

Birth-Right

The Four Essentials of
Normal Christian Birth

(Do it Once – Do it Right!)



What do we do?

When someone says, "I have had an experience like this:

- I have become deeply disturbed about my behaviour.
- I have seen and experienced the power of God for myself.
- I have become convinced of the truth about Jesus Christ.
- I have been touched powerfully by God's Spirit.
- I have had a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus.
- God has scared the wits out of me!
- I've really got into the Bible.
- I've been drawn into this neat church fellowship.

What do you say to them?

Are these experiences enough in themselves to establish someone in a meaningful relationship with God?

This is a relevant question, because there are a lot of people around us today in that situation. They have been to crusades or rallies or church services, and have been touched in them. Or they have been influenced by friends who have become Christians. Or they have read something about Christianity that has got to them. That is, they have had drawing or calling experiences; they have felt a touch from God; they have met him in some way. But how do they move from these kinds of experiences to being born again, becoming believers, entering the Kingdom of God (which is why God has granted them such experiences in the first place)? What responses do they have to make, and what help do they need to make the right responses?

This is also a very important question.

Christ wants his church to be disciples or spiritual apprentices, making others into disciples or apprentices for him. An apprentice doesn't just drift into an apprenticeship! There are decisive steps that have to be taken. Many struggle to be good disciples because they were not helped to get well established at the start.

God wants those who come to him to be birthed into a full-orbed relationship with him - as Father and Son and Holy Spirit - right from the beginning. So the church must not only preach the full gospel, but also the full response to the gospel.

Unfortunately that is not always done today, and the result is that some spiritual babies are badly birthed. As David Pawson says, *"Many Christians, including myself, were badly delivered. Initiation either took years to be completed or has remained incomplete. In many cases an umbilical cord to the past has never been cut and tied off. Some have never been washed. Others never had hands laid on them in order to breathe in and cry out! Some are barely alive or soon abandoned "*. This kind of situation must not be allowed to continue.

So this is an important question for you personally, because sooner or later a friend or acquaintance is going to talk to you about coming to the Lord. You need to be well equipped to help them.

And finally, many problems Christians have later on can be traced back to an inadequate spiritual birth. If you can go back and help them with that, then the problem solving will be much easier.

Four Decisive Steps

In the New Testament, seekers were told, 'Turn away from your sins to Jesus; make a clean break with the past; and open yourself up to the power of God'.

That is, they were told to:

Repent of their sins towards God
Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
Be Baptised in water
Receive the Holy Spirit

(you can remember this by the word **RuBBer**)

For example, in Acts 2:32-41, Peter had a crucial role in helping people move from conviction of sin into fullness of new life in Christ.

In Acts 9:1-9 and 22:16, Ananias had a crucial role in helping Saul move from a powerful meeting with the Lord Jesus into a firm relationship with him.

In Acts 16:25-34, Paul had a crucial role in helping the jailer move from a fear of judgement to being born into the kingdom.

In each case they took the seekers through the four steps of Repentance, Faith, Baptism and Receiving the Spirit.

The first two of these steps are essentially spiritual steps with physical results, the emphasis being more on what we do - practical fruits of repentance and faith actions. The second two are essentially physical steps with spiritual results, the emphasis being more on what we are asking God to do - cut us off from our past and fill us with the Holy Spirit (although of course God is fully involved in all four steps).

These four go close together. The place for baptism in water and being filled with the Holy Spirit is at the start of Christian life. You cannot go on well if you have not broken with the past and been empowered for your new life. This ideal is what we should work for and aim for, although even in New Testament days there were exceptions.

Normally the order is Repentance, Faith, Baptism, and Reception of the Spirit although here too there may be the occasional exception.

The important thing of course, is that the full fourfold response has been made, that the baby is fully alive, and that the new Christian has been totally "rubberised"!

In the New Testament when that hadn't happened, steps were taken to see that it did. In Acts 8:4-19 and 19:1-7 you will see that the apostles were not afraid to ask leading questions and then step in to complete the process. With poorly birthed Christians we will have to do the same thing.

You will realise already that what the New Testament is describing is a birthing process that takes time (this contrasts sharply with our modern practice of taking seekers through a brief "sinner's prayer" and then declaring that they are now saved!). So it shouldn't be hurried or forced. What we are about is not rushing people across a line (from danger to safety) but getting them onto the way of lifelong discipleship.

It is essential therefore that each of the steps be thoroughly worked through and not skimped. That is the only way to ensure a healthy birth.

What follows is a description of these four steps to Normal Christian Birth.

Repentance Towards God

Repentance is the first step in Normal Christian Birth.

'Repent' today often has negative connotations for us, but in the Bible it is a powerful and positive word.

Repentance is a positive word.

It is a word of love. God calls us to repent because he wants the very best for us. It's not a putdown. It is a word of life. We don't have to go on living with the dead weight of sin hanging on us. It is a word of hope. When you decide to turn, you will be turned. God will turn you. And it is a word of promise. "If we confess our sins, He will keep His promise and do what is right. He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness". (1 John 1:9) "Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). God doesn't wait until we've repented and then decide what to do! Built right into the word "repentance" is forgiveness, cleansing, freedom, release, purity.

So the result of repenting is not morbidity or condemnation. It is life and joy because we've been set free. There's praise and rejoicing towards God, and a great love for Jesus and the cross. There is exciting good news and life to share with others.

The experiential heart of the Good News about Jesus is "real forgiveness for all sins"

and that's what 'repent' says to us. (Read Psalm 32:1-5,11 for an example of this)

Godly Sorrow

It's easy to confuse repentance with other feeling. Regret is when you feel bad about what you have done to yourself. Remorse is when you feel bad about what you have done to other people. Self-pity and condemnation are when you just feel bad! - about the terrible person that you are. And it's easy to pray out of these feelings about our sins. The root of such praying is basically self-interest.

Real repentance is when you feel bad about what you have done to God, that you have been offensive and rebellious and hurtful to him. It is when the light dawns and you begin to see the true nature of sin and its terrible impact upon God. (Read 2 Cor 7:9-10 where Paul describes this kind of "godly sorrow.")

For example, in Psalm 51, after his adultery and murder and deceit are revealed, David suddenly sees with a flash of dreadful understanding that what he's done to Bathsheba, the baby, Uriah, Joab, his own reputation and Israel are nothing in comparison with what he's done to God. These dreadful things pale into insignificance as he cries out, "against you only have I sinned".

This kind of godly sorrow leads to a decisive turning.

A Decisive Turning

1) **A Turning of the Mind**

Repentance is a change of mind, a new world view, a new way of seeing things. It's saying to God, "You've been right all along and I've been wrong. In a general sense, "my way of life has been wrong" and in a specific sense, "I can see now that those particular actions, words, thoughts, feelings were wrong". To repent is to have second thoughts.

But it's not just a mental exercise.

2) **A Turning of the Heart**

It's relational. It's opening yourself up to the Holy Spirit's conviction; letting your heart be broken over your sin; choosing to set your heart on God and not on yourself.

3) **A Turning of the Mouth**

Confession is a vital part of repentance. That is, speaking out our agreement with God's assessment of our behaviour and ways, turning from justifying, excusing, denying or minimising our sinfulness and sins, to saying, "Yes, I was wrong. That is sin. I made a sinful choice".

4) **A Turning of our Hands**

Acts of sin need acts of repentance. John the Baptist said, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" and the crowd asked the right question, "What shall we do then?" Paul said, "I preached that they should repent and prove their repentance by their deeds".

But what are we to repent of?

What is Sin?

The Bible describes sin as trespassing, trampling over things that are precious to God; as falling short of what we are expected to live up to, or completely missing the mark; as breaking the law; as crossing over the line; as deliberately choosing to do wrong; as being in rebellion towards God.

The Bible is also very specific about sins, describing them in a number of lists in the New Testament. Following is a combined list from these passages, together with a list of occult activities. Reading it through is, of course, not the only way repentance comes, but the Holy Spirit can use it as the basis for revelation.

As you go through the list, you are not being asked to go back and feel guilty about what has already been dealt with and forgiven. But if you have drifted into faith, by passing repentance; if you have never been specific in confessing sins, this will be helpful to you.

What specifically are we told to repent of?

Tongue

Abuse	Godless chatter	Blasphemy	Gossip
Boasting	Grumbling	Lying	Coarse joking
Cursing	Obscenity	Deceit	Perjury
False testimony	Profanity	Filthy language	Slander
Foolish talk			

Heart

Arrogance	Jealousy	Bitterness	Love of pleasure
Covetousness	Lovelessness	Dishonouring parents	Lust
Malice	Pride	Disobedience	Rebellion
Envy	Ruthlessness	Evil desires	Self-love
Factionalism	Self-righteousness	Greed	Selfish ambition
Hypocrisy	Sensuality	Impurity	Treachery
Ingratitude	Love of money	Judging/resisting God's word	

Flesh

Abortion	Lawbreaking	Adultery	Stealing
Debauchery	Murder	Drunkenness	Swindling
Homosexuality	Lesbianism	Sexual immorality	Indecency
Perversion			

Spirit

Hatred of God	Sinful soul ties	Idolatry	Spiritual adultery
Magic arts	Unbelief	Occult practices	Unforgiveness
Ritual religion	Witchcraft		

Emotions

Anger	Hatred	Brawling	Insolence
Brutality	Lack of self control	Cowardice	Quarrelling
Discord	Rage	Dissension	Strife
Fear			

Read for yourself:

Matt 15:18-20	Mark 7:21-23	Romans 1:29-32	Romans 13:13-14
1 Cor 5:9-11	1 Cor 6:9-10	2 Cor 12:20-21	Gal 5:19-21
Eph 4:12-31	Eph 5:3-4	Col 3:5-9	1 Tim 1:9-10
2 Tim 3:1-5	Titus 3:3-5	1 Peter 2:1	1 Peter 4:2-4
Rev 21:8	Rev 22:14		

You will find it a very freeing thing if, after you have gone through the list carefully and specifically, you ask someone you trust to listen to your confession. They can then confirm your forgiveness on the basis of 1 John 1:9

You may also find Basilea Schlink's prayer helpful to use as a launching-off point for your own praying.

Prayer for Repentance (Adapted from Basilea Schlink's book "Repentance - the Joy- Filled Life")

Dear Lord Jesus, I ask you for what I long to have in my life – your greatest gift of grace, repentance.

Send me your Spirit of Truth so that I can recognise myself in the light of your Word. Let it convict me as your standard for my thinking and speaking, for my ways and my actions and my work. Keep me from applying my own cheap standards. Bind me to the measurement of your Word, so I can see myself as you see me, and assess myself as you assess me.

Help me recognise in everything that happens to me, especially in your discipline, that you are lovingly calling me to repentance. Enable me to respond willingly.

Answer my prayer by giving me a broken heart, not one that is self- righteous and self-satisfied, but one that is always able to weep anew over its sins and then able to rejoice over your forgiveness.

I thank you Lord that you will surely answer this prayer because you delight over 'one sinner that repents'. So I look Lord at you, not at my hard impenitent heart. I look at you, who came to destroy all self- righteousness and hardness of heart, and who has won for us by your redemption a new heart that is soft and humble.

Help me persevere in this prayer of faith until my hard heart has melted and I genuinely repent of the things I have done to you and to others. Give me the grace to weep over my old sinful nature, over my hardness, my lack of mercy and kindness, my evil speaking about others, my envy and jealousy, my insincerity, my dependence on human beings and the material things of this world. Bring about a complete change in me.

I thank you Lord that you are calling for what I still do not have, repentance, and that when it comes my love for you will grow out of it. Lead me into the joy of your forgiveness and pardon, so I can praise you for all eternity. Amen.

Faith in Jesus

Today when we talk about faith in Jesus the emphasis is very much on what we do; make a decision for Christ; invite Jesus into your heart; commit your life to Jesus (almost as if we are doing God a favour!)

Calling on the Name of the Lord

But the New Testament emphasis is firstly on what God does. For example, in Acts 22:16, Ananias told Paul to “call on his name”. That is, to appeal to God, to cry out to him, asking him to act on his behalf (rather like blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10 who, when told to be quiet, shouted all the more, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”).

“Calling on the Lord” is how believing in Jesus is often referred to in the New Testament (Acts 2:21 - “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”. Read Romans 10:8-14). That is, saying “ I’m in deadly danger and I’ve had it if Jesus doesn’t act to come and save me, to salvage my life”.

Being Convinced

Believing in Jesus begins when you become convinced about certain truths concerning God and yourself; On the one hand, God is Holy Sovereign Creator of all things; setting standards; determining his purposes; just and righteous in all his ways. On the other hand, you are in rebellion towards him; completely tainted with self-interest and sin; unrighteous and wicked in all your ways. And you realise that, therefore, you are doomed, perishing, lost, headed for destruction. That you don’t just need a little bit of tolerant forgiveness but you desperately and urgently need to escape from God’s wrath and judgement. You need release from bondage to sin; freedom from Satan’s clutches; deliverance from darkness and corruption and death. That is, you need to be saved from a terrible situation and a dreadful fate.

And then you see that only Jesus Christ can save you. Only he can deal with your rebellious past; take you out of the evil present; and keep you safe in the future. As Acts 4:12 says, rescue or salvation “is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved”.

Start with the Facts

How can you be sure that Jesus can and will help you? Start with the facts about him. Specifically that he died, was buried and rose again. 1 Cor 15:1-5 says “I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you ... for what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve”.

Faith in Jesus rests first of all in the historical facts of his life, death, resurrection and ascension. He lives today as a real person with a verifiable history.

But we must also believe in the meaning of his coming. John 3:16-17 says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”.

In Acts 10:36-43 Peter explains that Jesus came “as judge of the living and the dead... everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name”.

That is, Jesus’ coming was intentional and purposeful. He came to accomplish a number of objectives. And he is alive and active today accomplishing his purposes in people all around us.

But these convictions are not enough.

Get Personal!

To believe in Jesus is

a) to believe that he came and died and rose again for you personally. It is to speak the Bible truths about him to yourself:

- “The blood of Jesus purifies me from all sin”. (1 John 1:7)
- “While I was still a sinner, Christ died for me”. (Romans 5:8)
- “In him I have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins”. (Eph 1:7)

It is a very personal thing.

There are many who know the facts of the matter and even their meaning, but have not yet made a personal application of the truth to their own sins and their own lives.

b) Then you speak to the Lord. Not, “please come into my life”, but a desperate cry from the heart, “Have mercy on me”; “help me”; “save me”; “salvage my life”; “if you don’t come to my aid, I’m lost”. That is, you call on the name of the Lord, appealing to Jesus to bring all he is and all he’s done to bear on your helpless, ruined state.

Faith Actions

And then there’s a third step.

c) Faith actions are needed, acts of trust in Jesus. James 2:12 “Faith by itself, if it is not accomplished by action, is dead”. i.e. Ineffective, not really faith at all.

There are two kinds of faith actions. To start trusting in Jesus means to stop trusting in other people and their resources, or yourself and what is in you, or religious resources and philosophies to save you. Then you actively demonstrate your faith in him.

In everyday life you show your trust in someone by entrusting something to them - your reputation; your money; your physical wellbeing - and by doing what they say.

So it is with the Lord Jesus. You bow before him as Lord and you unload your sin, your guilt, your past onto him and you hand over to him your mind, feelings, possessions, relationships, future, desires, etc. You say to him, 'I'm yours completely. And then you show your love and trust and commitment to him by doing what he says. As Jesus himself says, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).

Here's a parable about this process:

It's a violently stormy day yet a person insists on going out into Cook Strait with little skill in handling boats, in a obviously unseaworthy craft, with no life jacket or safety gear. The inevitable happens. The boat sinks, and they are left struggling in the water, hanging on to bits of flotsam but about to drown.

Watching on the shore is a man, muscular, strong, a powerful swimmer. He calls out, "Here I am", and swims out through the surging sea. The drowning person sees him and cries out, "Help, save me".

As the swimmer gets closer, he calls back to the person, "Stop struggling, let go of that stuff and hang on to me. Let me hold you". The drowning person does so.

They give up the struggle and cling tightly to their rescuer, who starts to steadily plough his way back to dry land. Despite the ferocity of the storm and the added weight, he's absolutely rock steady as he swims through the waves to shore.

That's a simple picture of what it means to call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Have you done this?

Baptised in water

What we need when we turn to the Lord is a CLEAN BREAK with the past. We actually need something objective and date-able that's done to us, not done by us on our own. Something that will give us the cleansing and the break that we want; an event in which God acts decisively to cut us off from the past.

That is exactly what baptism does. It is a decisive physical act with definite spiritual results.

1) It is a CLEAN break. It relates to repentance. Peter says, "Baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the body, but an appeal to God for a clean conscience' (1 Peter 3:21). So it is a BATH. We need more than forgiveness, we need to be made clean on the inside. Baptism is asking God to wash your conscience free from guilt and shame and condemnation.

2) It is a clean BREAK. It relates to choosing to put faith in Jesus. Paul says, "You were buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col 3:12). So it is a BURIAL. It speaks of coming under a new government; having a new allegiance; dying to self and living for God.

The expectation is that as we submit to the bath and the burial, God will respond by cleaning us up on the inside and cutting us off from the past. (Baptism also relates to the fourth step of receiving the Spirit. Having broken with the past and been made clean, we are now ready to be filled).

Baptism is not a magical act

It requires our repentance and our faith to be effective. For example, in Acts 8:9-23, Simon the Sorcerer had clearly not repented. He had not changed his mind or his heart (see v22-23) so his baptism was not effective. In Acts 19:1-7 the Ephesian disciples had repented but not believed in Jesus, so their baptism was not fully effective. That is why New Testament Christians didn't baptise babies, because baptism requires the active participation of the one being baptised. As Ananias said

to Paul, 'What are you waiting for? Get up, get yourself baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). As Colossians 3:12 says, "You were buried ... and raised ... through your faith ..."

On the other hand, baptism is not merely a symbolic act. When repentance and faith are present, God acts and something happens. The physical act of being plunged into water has a spiritual effect on the one being baptised. This is why every Christian was baptised at the start of their walk with the Lord. Like receiving the Spirit, it belongs at the beginning of the journey. New Testament Christians didn't look for a lot of Bible knowledge or marks of maturity or absence of problems. They looked for only one thing in a convert: proof of repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So baptism is essentially a vertical act, not a horizontal one. The emphasis should not be on the one doing the baptising; the one who led you to the Lord; the warm relationships you have with your fellow believers; the excitement of the event; and so on.

The emphasis is on asking God to act decisively in the life of one who has turned to him.

Receive the Spirit

There are seven things that a new believer needs to know at the start of their relationship with the Lord; vital, essential inner knowledge and experiential truths.

At the start of your walk with the Lord you need:

- 1) To know the reality of God's love for you. That he cares, that he's concerned and deeply committed to you. And you need to know that inside; to feel it, experience it, be bathed and warmed by it.
- 2) Complete assurance that your past has been forgiven by God; that you are fully accepted by him without reservation; that nothing is still being held against you; that the slate has been wiped clean.
- 3) To know as a settled established fact that God is your loving Father and that you are now part of his family; that you belong, you've been taken in; that you've been born again and adopted as a child of God.
- 4) To know that Jesus is real and alive and active in you; that he lives, dwells inside you. You are now his home.
- 5) To have God speaking personal living words from his heart and mind to yours; to have a direct line of communication with him, an open channel for specific words from him to you.
- 6) Power to speak freely, confidently, effectively to others of your experiences of God as a personal witness (not an advocate, who tells what they have learnt from elsewhere).
- 7) An active role among God's people; to be a specific part of the Body of Christ.

Today we usually say to people, 'Take it on trust that these have happened to you. You have said the right words and done the correct things, so God must have responded to you, whether you have felt or experienced anything or not. Just believe. Hang on with raw faith'.

The Work of the Spirit

But no-one would have ever said that in New Testament days, because they knew that all of these are specific works of the Holy Spirit. They are part of his ministry. We have to actively appropriate them, but they come from him, not just out of our faith.

Here's what the Bible says about them:

- 1) **God's Love** - "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Romans 5:5).

2) Forgiveness and Acceptance - "The Holy Spirit's presence within us is God's guarantee that he really will give us all he promised; and the Spirit's seal upon us means that God has already purchased us and that he guarantees to bring us to himself" (Ephesians 1:14 LB).

3) Father and Family - "You received the Spirit of sonship or adoption. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father". The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:15-16). "Because you are his heirs, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father" " (Galatians 4:6).

4) Jesus in us - "And he has put his own Holy Spirit into our hearts as a proof to us that we are living with him and he with us" (1 John 4:13 LB).

5) God speaking to us - "When the Holy Spirit, who is truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

6) Power to witness - "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

7) A place in the Body - "Each of us is a part of the body of Christ ... the Holy Spirit has fitted us all together into one body. We have been baptised into Christ's Body in the one Spirit ..." (1 Cor 12:13 LB).

Which is why the New Testament Christians were so insistent that new believers not only had to repent, believe and be baptised in water, but also receive the Spirit. They were desperately anxious to ensure that they got all they needed to make a proper start in their new life; that they entered into a full relationship with God as Father, Son Holy Spirit; that they were operating on "all four cylinders". As David Pawson says, they wanted them to be "anointed followers of the Anointed One".

Jesus himself said to his disciples at his Ascension, "Don't move. Stay in the city. Don't leave until you've been clothed with power from on high, until you have received the gift my Father promised, until you have been baptised in the Holy Spirit".

What happens?

But what does this mean? What sort of experience is it? How is receiving the Spirit described?

The New Testament uses a number of expressions: clothed with power from on high; baptised (ie. drenched, plunged, soaked); came on; filled; poured out; receive; given.

In the story of Cornelius for example (Acts 10,11), a variety of terms are used together (fall on, poured out, received, baptised).

From the Biblical descriptions it is clear ...

a) You will know that you have received the Spirit. It's an obvious, dateable experience. As Roland Allen puts it:

The gift which the apostles received was a definite gift received at a definite time. It was not the experience of a vague influence which they felt more or less markedly at different times: it was a definite fact concerning which they could name the time and the place. Later the Holy Spirit was given to many others, but always this peculiar definiteness marked the coming of the gift. There was always a time and a place at which each convert received the gift. It was perfectly natural for St Paul to ask certain men at Ephesus of whom he stood in some doubt, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you . . . believed?' (Acts 19:2). I-le asked a definite question expecting an equally definite answer, as a matter of course. He expected Christians to know the Holy Spirit, to know whether they hadreceived Him, and to know when they received 1-hm ... In this, the gift of the Holy Spirit to all the later disciples had the same character as the first gift of the day of Pentecost.

b) Others will know ... at the time it happens. In Acts 8, the apostles and Simon knew the Samaritans had received the Spirit as did the believers who were with Peter as he preached to Cornelius and his household in Acts 10. And afterwards, whether it's soon afterwards as in Acts 2, or much later as in Acts 19 (where Paul obviously expected evidence that they received the Spirit and couldn't see or hear it)

Overflow

c) ... Because there is clear evidence: What is the evidence that you have received the Spirit? Peter refers to "what you see and hear" in Acts 2:33. There will be an obvious overflow through our mouths of spontaneous spiritual speech: This may be in the form of ...

"Tongues" - an unlearned spiritual language [hat enables you to speak directly from your spirit to God's, bypassing your conscious mind, as in Acts 10:46.

"Praise" - a welling up of praise to God, whereby you can't help wanting to tell God how good he is, as in Acts 10:46.

"Prophecy" - God speaking through you what he wants to say, as in Acts 19:6

"Crying out" - to God as Father, calling him 'Daddy, Abba', as in Romans 8:15 or to Jesus as Lord, as in 1 Cor 12:3.

In Ephesians 5:18-20 Paul describes the overflow of being filled with the Spirit in terms of **singing** and **giving thanks**.

There will also be seen evidences ...

At Pentecost the disciples were so affected by the Spirit that they gave the impression of being drunk. Joy, which shows itself on our faces and in our behaviour, is also found in those who receive the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the authenticating mark of the Christian. Other faiths and philosophies have ways of dealing with past wrong-doings, bringing "salvation", helping people break with their past and join them. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit of God within us and upon us that marks us out as truly belonging to him. We have his seal on us. He is the deposit of things to come, both here and hereafter. Which is why the New Testament calls his coming on us the promise that God wants to fulfil in us.

Jesus said, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised". "Wait for the gift my Father promised"

Peter said, "Jesus has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear". "You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, for the promise is for you and your descendants and for all who are far off".

Paul said, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law ... so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith".

Above all the other promises of God, this is the one we should seek for most actively. "Ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, ... how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him".

If you have made a true repentance - mind, mouth and actions; if you have believed in Jesus, calling out to him for mercy, trusting actively in him; if you have been baptised in water; then ask Jesus the Baptiser to pour out the Holy Spirit upon you.

POSTSCRIPT

This is the CONVERT'S EDITION of the Birth-Right teaching that accompanies the Birth-Right audio messages available at www.awakencitychurch.org.nz/podcasts.

For further teaching on "The normal Christian birth" please search for David Pawson's teachings on youtube, there is also a book available.

David Wells has these comments: David Pawson's video series and book (which incidentally covers a lot more ground than the video teaching does) provided the stimulus and basis for my series. But I approached the topics quite differently and in my own style, so the two series are complementary not repetitive. Plus of course David Pawson's teaching has the power and the depth of the great teacher he is, so he is not to be missed. Listen to him and read his book and you will have a very strong foundation on which to build your own spiritual life as well as that of those you help.

Comments, questions, etc can be sent to:

David Wells or Michael Greaney at www.awakencitychurch.org.nz