

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think of the Holy Spirit?
2. Since you've got Jesus, why do you need the Spirit?
3. When was the last time you undeniably saw the Spirit at work in or around you?
4. Acts 1:8 says *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*
What does "power" mean for you?

July 1, 2018
FORGOTTEN GOD (1)
Why Do I Need the Spirit?
Acts 1:4-8
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Today we begin a new sermon series about the Holy Spirit. I call the Holy Spirit a "forgotten God." It seems a bit extreme. You may think that it is an exaggeration to say we have forgotten about the Spirit. But from my perspective, the Holy Spirit is neglected in our ministry and forgotten in our lives. The benchmark of success in church services has become more about attendance than the movement of the Holy Spirit. The "entertainment" model of church was largely adopted in the 1980s and '90s. It filled our churches with self-focused consumers, rather than self-sacrificing servants adjusted to the Holy Spirit.

We understand something very important is missing in many churches today. I believe that this missing something is actually a missing someone – namely, the Holy Spirit. Without Him, people operate in their own strength and only accomplish human-size results. The church is not empowered to live differently from any other gathering of people without the Holy Spirit. But when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural.

The Holy Spirit is absolutely vital to our situation today. If the Holy Spirit moves, nothing can stop Him. If he doesn't move, we will not produce genuine fruit – no matter how much effort or money we expend.

In our church and faith lives most of us assume what we believe is right, but have never really studied for ourselves. We were simply told, "This is the way it is," and didn't question. The problem is much of what we believe is often based more on comfort or our culture's tradition than on the Bible. We need to reexamine our

faith. One of the areas we desperately need to examine is how we think about and relate to the Holy Spirit.

Upon foretelling His death, Jesus comforted the disciples by telling them that *“another Counselor”* is coming (John 14:16). In today’s text Acts 1:4-5, after His death and resurrection, He told His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ disciples had no idea what or whom they were waiting for, or what it would be like. But they were expectant and trusting because Jesus had instructed them to wait for this good gift. In Acts 2, we see the fulfillment of this promise. The Holy Spirit’s power is unleashed like no one had ever seen or experienced before. And Peter shares the amazing promise that this Holy Spirit is available to anyone who believes. The Epistles tell us of the Holy Spirit’s amazing power at work in us.

Yet this is not the way it is for most people today. We don’t live this way. For some reason, we don’t think we need the Holy Spirit. We don’t expect the Holy Spirit to act. Given our talents, experience, and education, many of us are fairly capable of living successfully without any strength from the Holy Spirit.

Even our church growth can happen without the Holy Spirit. Let’s be honest: if we combine a charismatic speaker, a talented worship band, and some creative events, people will attend our church. Yet this does not mean that the Holy Spirit of God is actively working and moving in the lives of the people who are coming. It simply means that we have created a space that is appealing enough to draw people in for an hour or two on Sunday. People are more likely to describe the quality of the music or the appeal of the sermon than the One who is the reason people gather for “church” in the first place.

I think the worst part is when we get outside the church’s walls and interact with believers and nonbelievers in the community. Can you really tell a difference? If you didn’t recognize their faces from

church, would you know from their actions and lifestyle that they were followers of Jesus? Why does this happen? And how is it even possible?

Romans 8:9 says, *“You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.”* According to this verse, if I am a believer, the Spirit of God dwells in me. Paul retells that truth in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”* Our bodies are the Spirit’s temple. We are His place of dwelling. If it’s true that the Spirit of God dwells in us and that our bodies are the Holy Spirit’s temple, then shouldn’t there be a huge difference between the persons who has the Spirit of God living inside of him or her and the person who does not?

Many born again Christians all across the nation say the Holy Spirit has entered them. They claim that God has given them a supernatural ability to follow Christ. Christians talk about being born again and say that they were dead but now have come to life. Yet when those outside the church see no difference in their lives, they begin to question their integrity, their rationality, or even worse, their God. Many Christians who have received the Holy Spirit lack love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc., even while many of our unbelieving friends exhibit these traits. We need to begin afresh by reexamining our preconceived ideas about the Holy Spirit and what it means to be a temple of the Spirit.

We are going to talk about the Holy Spirit for several weekends. But when it comes to experiencing the Spirit in our lives, it’s a different story. The goal of this sermon series is not to completely explain the Spirit or to go back to the early church. I hope we will learn something new about the Holy Spirit through this sermon series and it will draw us into deeper communion with the Spirit and greater experience of His power and presence in our lives.