

"The Promise of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:1-11)

For the week of September 13, 2015

Ground Rules

Pass out and go over the ground rules for small groups.

Testimony

Ask for a volunteer to share their testimony. Take 5-10 minutes. A simple three-point approach can be used:

1. What was your life like before you committed your life to Christ?
2. How and when did you surrender your life to Christ?
3. Since you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior how has your life in Christ made a difference? How has Christ met your needs? What does a relationship with Him mean to you now?

Tell the Story

Read Acts 1:1-11. Now have everyone close their Bible and as a group retell the story from memory. After rebuilding the story, open your Bible and fill in any "blanks" from your retelling of the story.

1. What did you learn about God from this story?

2. What does it look like when the Holy Spirit is at work in the life of a person? A church?

3. Describe a time in your life when you had a deep sense of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

4. Looking at your life today, is the Holy Spirit actively working in your life? How?

Digging Deeper

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit was made available by all who believed in Jesus. We receive the Holy Spirit (are baptized with Him) when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Answer some key questions about the Holy Spirit below:

- Can you be a Christian without His Spirit (see Romans 8:9-11)?
- Can you be joined to Christ without His Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:17)?

- What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit in your life and what should be evident in your life (see Galatians 3:3; 5:22-25)?
- The Holy Spirit unites the Christian community in Christ (see Ephesians 2:19-22). How? Give examples.
- Is the Holy Spirit God? Explain your answer.

- Why was it good for Jesus to physically leave them (see John 16:7-15)?
- How do you receive “power” from the Holy Spirit in your life today (see Acts 1:8)? Share an example. On the flipside, how do you respond or what do you do if you feel you do NOT have the power of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Keys to the Text

1. The first 14 verses of Acts give us the key to the book of Acts. It reveals the strategy by which Jesus Christ changes the world. It is the strategy of His church. The church (us) ceases to become effective in the world when it departs from this strategy. Many may feel the church is increasingly irrelevant. No! The church is the most important body in the world today. And whatever happens in the world today is a result of what the church is doing – or not doing. In a real sense the book of Acts is the continuing acts of Jesus. In the Gospels, Jesus did His work

through His physical body of human flesh. In the book of Acts, He does His work through the bodies of men and women who are indwelt by His life. So what is the strategy? Here it is: MEN AND WOMEN, POSSESSED BY JESUS CHRIST, INDWELT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, MANIFEST THE LIFE AND POWER OF GOD THE FATHER.

2. The Holy Spirit is the divine agent who creates, sustains and preserves spiritual life in those who place their trust in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is a person, the third member of the Trinity, equal in every way to God the Father and God the Son. Among the many characteristics of the Holy Spirit are: He functions with mind, emotion, and will; He loves the saints; He communicates with them, teaches, guides, comforts and chastises them. He can be grieved, quenched, lied to, tested, resisted and blasphemed. Since Pentecost the Holy Spirit has indwelt all believers. He fills them, seals them, has fellowship with them, intercedes for them, comforts them, admonishes them, sanctifies them and enables them to resist sin and serve God.

Next Week

1. Ask for a volunteer to share their testimony.
2. Ask for a volunteer to tell the story in Acts 1:12-26 the best they can from memory. After telling the story, then have everyone read Acts 1:12-26. Compare the telling and the reading of the story. Finally, have the group retell the story together with their Bibles closed.

Prayer

- Praise God for who He is. Praise Christ for His work on the cross for us. Praise the Holy Spirit who was sent to indwell in all believers.
- Pray for RiverLakes to be a church that actively makes disciples who make disciples. Pray for our church family to be bold for Him in our home, at work and elsewhere.
- Pray that each and every one of us spend more time in the spiritual habits such as prayer, reading God's Word, meditating on God's Word and fellowship with other believers.

The Bottom Line – The Gospel mobilizes a mission fueled by hope. We have incredible hope but we also have an incredible mission that promises to keep life interesting until that hope is realized.