajectory of life from...

- being a sinner to a saint,
- being a slave to a child of God,
- being conformed to sin to transformed by grace,
- having a depressed life to overcoming and winning,
- being an orphan to a child of God.

Galatians 5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.* This covenant relationship that begins with salvation is just the beginning of the Father's blessing. There is **so much more** that the Father has to give. Jesus came to set us free - free from sin. Jesus came to restore... restore means to return to the original intent. So what was God's original intent for mankind? **Genesis 1:27** *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* When we receive Christ, are born again, restoration takes place. **2 Corinthians 5:17** *Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

The old things: old nature, love of sin, pride, habits, love of self. All died and are nailed to the cross with our old sin nature.

The new things: the things of God, love for His Word, hatred of sin and flesh, new desires, new compassion, new love for people.

Colossians 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices. Ephesians 4:24* *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

Romans 6:6-7 *knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. **Romans 6:11-12** Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts.*

This is regeneration and by the power of Jesus, we have...

- a new birth. **John 3:3**
- are a new creation. **2 Corinthians 5:16**
- a new heart. **Ezekiel 36:26**
- new life. **Ephesians 2:5**
- restoration back to God's original intent.

This took place for the first time in the upper room on the evening of the resurrection of Christ. Jesus appeared to the disciples. **John 20:22** *And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." These were the first Christians. Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit and they breathed in new life; they were born again.*

Acts 1:4-5 *Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." What was the Father's promise to wait for? to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Baptism means immersion - a complete saturation. This church in Acts 1 was alive but had no power. The Father will give the Holy Spirit to whosoever will ask. The promise was to fill the child of God with the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead. The promise was not just restoration but a power to be living witnesses of God's love. *How much more!**

Genesis 3:1-5 tells of the first time the devil is mentioned and he is sowing doubt about God's blessing. Doubt is also the deception surrounding the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

God's plan did not end at restoration but continues with the "how much more" of overabundant, joy-filled, transforming, never the same life, that can only be produced when we embrace the "how much more" of the Father. It is an immersion into the full power of the Holy Spirit of God. **Luke 11:13** *So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"*

Peter's answer to "what shall we do?" at Pentecost, is the same today. **Acts 2:37-39** *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "**Brethren, what shall we do?**" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."*

- Repent! Confess your sins and be born from above.
- Be baptized! Water Baptism is a physical demonstration of the spiritual act of re-birth.
- You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 39 *For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.* The Book of Acts that follows is the story of the redeemed, restored, and empowered church that changed the world! The same Holy Spirit that changed thousands at Pentecost and laid the foundation for the church of Jesus Christ is here to change our lives today. The Holy Spirit's power, His transforming grace, is still for whoever would ask!

Are you a believer who desires more of God? more than a breath?

What do you desire more of? love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control?

What does "how much more" mean to you? Luke 11:13