

Questions for Small Groups | April 28, 2019

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Explore the Spirit — Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Focus Passage: Luke 3:21–22; 4:14–21; John 20:19–22

Context: Luke 3:21–4:30; Acts 2–5

Corollary Scriptures: Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; John 16:7; Acts 1:8, 12–14; Romans 8:11

Sermon Recap: The Holy Spirit empowers the exploration. *The Big Idea is that the same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus during His ministry on earth empowered the early Church in her ministry, and empowers those in whom He dwells today—every born-again follower of Jesus the Messiah.* The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts reveal parallels in the Holy Spirit’s empowerment of Jesus and of the early Church at a number of points: baptism, commissioning to the Kingdom of God mission, overcoming temptation, gospel and geographic movement, empowered preaching, ministries of justice and mercy, and joy. We can expect that same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus and the early Church to baptize us, commission us to Kingdom of God mission, give us power to overcome temptation, carry the gospel to those who haven’t received it, proclaim Bible truths effectively, reflect Jesus’ concern for justice and mercy. Moreover, we can have joy in the process even in the face of opposition and mistreatment.

Background Helps

- **Between the Ascension and Pentecost** – What we know of as Pentecost (deriving from 50 days) began as the Jewish feast of Shavuot or “The Feast of Weeks.” It was a harvest celebration that was to occur the day after seven weeks after the first day of Passover—50 days. Acts 2 describes how the promised Holy Spirit came upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 1:3 refers to Jesus stating, “He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.” Some resources say the 7 weeks were counted from the first day of Passover while others state it was counted from the first Sabbath day after Passover. When we take into account that Jesus was in the tomb until the 3rd day after the first day of Passover and that He spent 40 days with His disciples after rising from the dead, it seems we have a window between 7 and 10 days between His ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The difference of the few days depends on whether you count Pentecost from the first day of Passover or from the Sabbath day after Passover.

Hook: *Pick a Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

When you were a child, what did you think when you heard mention of the “Holy Ghost” or the “Holy Spirit”?

Look—Observing and Interpreting:

READ – John 20:19–22. Also, to better see the relationship between Jesus’ relationship with the Holy Spirit and the relationship of Christians in the Church to the Holy Spirit, please read and discuss each set of parallels and their associated Bible references in the chart below, treating each numbered pair as a “question.”

Parallels Between Jesus' Relationship with the Holy Spirit in Luke and the Church's Relationship with the Holy Spirit in Acts

Luke	Acts
1. Jesus' birth comes through the Holy Spirit "overshadowing" Mary (Luke 1:35). His ministry begins when the Holy Spirit descends upon him at his baptism (Luke 3:22).	The church in Acts is born through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).
2. Jesus' first sermon explains how the Spirit had come upon him to set the captives free (Luke 4:16-19).	Peter's first sermon explains how the Spirit's power had come upon the church to testify to Jesus (Acts 2:14-36).
3. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus is driven into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. Luke notes that he did so "full of the Holy Spirit," which was part of the reason he so successfully resisted the temptations (Luke 4:1).	The apostles are baptized in the Spirit and almost immediately get dragged in front of the Sanhedrin, in whom the power of Satan is at work. The Holy Spirit fills them with boldness so that they can respond to their accusers (Acts 4:8).
4. Jesus gets sent out by the Spirit to travel around Israel, preaching the gospel (Luke 4:16).	Jesus tells the apostles that the Spirit will take them around the world, preaching the gospel (Acts 1:8).
5. Numerous followers prophesy in the power of the Spirit about Jesus (e.g. Luke 1:39-45; 2:25-35).	Peter tells the first church gathered at Pentecost that the evidence that the Holy Spirit is on them is their prophesying about Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18).
6. The Spirit of God fills Jesus to preach the gospel (Luke 4:14). He tells his disciples to depend on the Spirit for that same filling (Luke 12:11-12).	The disciples experience this filling frequently (Acts 4:31; 7:55). ¹

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

1. What parallels with the Holy Spirit's work in the life of Jesus and in the early Church can you point to in your relationship with the Holy Spirit?
2. How have you embraced the Holy Spirit's commission to engage in the Kingdom of God mission? If you were not aware that you have been called to that mission, how can you open yourself to accept it moving forward?
3. When you are being tempted, what are some practical ways the Holy Spirit empowers you to overcome the temptation?
4. If you have not experienced any of the evidences we've discussed of the Holy Spirit's empowering in your life, it would be helpful to ask yourself, "Do I have assurance that God has begun a new creation in me through His Spirit? Have I been spiritually born again and received the Holy Spirit?" If you do not have that certainty, consider these verses:

¹ This chart is drawn from J. D. Greear, *Jesus Continued: Why the Spirit Inside you is Better Than Jesus Beside You* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 67

1 John 5:13 – I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

What does John want his readers to know? What is the basis for their knowing?

Romans 8:9 – You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

What does Paul say about those who do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them?

If you do not have that assurance of a saving relationship with God through Jesus, please ask your group members how you can be certain that you are born-again.

Prayer: Please spend some time praying for one another.