

BBC CORE

Gospel | Spirit | Community | Mission

Week 2: Empowered By The Spirit

Introduction:

Last week we looked at what it means to be rooted in the gospel, with our lives anchored in the finished work of Christ on the cross. In today's study we discover that Christ's presence, power and ministry remains with us through his Holy Spirit.

1. Jesus Lived The Spirit Empowered Life

- Read Matthew 1:18-20, Romans 8:9,15-17

Jesus was not just an ordinary man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, God incarnated into human flesh. Jesus taught that mankind must also be born of the Spirit, or be "born again". This means to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, where he takes up residence in the lives of believers. The Spirit saves us by bringing our spirits from death to life, then he begins to transform us from the inside out, and he gives us absolute assurance that we are his children, because he lives within us.

- Jesus is born of the Spirit - Matthew 1:18-20
- Jesus is filled with the Spirit - Mark 1:9-11, Isaiah 11:1-2, John 1:33-34
- Jesus sends the Spirit to us - John 14:16-17. The Holy Spirit does not just rest on us but fills us, in an ongoing basis.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think it is important for us to see the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- ❖ Q: Why did Jesus need to send his Spirit to us?

2. Apart From The Holy Spirit We Have No Life, Power Or Victory

- Read Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-13

At the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Christ's disciples, just as it was prophesied hundreds of years beforehand through the prophet Joel. In times past, the Spirit anointed certain prophets and kings in order to do God's will. Never before in history had the Holy Spirit been poured out on regular believers in this way. This outpouring on his disciples changed everything. As a result, we cannot just *believe* that the Holy Spirit is real. We have got to accept and embrace him as a living reality in our lives.

It is impossible for any of us to live a life of obedience to Christ, or to be his witnesses and ministers of the gospel, without the Holy Spirit within us. Any faithfulness to Christ is a direct result of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. He causes us to submit to and obey his will for our lives, which we do for his purpose, will, pleasure, fame and glory. We must be careful not to equate gospel faithfulness with human success. It is very possible for people without the Spirit to be successful, but that is not the same as being faithful to Christ. We need to watch that in our own lives too.

- ❖ Q: In your personal experience, have you struggled to relate to the Holy Spirit, as the active and involved third person of the Trinity? Why do you think this is such a struggle for so many believers?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think we need to embrace the reality of the Holy Spirit in our lives, rather than just believe that he exists?
- ❖ Q: What is the difference between success and faithfulness?
- ❖ Q: Why it is impossible for us to be faithful to Christ without the power of the Holy Spirit empowering us to do so?

3. The Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit Is Truthful & Experiential – And It Bears Gospel Fruit

In obedience to the Father, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ in everything he does. But how he does that is his choice alone. We cannot prescribe what and how he will act. He poured himself out upon the disciples in a miraculous way at Pentecost, and yet very often he works in ways totally unknown to and unseen by us. We must be careful not to dismiss his work when it does not fit into our self made “Holy Spirit box”. Equally we should not be quick to attribute every strange and spectacular occurrence to his power work.

How we know if it IS the Holy Spirit at work

- He draws our attention to and glorifies Christ
- He does not elevate the experience above God himself
- He leads people to repentance and obedience
- He leads people into Christian community rather than into isolation
- He leads people to worship God from the heart
- He will not do anything outside of his character, which we see revealed in scripture

How we should respond to the Holy Spirit

- We must believe and embrace the work of the Holy Spirit
 - We must repent of our lack of dependence on or our disregard of the Holy Spirit
 - We must continue to be filled by the Holy Spirit
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- ❖ Q: Why do you think so many of us are quick to judge others for their experience of the Holy Spirit? What does that reveal about us?
 - ❖ Q: When last did you celebrate with someone because of the obvious working of the Holy Spirit in their lives? (Are we people who see God at work, or are we so self reliant that we are blind to his ways?)
 - ❖ Q: Why do you think we struggle to accept that the Holy Spirit works in ways that we are sometimes uncomfortable with?
 - ❖ Q: Why is it true to say that it is not a work of the Holy Spirit if we are the ones who get the glory from the experience and not Christ?
 - ❖ Q: Why is it important for us to be able to recognize and test whether or not it is the work of the Holy Spirit?
 - ❖ Q: Have you ever had the Holy Spirit ask you to do something that you thought was ridiculous or seriously uncomfortable? If so, how did you know it was the Holy Spirit and not just a strange experience?
 - ❖ Q: What does it look like for us practically, to depend on the Holy Spirit and not on ourselves? (Give an example of something the Lord has led you to rely on him for, rather than on your own strength and ability.)
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