

Holy Spirit in the Church sermon

March 31, 2019

We're currently in a series of Living in Awe of the Holy Spirit.

1. The first week we looked at the work of the Holy Spirit in the **Old Testament** and what we discovered was that the Holy Spirit was given to select people to enable them to carry out certain tasks: such as rule as king, serve as priest or prophet, or to build something.
2. Last week we looked at the work of the Holy Spirit in the **life and ministry of Jesus** and we saw the Holy Spirit involved in every aspect of Jesus' life and ministry from his conception inside of Mary to empowering him to teach and perform miracles, to dying on the cross and raising him from the grave. There wasn't any area of Jesus' life and ministry where the Holy Spirit wasn't involved.
3. Today we're going to look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the **church**
4. Then over the next two weeks we're going to discover the work of the Holy Spirit **in our lives** as disciples of Jesus Christ. Those two sermons are going to be packed with lots of really helpful information

So, let's jump right in to the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

This aspect of the Holy Spirit's work really begins in the very first verses of the book of Acts when Jesus instructs his disciples to stay put right where they are until they receive power from above through the Holy Spirit. I'm pretty sure these apostles didn't fully understand what that was going to look like but by chapter two they quickly learn. (**READ Acts 2:1-8**) Having tongues of fire resting on your head will certainly grab the attention of others. I believe that when this happened they were in the temple worshipping God. And everyone who was in the temple, from all over the surrounding countries, were able to hear them in their own languages. And Peter then stood up and began to preach a sermon, which was really more of an explanation as to what was happening.

That's an exciting beginning to the book entitled in your Bibles, **The Acts of the Apostles**. Many commentators have suggested that it may be more appropriate to entitle it **The Acts of the Holy Spirit** because we see the Holy Spirit empowering and equipping the Apostles throughout the book to be Christ's witnesses everywhere they went. And the message of Jesus spread like wildfire as a result of the Holy Spirit's work in and through these apostles. And I believe that the Holy Spirit is still as active and as powerful in churches today leading them spread the good news of Jesus everywhere.

Take out your sermon outline, located on the back of your bulletin, and let's jump right into the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

The Holy Spirit gave supernatural power (just as Jesus promised)

1. **To speak in everyone's native tongues (Acts 2:1-4)**
2. **To stand up to persecution**
 - a. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 4:8-10**) Peter and John heal a lame man while going into the temple to worship. The man hangs on to Peter and John and goes into the temple with them. The people in the temple at the time recognize this man as the lame man and so instantly Peter and John have a captive audience. Peter begins to explain how Jesus came, the Jews killed him but God raised him from the dead. Well along comes the priests, the captain of the temple guard and the ruling council of the Jews, (the Sadducees), and they arrested Peter and John and threw them in jail. However, the text says many more people believed Peter's message and now the number of believers grew to 5,000. The next day they bring Peter and John before them and they try to intimidate them into stop telling everyone about the resurrected Jesus. But Peter and John won't back down. Why? It says that they were filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**) Then in **Acts 4:12** Peter declares that "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*" After this the council is in a real quandary as to what to do. They're not used to people standing up to them. So, they confer and then order Peter and John to quit telling

people about Jesus. But Peter's response is classic. *"Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* (Acts 4:19) It says that they threatened them some more and then let them go because they couldn't figure out how to stop them.

- b. They prayed for more power to speak boldly (Acts 4:29-31). Remember, 50+ days before this these apostles were hiding behind locked doors after Jesus was crucified. Now, with the Holy Spirit inside of them they are unstoppable. Every follower of Jesus Christ has that same power inside of them – what should that say about you and I?
3. **To die with confidence and hope** Two chapters later another group of Jews opposed Stephen (who was out performing miracles and telling everyone about Jesus). It says they couldn't stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke (Acts 6:10). He's hauled before the Sanhedrin on false trumped up charges. But while before them Stephen begins to give them this history lesson on God's working in the Old Testament – but when he gets to telling them about Jesus they become furious at him and gnash their teeth. Look at what happens next: **Acts 7:54-56 (NIV)** *When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."* Jesus is almost always described as seated at God's right hand. But here, in anticipation of Stephen coming home, Jesus stands to welcome him home.

The Holy Spirit showed God's acceptance of Gentile believers

1. **Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17)**
2. **Cornelius' family (Acts 10:44-47)** This is an incredible story of the work of God and the Holy Spirit. God prompts a Gentile believer, Cornelius, to send some men to get Peter and bring him back to his house. While they are in route, God gives Peter a dream where he says it's okay to eat unclear animals. After he's had the same dream 3 times the Holy Spirit tells Peter that there are some men at the door and to go with them. So, he goes to this Gentile Cornelius' house and while telling them about Jesus, the Holy Spirit falls on them and they begin speaking in tongues and praising God. The reaction of those who had accompanied Peter *was astonishment that the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles* (Acts 10:45). So, immediately Peter ordered them to be baptized, since they were clearly acceptable to God.

The Holy Spirit encouraged believers (after persecution of Paul)

Acts 9:31 (NIV) *Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.* That same Holy Spirit is living inside of you and can provide you encouragement in your time of need.

The Holy Spirit gave direction for ministry

1. **Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29-30)** First an angel instructs Philip to go get on this one road. Then as an entourage of an important Ethiopian official comes by the Spirit tells Peter to go over and stand by this chariot. So, Philip runs over to the chariot and strikes up a dialogue with this man, which ultimately leads to him being baptized.
2. **Paul was prevented from going into Asia to preach (Acts 16:6-9)** God basically directed Paul as to where God wanted him to preach by closing doors and opening others. God can do the same thing for you as well. But notice, Paul wasn't just sitting around doing nothing waiting for the Lord's instruction. He was involved in ministry, while still seeking the Lord's direction.
3. **Paul was continually warned about dangers awaiting him in Jerusalem**

The Holy Spirit set apart church leaders

1. It was one of the qualifications to be a deacon (Acts 6:3-4) *“full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”*
2. He equipped elders (Acts 20:28)

Outside of the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit is busy as well:

1. The Holy Spirit produces unity

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NIV) *For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

Ephesians 4:3-6 (NIV) *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Within any given church you have all sorts of different people from all sorts of various belief backgrounds. And yet, the Spirit produces unity by keeping our individual focuses on Jesus. Just like a symphony to sound good and in unison, they all focus on the conductor, even though they are doing their own thing, when you bring it all together under one leader they play in unison. Same way as a church. We each focus on Jesus which thereby produces unity. I don't agree with all of you on every single doctrine. And that's okay, there's richness in diversity. But we need to all agree that we're all sinners in need of God's grace and that this grace comes through Jesus' death on the cross and our victory comes through His resurrection. And one day He will come back and take all of us to live with Him forever. Outside of that we can agree to disagree on all sorts of things. And that's one of the things I treasure about the Christian Church movement. It's intentionally designed to bring people from all sorts of faith backgrounds together in unity. It's what Jesus prayed for in the Upper Room and yet we don't often see it in reality.

2. The Holy Spirit gives each of us gifts to build the body up

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NIV) *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*

1 Corinthians 12:11 (NIV) *All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

In between those two passages of Scriptures is a partial listing of some of the gifts the Spirit gives to every single believer. And these are all given to help build the body up to unity and maturity.

3. The Holy Spirit produces worship in us

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NIV) *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs **from the Spirit**. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

As we give over control of our lives to the Spirit, He produces worship flowing from inside of us.

4. The Holy Spirit partners with us in evangelism

Revelation 22:17 (NIV) *The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.*

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2. To stand up to _____
3. To _____ with confidence and hope

The Holy Spirit showed God's _____ of Gentile believers

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2. _____ family (Acts 10:44-47)

The Holy Spirit _____ believers (Acts 9:31)

The Holy Spirit gave _____ for ministry

1. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (8:29-30)
2. Paul was _____ from going into Asia to preach
3. Paul was continually _____ about dangers

The Holy Spirit set apart church _____

1. It was a qualification to be a _____ (6:3-4)
2. He equipped _____ (Acts 20:28)

The Holy Spirit produces _____ (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:3-6)

The Holy Spirit gives each of us _____ to build the body up

The Holy Spirit produces _____ in us (Eph. 5:18-20)

The Holy Spirit partners with us in _____ (Rev. 22:17)

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