

Christian Basics

Session 5: The Holy Spirit

Introduction

In the last session we learnt that on the Sunday following His death on the Friday, Jesus was resurrected bodily from the dead. He appeared to hundreds of people and ate food with His disciples and was physically touched by them. As a result of Jesus rising from the dead, we can be assured of His promise that He will raise all those who believe in Him from the dead.

We also learnt that after Jesus had appeared to many in His risen body over a period of forty days, He was taken up to heaven (ascended) while his disciples watched on.

1. Instruction to the disciples

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His disciples directions on what they were supposed to do immediately after He ascended.

Read: Acts 1:3-5, 8

Jesus promised the disciples that when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, they would be empowered to share about Him with other people everywhere.

2. The coming of the Holy Spirit

The disciples obeyed Jesus' command and stayed in Jerusalem. At that time there were many other disciples who had joined the initial twelve disciples. Ten days following the ascension of Jesus into Heaven, about 120 disciples were gathered together in a room when the gift that Jesus promised was delivered.

Read: Acts 2:1-4

(See also: Acts 2:33)

3. The empowering of the Holy Spirit

Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He promised that the gift of the Holy Spirit would empower the disciples to be His witness. We notice throughout the book of Acts that the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to do this in a variety of ways.

Firstly, the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to **proclaim the wonders of God (Acts 2:11) in languages they had never learnt or spoken before**, so that people from other nationalities could put their faith in Jesus.

Read: Acts 2:5-8

(See also: Acts 10:44-46; 19:4-6)

Secondly, the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to **boldly share the truth about Jesus**.

Read: Acts 4:8-13

(See also: Acts 2:14-21; 3:11-24; 4:31; 6:1; 7:1-53, 13:13-52; 14:1; 16:16-34; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:12)

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit enabled them to **perform amazing miracles, signs and wonders**.

Read: Acts 5:12-16

(See also: Acts 3:1-10; 5:27-32; 8:4-8; 10:32-43; 16:16-18; 19:11-12; 20:7-12; 28:1-5, Romans 15:19)

Fourthly, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples **directions for ministry**.

Read: Acts 13:1-4

(See also: Acts 8:26-40; 11:12; 15:28; 16:6-10; 20:22-23,28)

Fifthly, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples **supernatural insight and foreknowledge**.

Read: Acts 11:27-30

(See also: Acts 5:1-11; 13:6-12; 21:10-11)

Now that you have seen some of what the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to do, you may be asking who or what is the Holy Spirit?

4. Who is the Holy Spirit?

In our previous sessions we learnt that Jesus was referred to as the 'Son of God', which made him equal with God the Father. Jesus also said on one occasion that He and the Father are one (John 10:30). Jesus is God the Son, the second person with God the Father in what we call the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead and is equal with God the Father and God the Son. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not separate gods but one God with different roles. This is what is commonly known as the Holy Trinity and can be challenging for us to fully grasp or understand.

To help you understand the Trinity, it may be beneficial to think about the various forms that the element water can take. When water is transformed from liquid into steam or ice, the form and activity that the water takes is different, but the basic element of water remains the same. In the same way, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all one God, but take different forms and perform different tasks. For example, Jesus took the human form of God and did the work of dying for our sins, while the Holy Spirit, fills believers to empower them for ministry. They are the same person manifesting in different ways and performing different roles.

The Holy Spirit is the **active presence of God in the world**. We see in the Bible that the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of the world and gives life to all living creatures.

Read: Gen 1:2, Psalm 104:30

We also see in the Old Testament of the Bible that the Holy Spirit **empowered some people for special service**.

Read: Deuteronomy 34:9

(See also: Numbers 27:18; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19, 15:14; 1 Sam 11:16)

Following the ascension of Jesus to Heaven, **the Holy Spirit is given to everyone who puts their faith in Jesus**. Every believer in Jesus has the **Holy Spirit** living inside of them.

Read: John 7:37-39, 1 Cor 6:19-20

(See also: Acts 3:38; 5:32; 1 Cor 3:16)

You may be wondering, if the Holy Spirit is able to do in and through you what He did in those first believers.

5. Can the Holy Spirit empower me for ministry?

The answer to that question is a resounding 'YES'. In fact, without the Holy Spirit helping you, you would not have been able to **put your faith in Jesus**.

Read: 1 Cor 12:3

Once you have put your faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit will continue to **convict and remind you that you are a child of God**.

Read: Romans 8:16

Just like the first believers, the Holy Spirit **gives each believer one or more gifts** to be able to bear witness to Jesus.

Read: 1 Cor 12:4-11

(See Also: Romans 12:4-8)

As Jesus wants all believers to work together to grow His kingdom, no one person will have all the gifts. We all will be given some gifts to use in combination with the gifts of others.

Apart from putting the gifts of God to use for the kingdom, one of the most powerful witnesses of Jesus to others, is when we are like Jesus. The Holy Spirit **grows spiritual fruit** in us that **makes us more like Jesus** and speaks loudly to those who don't yet know Him.

Read: Galatians 5:22-23

(See also: Romans 5:5)

The way that God works in our world is through the prayers of believers in Jesus. The Holy Spirit also **helps believers to pray**.

Read: Romans 8:26

Looking Forward

In this session we have learnt that every believer has the Holy Spirit living in them to enable them to both be more like Jesus and do His work to help others to come into His kingdom. While we cannot grow in the likeness of Jesus or do ministry without the Holy Spirit, there are ways in which we can posture ourselves to grow in our relationship with God and be used more powerfully by Him for the growth of His kingdom every day. We will learn more about that in the next session.

Prayer to Make Jesus Lord of Your Life

If you have not done so yet, you can say the following prayer today, to put your trust in Jesus and make Him the Lord of your life:

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died on the cross to rescue me from sin and eternal separation from God.

I ask for Your forgiveness for all of my sins and I choose to turn from them and make You the Lord of my life.

I receive Your forgiveness and ask You to come and live in me and help me to love in the same way that you do.

Thank-You for the free gift of salvation and for making me a child of God.

Thank-You that You will never leave or forsake me and that I can be assured of spending all eternity in heaven with You, only because of what You did on the cross for me.

May Your will be done in my life.

Amen.

Prayer to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

When we place our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. While the Holy Spirit lives within us, we can always ask to be filled with more of His presence and power. In Luke 11:13, Jesus teaches that the Father will always give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. You can pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit every day by saying the following prayer:

Dear God,

Thank-You that the Holy Spirit already lives in me.

Please fill me now to overflowing with more of the Holy Spirit to be empowered in following Jesus and helping others to know Him.

Amen