

# EMPOWERED

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

FALL



MACOMB  
*Christian Church*

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## LETTER FROM KURT

*The book of Acts, in my opinion, is the most indispensable book of the New Testament. We have four Gospel accounts, 13 letters from Paul, and many letters from other writers which are all equally important. But Acts stands alone as a unique book unlike no other in our New Testament. It describes what the early church looks like, and prescribes what all churches should aspire to.*

*Acts is more than just a historical documentary...it is a personal narrative telling the story of God's followers. This narrative includes many scenes, acts (no pun intended), characters, and plot lines which lead us back to God. There is one person who ties everything together and is woven throughout the narrative as the main character with the leading role..and it may not be who you think it is.*

*Luke wrote the book of Acts, but he rarely mentions himself. Peter and John were the pillars of the early church, but they take a back seat in this story. Over half of the narrative follows the life and journey of the Apostle Paul, but he is still not the most important person in the book.*

*The main character in the book of Acts is the person of the Holy Spirit! You see his presence, power, and influence throughout every story and plot twist. Before Jesus left, he promised his followers something better was coming...the Holy Spirit (John 16:7).*

*We learn more about who the Holy Spirit is and how he operates in the book of Acts than any other book in the Bible. In this book, we see the power of the Holy Spirit and how he empowered followers of Jesus to accomplish the will of God (Acts1:8).*

*It is my hope and prayer throughout this LIFE Group season, you not only learn about Jesus and his first followers...but you receive, follow and EMPOWERED by the Holy Spirit!*

*May God bless,*

**Kurt Charlton**

  
Lead Minister

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

The purpose of this guide is to help you dive deeper into the book of Acts and the works of the Holy Spirit.

### SERMON NOTES:

Bring this workbook to church each Sunday. As you listen to the sermon, make a note when you hear something that surprises you, intrigues you, bothers you, challenges you, or encourages you. Use this as a starting point for your group discussion.

### ACTS OVERVIEW:

Each week, we will provide extra insight into the background of the text as you begin your own study. These notes are meant to help the scriptures come alive for us. They will add a depth of meaning and help us see the continuity of the central themes throughout the book of Acts.

### CONNECT QUESTIONS:

These questions will help you and your group members become more comfortable with talking and sharing with each other. Not only will you learn more about one another, the questions will help to steer the discussion in the direction of the topic.

### DIGGING IN:

These questions are the “meat” of the discussion and will point back to the sermon each week. Feel free to read and answer the questions before your group meets. They will also help you dig deeper into the Scriptures during your group discussions.

### CHANGE QUESTIONS:

Conviction leads people to significant actions. At the end of Jesus’ most famous sermon, he says if you do not put his words into practice, then you are a fool (Matthew 7:24-27). Life transformation is the ultimate goal of a follower of Christ. This happens through personal reflection and a genuine response to what you have heard from God. Feel free to answer the questions out loud when your leader reads them or you can quietly reflect and write a response in your workbook. This is the time to go deep and make it personal!

### WRAP UP:

This section is a summary of that week's study.

### ADDITIONAL NOTES:

This section is an where you can write additional notes or questions you may have concerning the passage. You could also write any a note about additional study you may want to do for the week's topic.

### CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER:

Please focus this time on your own personal praises and requests instead of listing all of the bad things that happened to someone you know. We challenge you to get “deep” with one another relationally, which means becoming a little bit vulnerable as you are honest with one-another.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE BOOK OF ACTS:

### INTRODUCTION

Acts is written by Luke, the physician, who is the only Gentile author of the New Testament. Luke covertly includes himself into the narrative a few times by saying we/us. The Gospel of Luke is episode one; Acts is episode two. The movement of the church in Acts follows the general flow of Jesus’ instructions in Acts 1:8; Jerusalem (Acts 1:1-8:1a); Judea/Samaria (Acts 8:1b-12:25); Ends of the world (Acts 13-28).

### MAJOR THEMES

#### - HOLY SPIRIT (and his power)

Holy Spirit is mentioned 56 times, which is more per chapter than any other book of the Bible. He is responsible for every major turning point in the narrative. (1:2; 1:8; 2:1-4; 4:28-31; 5:32; 8:15-17; 10:44-46; 11:15; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:4-6; 20:22)

#### - PERSECUTION (and its results)

Early Christians suffered intense persecution, but Luke always records the positive attitudes and results. (4:3-4; 4:23-24; 5:40-42; 8:1-4; 11:19-21; 12:1-19; 14:1-7; 14:8-22; 16:25-34; 18:1-8; 21:11)

#### - BAPTISM (and its importance)

Baptism was clearly commanded as a response to faith in Jesus (2:38) and was the common practice for all new believers. (2:37-41; 8:5-13; 8:36-38; 9:10-12; 9:17-19; 10:47-48; 16:13-15; 16:27-34; 18:5-8; 19:1-5; 22:14-17)

#### - THE CHURCH (and its ups/downs)

Luke gives church summary statements like a narrator who wants to inform the readers of what they missed in-between each scene. (2:42-27; 4:32-37; 5:12-16; 5:42; 6:7; 9:31; 12: 24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:19-20)

#### - PRAYER (and its effects)

Prayer is intentionally scattered throughout the entire narrative. It is almost like a supporting character beside the Holy Spirit. (1:14; 1:21; 4:31; 6:6; 9:40; 10:1-9; 12:12; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8)

### DESCRIPTIVE VS. PRESCRIPTIVE

Be careful not to read the book of Acts as a prescription for how every single church should operate today. There are times when Luke is merely describing the events as they unfold. It is up to us to interpret and apply what these descriptions mean for us today. One way to do this is to seek the underlying principle that is described, and then turn that into a principle for life.

Should we cast lots or draw names out of a hat when choosing leaders for our church? Should we meet together every single day of the week? Should we sell all of our possessions and give our money to the poor? Should we speak in tongues when we accept the Holy Spirit? These are examples of descriptions not prescriptions for everyone, everywhere.

An example of turning a description into a principle can be found in Acts 2:42. Luke says the first converts devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to fellowship. The principle for our lives today is: we should be devoted to God’s Word and to living in community with other Christ followers. Acts 2:46 says they met daily in the temple courts and in homes. The principle for us is we should regularly gather corporately and privately with other believers.



# WEEK 1 - INTRO

## WELCOME

Welcome to LIFE Group. During this calendar year, we will meet as a group to learn about God and his ways. Together we will get to know, begin to love on another, and grow as disciples of Jesus.

## CONNECT

1. What brings you to this group?
  
2. Have you had other small group experiences before?

## THIS LIFE GROUP

LIFE Groups are intentional experiences.

We take our groups seriously because there's something unique that can happen in LIFE Groups that can be life changing for us depending on our participation and commitment to the group. On the next page is a LIFE Group Covenant. It sets the ground rules for the practices that ensure our experience together can be safe, authentic, and helpful.

Take some time to read through these as a group. Consider signing and dating the covenant as your commitment to this LIFE Group.

## LIFE GROUP COVENANT

The purpose of this group is to live godly lives in community. As a group, we agree to the following five disciplines:

1. **Attendance** - I will give priority to the group meetings and call/message when I will be absent or late. (I will be here.)
2. **Safety** - I will help create a safe place where people can be heard without harsh responses or judgments. (I will be supportive.)
3. **Confidentiality** - I will keep anything shared strictly confidential. What's said in the group stays in the group. (I will not gossip.)
4. **Accountability** - I give permission to group members to speak into my life. I will allow their words to shape me. (I am open to change.)
5. **Scripture** - While everyone's thoughts and opinions are valuable and encouraged, we will ultimately rely on the truth of Scripture as our final authority. (I will rely on God and his word.)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## TEXT

### Acts 1:1-5 NIV

<sup>1</sup> In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach <sup>2</sup> until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

### Acts Overview

Over the course of this year, we will be studying the book of Acts together. The full title of the book is The Acts of the Apostles. It was written by Luke, a gentile convert to Christianity. He was known to be a doctor, and his writing dates between 63 and 70 AD. He describes the events of the church beginning in 33AD through 60AD. Luke wrote Acts as a sequel to his first book, the Gospel of Luke. The gospel describes the life of Jesus and his followers. Acts describes the life of the Apostles and the early church.

Acts describes for us the beginning of the first church in Jerusalem, how they were led by the Spirit, how they began to influence the 1st century culture, and how they spread the gospel throughout their world. It is a pivotal book for us as a church. It covers vast amount of territory, beginning in Jerusalem, continuing through Samaria, and stretching into the Mediterranean islands and the coast of modern-day Turkey and Greece. It reports the gospel was taken as far away as the city of Rome in Italy. The first half of Acts covers the actions of the Apostles in the city of Jerusalem while the second half of Acts covers the missionary expansion of the church through Paul into the Gentile world.

Acts describes to us in great detail the mission Jesus gave us and how the Holy Spirit *empowers* the church to accomplish her mission in this world. In many ways, Acts sets an example for us to follow. In other ways, it warns us of things to avoid and beware of. It reveals to us how utterly dependent they were upon the Holy Spirit, not just the example Jesus set for them. Their experiences guide us into understanding what church could look like. **The book of Acts helps us understand what is needed to have a vibrant and healthy church experience.**

## REFLECTING

- **What is something that stood out to you from Sunday’s message? What caused you to pause and think?**

## DIGGING IN

**1. What is something unique to the authorship of the book of Acts?**

**2. What is the benefit for us to study the founding of the first church in Jerusalem?**

**3. The Bible is the source of truth and inspiration for us today. What do these verses have to say about the source of the books we have in our Bible?**

**4. Read the verses below and remark on some of the benefits the word of God gives to us:**

**2 Timothy 3:16**

5. Many contemporary “prophets” and teachers claim to have new revelations from God. Are there any more inspired words coming from God that have the same authority as those God inspired through the Old and New Testaments? (Read Revelation 22:18-19)

6. In John 14, Jesus promised the disciples the Holy Spirit was coming. Read John 14:15-17. What are some things Jesus promises to us about the Holy Spirit?

7. Which of the above promises do you believe are overlooked or underused today?

## CHANGE

1. The book of Acts can help us to:

- a. Learn more of the history of the church.
- b. Discover the ways the Holy Spirit may work within you.
- c. Understand how the first church impacted their culture.
- d. Witness the growth/transition of the Disciples into Apostles.
- e. Apply God’s word to change our lives.

Which of the above excites you the most about this study?

2. If you were honest, what other sources of truth are you tempted to trust?

3. How can you allow the words of God to become more prevalent in your daily life?

## WRAP UP

The study of the Word of God is vital to our growth and understanding. This study of the book of Acts will help us understand the Holy Spirit and how he wants to work within his church. Without studies like these, people may feel free to create a church according to their own agendas and visions. But God had a very specific purpose for his church, wrapped around the instructions of the apostles, in the example of the early church. Studying Acts will help us become more than just a good group; it should change the way we interact as a church.

CARE

- How can we pray for each other?
- How can we pray for our church?



Week 2 - Power of the Holy Spirit

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# WEEK 2 - POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## TEXT

### Acts 1:4-11 NIV

<sup>4</sup> On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>6</sup> So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> 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.”

<sup>9</sup> After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. <sup>10</sup> They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. <sup>11</sup> “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

## Acts Overview

This section of scripture encompasses Jesus’ last words to his 12 disciples. As Luke heard the testimony of these eleven men, he recorded these words of Jesus. They faintly echo the words of the Great Commission in Matthew 28, but they encompass a greater and deeper meaning. While Matthew’s Commission defines what they were to do, these words describe more of the strategy.

These men were to be witnesses of what they had seen and heard of Jesus in Jerusalem, their capital city; and then Judea, their country; then Samaria, the country just to their north; and finally into the very ends of the earth. Jesus’ description to them encompasses a mission that would take more than their lifetimes, more than a dozen lifetimes. This mission and strategy are still occupying the time and attention of the followers of Jesus today.

To do this, they would need more than their own ability. They were going to need the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this mission. The Spirit was not just for the apostles. The Spirit of God was going to need to permeate this work from beginning to end for the whole world to hear the news of Jesus. They were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Meaning the Holy Spirit would totally encompass them, he would come to live in them, and he would come to serve through them to the world.

In scripture, we learn this was not the plan they thought Jesus would leave them with. They were still expecting him to set up a Kingdom on Earth. Even as Jesus ascended into Heaven, they were still waiting for something different to happen. It took men dressed in white, probably angels, to spur them on to go back into Jerusalem and wait for Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit to be with them.

## REFLECTING

- **Think back to the message on Sunday. What stood out to you? What was a new thought for you?**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. **Have you ever experienced a change in leadership in the groups you’ve been a part of? How did the change affect you?**
2. **Have you ever had to say goodbye to a good friend knowing it would be a long time before you would see each other again?**

## DIGGING IN:

1. **Jesus mentions a baptism with the Holy Spirit in his final words to the disciples. Look at these scriptures to see the number of different types of baptism that had occurred previously in the Bible:**
  - a. **Priests: Exodus 29:4**
  - b. **John the Baptist: Matthew 3:11**
  - c. **Jesus’ Disciples: John 4:1-2**
  - d. **Baptism with the Holy Spirit: Acts 1:4-5**

2. The disciples first reaction to Jesus' promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was to question Jesus about the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. Why do you think they responded with this question and continually questioned Jesus about this topic?

3. Is Jesus' Kingdom the Kingdom of Israel?

4. Compare the Great Commission to this last missional statement of Jesus:

**Matthew 28:18-20**

- a. What were the disciples asked by Jesus to do?
  
- b. How were they to make disciples?
  
- c. Where would God be?

**Acts 1:7-8**

- a. What were the disciples asked by Jesus to do?
  
- b. Where were they to be witnesses? What was the strategy?
  
- c. Where would God be?

5. Break down into groups of three or four and take a few moments to combine the ideas from Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:7-8.

6. The power that comes from the Holy Spirit is capable of accomplishing more than we can imagine. Look up the following scriptures to see what the power of the Holy Spirit did?

- Judges 14:6
- Judges 14:19
- Judges 15:14
- 1 Samuel 10:6
- 1 Samuel 11:6
- 1 Samuel 16:13ff
- Isaiah 11:2ff
- Micah 3:8
- Luke 1:35
- Luke 4:14
- Acts 1:8
- Acts 10:38
- Romans 15:13
- Romans 15:19
- Ephesians 3:16
- 2 Timothy 1:7-8

## CHANGE

1. **Do I consider the challenge Jesus gave to his disciples to be my challenge and commission for life? What is my Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the world?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **How much do I rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit in my life?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **Am I ready to engage in God's call to be his church and what his Spirit is trying to do in this world through me? Is there anything holding me back?**

## WRAP UP

As we close out this second lesson in Acts, we see Jesus was setting up his disciples to change their world. Real change only comes through Jesus. Real change only comes through the work of the Holy Spirit on people's lives and then in people's lives. We cannot accomplish his mission on our own. It will take his power and help. We need more than simply good instruction and a good example. We need the power of the Holy Spirit inside of us.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### CARE

- **How can we pray for each other?**
- **How can we pray for our church?**



*“And now I will send  
the Holy Spirit,  
just as my Father promised.  
But stay here in the city  
until the Holy Spirit comes  
and fills you with  
power from heaven.”*

*Jesus*



# EMPOWERED

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

## Week 3 - Waiting on the Holy Spirit

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# WEEK 3 - WAITING ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

## TEXT

### Acts 1:12-26

<sup>12</sup> Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. <sup>13</sup> When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. <sup>14</sup> They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

<sup>15</sup> In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) <sup>16</sup> and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus-- <sup>17</sup> he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." <sup>18</sup> (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. <sup>19</sup> Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) <sup>20</sup> "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, *'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,'* and, *'May another take his place of leadership.'* <sup>21</sup> Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, <sup>22</sup> beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection." <sup>23</sup> So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. <sup>24</sup> Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup> to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." <sup>26</sup> Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

### Acts Overview

For the first time, the disciples were not under the direct supervision of Jesus. This had to feel strange to them. After they left the Mount of Olives, they went to their borrowed room in Jerusalem where they took a roll call and started praying. Luke records all 11 apostles by name, which sets up the scene.

Peter was the spokesperson and natural leader of the apostles and disciples, perhaps because he was older (Matthew 17:24-27). After Jesus' departure, Peter addressed everyone to bring assurance, direction, and biblical guidance. In this period before the Holy Spirit came upon them, they did not just sit around the room waiting. Their time was filled with prayer, sharing scripture together, and perhaps planning the message that was about to be shared on the day of Pentecost.

Luke give a parenthetical explanation to the reader to explain what happened to Judas. This helps us to understand why the disciples spent time selecting someone to replace him. Luke wants the reader to know Judas' death was graphic and notable since "everyone in Jerusalem heard about this." We would not have known about it if he had not written it down for the sake of history.

Peter quoted from two verses from the Old Testament (Psalm 69:25; 109:8) to affirm the events surrounding Judas all happened to fulfill scripture. Until this time, Jesus has reminded us of what has been said in scripture. Now, the disciples begin to use scripture as their guide for what they were to do. Reliance on the scriptures would have brought immediate comfort to everyone who was still in shock from Judas' actions and Jesus' departure. Peter's use of scripture gave direction for someone to take Judas' place.

Scripture led them through the process of choosing a new disciple/apostle. Jesus called 12 men to be his main disciples during his earthly ministry. He had other disciples (see Acts 1:15), but these 12 were the ones he gave ownership and leadership to. These were the men who became known as the Apostles. As Jesus was returning to his Father, he commissioned the apostles to lead the early church (Acts 1:8). They then determined they needed another disciple to bring their full strength up to 12 again.

The decision came down to casting lots to see who would take Judas' place. Casting lots seems very odd to us, but it was quite common in ancient Judaism. It was a widely accepted practice that was viewed as a way to seek the direction of God (or gods for pagans). God commanded, allowed, and even worked miraculously through the casting of lots in the Old Testament. It is interesting to note that Luke and Acts both begin with casting lots and the appearance of angels (see Luke 1:9-11). This is the only time casting lots is recorded in the early church. Note: this happened before the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost. Christians today have the unleashed power and direction of the Holy Spirit and God's complete Scripture to guide us.

## REFLECTING

- **Think back to the message on Sunday. What stood out to you? What was a new thought for you?**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. **Are you a patient waiter?**
2. **Have you walked through a period of life when you have been waiting on God for direction or an answer to prayer?**

## DIGGING IN:

1. From the ascension of Jesus to the day of Pentecost was about seven days. (Acts 1:3-Jesus taught for 40 days after his resurrection. Jesus was in the grave for three days. Pentecost was 50 days after Passover.  $50-40-3=7$  days.) Does this seem like a long time to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit?

2. Why is waiting on God hard for us?

3. Read the scriptures below. How long have others waited for the promise of God to be fulfilled for them? How does this change your perspective on waiting?

a. Noah and the flood (Genesis 5:32, 6: 18; 7:6)

b. Issac's birth to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 12:4; Genesis 21:4)

c. Israelites reaching the promised land (Numbers 32:13)

d. Return of the exiles to Israel after the Babylonian Captivity (Jeremiah 29:10)

4. The Bible has a lot to say about waiting on the Lord. Read the following scriptures and list the benefits of waiting on him:

a. Psalm 62:1,5

b. Lamentation 3:25

c. Isaiah 40:31

d. Exodus 14:14

e. Isaiah 64:4

f. Psalm 40:1-2

5. What were the qualifications for the Apostle position Matthias and Joseph were considered for? (Vs. 21-22) Why were these important?

6. What did they do in these seven days of waiting?

## 7. What are we to do while we wait on the Lord?

- a. 1 John 2:28
- b. 1 Peter 4:19
- c. 2 Timothy 3:14
- d. Psalm 37:7
- e. Philippians 2:12

## CHANGE

1. Am I willing to pray through my circumstances and learn to wait for God?

2. What can I do that I know needs to be done while I am waiting for God's answer or next directive?

## WRAP UP

Waiting is never enjoyable, but with God it is a part of life. Some of the best things God has for us will come as we wait for him. The Holy Spirit is the greatest gift (outside of salvation) we received as human beings. He was promised to Jesus' followers, but they needed to wait. Waiting doesn't mean doing nothing. We still prepare for our part of what God is going to do. Whether waiting involves prayer or getting obstacles out of the way or preparing ourselves for what is to come, the wait time is a part of our growth and his work.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

## CARE

- How can we pray for each other?
- How can we pray for our church?



Horizontal lines for writing notes.

# WEEK 4 - RESPONSE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

## TEXT

### Acts 2:1-41

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" <sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> "'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

<sup>22</sup> "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. <sup>23</sup> This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup> But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. <sup>25</sup> David said about him:

"'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. <sup>26</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, <sup>27</sup> because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. <sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'



<sup>29</sup> “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. <sup>30</sup> But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup> Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. <sup>32</sup> God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. <sup>33</sup> Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand <sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

## Acts Overview

### ACTS 2:1

Pentecost was a Jewish festival known as Feast of Harvest, which happened 50 days after Passover, coinciding with the resurrection of Jesus. Jews would make a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem for these holidays, so this was a perfect time for the Holy Spirit to be unleashed.

### ACTS 2:2-4

Read these verses slowly and note the vivid details of Luke's description. There was a supernatural outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all who were in attendance in the upper room. This was the fulfillment of Jesus promise to them.

### ACTS 2:5-13

The Jewish pilgrims who heard the Apostles preaching were a gathering of the scattered tribes of Israel (vs.5). Some suggest this event brings about the Kingdom fulfillment Jesus predicted in Matthew 24:14, though this idea is speculative. The places listed represent the known Roman Empire. Everyone was astounded by the events that unfolded, which set the stage for Peter's sermon.

### ACTS 2:14-36

First, Peter boldly assumed leadership with the Apostles. Now, he becomes the spokesperson of the Apostles to the world even though he could not even speak of Jesus when confronted by a little girl (See Luke 22:56-57)! His boldness symbolizes the power and unleashing of the Holy Spirit. He used Scripture to show this miracle is the fulfillment of prophecy, and we are now in the last days. Peter quoted three Old Testament scriptures. Even with the indwelling of the Spirit working through his words, his message heavily relied on the authentication of scripture to prove to the crowd what was being told to them was from God. He gave the full gospel message: Jesus was the Messiah, he died on the cross, and was resurrected by God. He is Lord and Messiah!

### ACTS 2:37-41

The people were emotionally, logically, and scripturally moved by Peter's message. They realized a response was needed. Peter told them the simple, yet essential response after their initial belief in Jesus; repent, be baptized for forgiveness of sin, and receive the Holy Spirit!

## REFLECTING

- **Think back to the message on Sunday. What stood out to you? What was a new thought for you?**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. **Recall a time you felt moved by a message that was preached? What did you feel called to believe or change?**
2. **How comfortable are you with public speaking?**

## DIGGING IN:

1. Read Acts 2:1-4. Luke describes three symbols associated with the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Explain the significance of each of them:

- a. Wind
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Fire
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- c. Tongues

2. What are some distinctive ways we see the power of the Holy Spirit displayed through Peter and the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

3. Is there a difference between the way the Apostles spoke in other tongues on Pentecost and the way speaking in tongues is used in many churches?

4. Why was quoting from the Old Testament scriptures effective with the crowd gathered in Jerusalem?

5. Reread Acts 2:17-21. This is a prophecy from the book of Joel that was being fulfilled in their presence.

a. Who was the Holy Spirit going to be poured out upon? How is this different than before this time?

b. Verse 21. Who are those who will now be saved? How is this different than the teaching of the Old Testament?

6. Read John 16:7-11. What is the work of the Holy Spirit in the world, on those who do not believe in God?

7. In the message delivered by Peter, where do we see evidence of the Holy Spirit working to convict of sin, righteousness, or judgment?

8. Read Acts 2:36 again. What does it mean for Jesus to be Messiah? What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord?

9. The call to repent and be baptized is still a part of following Jesus and becoming a part of his church. What does it mean to repent? What does it mean to be baptized?

a. Repent.

b. Baptism.

10. Three thousand people took Peter's words to heart and were baptized. What were the contributing factors to such a large response? Why don't we see people in such large numbers making this commitment?

## CHANGE

1. Have you received, accepted, and unleashed the Holy Spirit through faith, repentance, and baptism?

2. Have you made Jesus both Messiah and Lord of your life?

3. Have you experienced the unleashing of the Holy Spirit in your life?

## WRAP UP

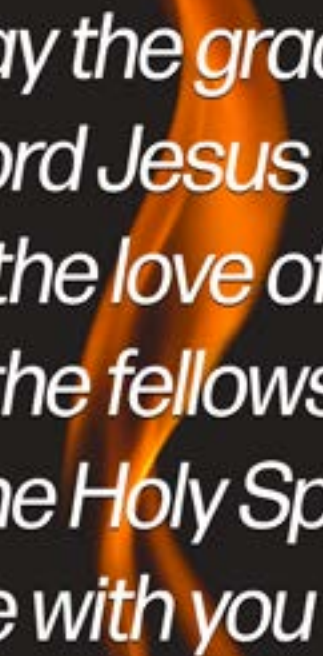
The outpouring for the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles brought about an immediate response. In the Apostles, they spoke with boldness and in other languages. In the crowd, the response was being convicted by the Holy Spirit. Through the words of Peter and the words of Scripture, they were motivated to accept Jesus as their Lord and to join with the disciples as followers of Jesus. This group had no name yet. It would be decades before they were given the name Christians. Yet the Holy Spirit's work in launching this first church was remarkable. We don't see the exact same miracle in any other church launch in the New Testament. It is clear the Apostles needed the Holy Spirit. It was clear they believed others would need the Holy Spirit. Peter's promise of the gift of the Spirit is one of the few promises in scriptures made to every generation after Pentecost. We need the Holy Spirit today as much as they did in the 1st century.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

## CARE

*(Spend some time praying with your LIFE Group. When asking for requests, try to keep the focus on personal praises/requests that relate to people in the group.)*

- **How can we pray for each other?**
- **How can we pray for our church?**

A graphic of a single flame, rendered in shades of orange and yellow, positioned on the left side of the page and partially overlapping the main text.

*“May the grace of  
the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of  
the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.”*

2 Corinthians 13:14

# EMPOWERED

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

## Week 5 - Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

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# WEEK 5 - FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## TEXT

### Acts 2:42-47

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### Acts Overview

This passage is the first of many church summary statements Luke provides throughout the book of Acts. These summary statements help us understand different phases of the church's development as it grew in the city of Jerusalem. This passage caps off the birth stage of the first church. After getting the Commission from Jesus, after praying together in the upper room, after receiving the Holy Spirit, after their first opening service in they city of Jerusalem, this is a result of that work.

Not only are these verses a summary of the benefits of what happened, they also described the dynamic of the early church. As the Holy Spirit indwelled the body of believers, not just leaders, not just pastors, but each individual member, the group began in interact differently than groups ever had in the past. There was a vibrancy to the church that was not just because it was new, but because of the presence of the Spirit of God. And his Spirit flowed into the actions of this group of believers as they began to live in unity.

Verse 42 mentions they were devoted to four things: the Apostles' teaching, breaking bread, fellowship, and prayer. These weren't aspirational values like you might see on the side of a corporation boardroom; rather, these were the actions describing the believers' behavior. These were the things the Spirit was leading them to value: learning, Communion, the community, and a dependence upon God in prayer. The Apostles continued to teach and continued to perform signs and wonders in the presence of the people.

The people themselves began to enjoy an almost supernatural community together. They met together. They shared their property and possessions. They went into the temple courts to witness together. They had communion together in their homes. They ate meals together throughout the week.

What began as a message in the middle of the busiest part of the city of Jerusalem became a movement of people who shared the same purpose. The Holy Spirit had not just given them power, but He had drawn them together.

The word fellowship is the word koinonia. (Vs. 42, in vs. 44 translated "common") Koinonia conveys more than just a gathering, or a party. It conveys a sense of community and common purpose. They were more than just a diverse group of people, enjoying each other's company. They were knit together by their love for one another and the purpose Jesus gave them.

It's no wonder this section of scripture ends with "the Lord was adding daily to their number." People were witnessing a new movement of God, and they went looking for God in the midst of it. They were finding the salvation of Jesus as they were searching for this new way of life. Their numbers continued to grow as more and more were drawn to the witnesses of Jesus, the teaching of the Apostles, and the power of God they saw displayed around them.

## REFLECTING

- **Think back to the message on Sunday. What stood out to you? What was a new thought for you?**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

1. **What steps do you take in order to be healthy?**
2. **What steps should you take in order to be healthier?**
3. **What are some ways health is measured in a person?**

## DIGGING IN:

1. **Read Acts 2:41-47. What were some measurements and indicators of health Luke gives in this report on the early church?**

2. What are some measurements and indicators of health some churches use today? How can some of these measurements be misleading?

3. The church was healthy because of what they devoted themselves to in the beginning. (Vs. 42) List some examples of how we can be devoted to the following:

Apostles' doctrine

Fellowship

Breaking Bread

Prayer

4. Read Ephesians 4:1-3. One of the works of the Holy Spirit is to bring unity. That unity is something we must maintain, protect, and work for. In Acts 1:42-47, where do we see the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the common believers to bring unity?

5. This passage describes group life. What are some ways our group can be more devoted to group fellowship?

6. What stands in the way of true biblical fellowship in our world today?

7. What signs and wonders are in today's church that can create a sense of awe in the power of God and the work of his Spirit?

8. Verse 47 indicates the Lord was adding to their number daily. Why is this a significant statement?

## CHANGE QUESTIONS

1. Of the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, which of these principles do you need to be devoted to this week?
2. What would our church look like if the Holy Spirit was unleashed like in the early church?
3. How can you contribute to the health and growth of Macomb?

## WRAP UP

The establishment of the first church was not just accomplished by the actions of the Apostles. The Holy Spirit also worked through the lives of everyday believers to show the world what following Jesus looked like. Their commitment to gathering together, loving one another, taking care of each other, praying, learning together, remembering Christ through communion, and fellowshiping with one another communicated a vibrant faith to the community they were a part of. It was obvious the Spirit of God was alive in them. The apostles were still doing miracles and speaking every day. But the life change in people also drew attention to Jesus and this Kingdom he had talked about forming. The Holy Spirit's work in the fellowship of the church unified them. Even today, one of the greatest works of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers is the unity he brings to us and the love he prompts us to share with one another.

**Suggestion:** Choose a time to get together with your group outside of normal LIFE Group time and eat together.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### CARE

- How can we pray for each other?
- How can we pray for our church?





Handwriting practice lines consisting of horizontal lines for writing.

# WEEK 6 - IMPACT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## TEXT

### Acts 3:1-4:4

#### Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer-- at three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

<sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. <sup>9</sup> When all the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup> they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

#### Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

<sup>11</sup> While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade. <sup>12</sup> When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? <sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. <sup>14</sup> You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. <sup>15</sup> You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. <sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

<sup>17</sup> "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. <sup>18</sup> But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. <sup>19</sup> Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, <sup>20</sup> and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus. <sup>21</sup> He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. <sup>22</sup> For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

<sup>24</sup> "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. <sup>25</sup> And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'<sup>26</sup> When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

## Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

<sup>1</sup> The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. <sup>2</sup> They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>3</sup> They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. <sup>4</sup> But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

## Acts Overview

This is the first of many miraculous events initiated by the Apostles in the book of Acts. Luke does not just record miracles to merely impress his audience or give a historical record. Each miracle Luke records is weaved into the story that progresses the plot and advances the narrative. Each miracle is evidence of the Holy Spirit's impact within their lives and through their lives into the world around them.

Notice the healing was instantaneous and permanent. Many "faith healers" claim to perform miracles today, but many of those "miracles" are minor, temporary, and rarely as observable as this event. Luke emphasizes the reactions of the crowd: no one could comprehend or explain what had happened other than it was miraculous. Luke, a physician, gives several details for this healing. The man was "made strong," which meant his muscles, tendons, blood flow, and bone structure all immediately became strong enough for the man to not just stand, but to run and jump! This was not a psychosomatic "healing."

Peter and John make clear they did not heal the lame man by their own power. They turn the attention of the crowd to Jesus. Peter says they are "witnesses," which correlates with Acts 1:8; 2:32; 5:32; 10:39; 13:31; 13:31; 22:15; 26:16. Peter makes clear the name of Jesus and faith in Jesus healed this man, not the will or ability of the Apostles.

Peter then makes a case that Jesus is the Messiah and great Prophet promised in the Old Testament. These scriptures would have been well known to the Jewish crowd outside of the temple. Peter consistently reminds the crowd Jesus is the fulfillment of the predictions of the Old Testament. In the Pentecost message, he reminded them Jesus is the Lord of King David (Acts 2:34). He reminded them Jesus was a prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18), and the Messiah who came to suffer (Isaiah 53), and Jesus was the blessing given to the whole world promised to Abraham (Genesis 22:18). Although the Jews and the Romans killed him, God raised him from the dead.

Peter softens the blow a little by saying they killed Jesus out of ignorance, but he does not use this as an excuse to let them off the hook. They are still required to repent! See 3:19. Ignorance is not an excuse for sin (Romans 1:20; Micah 6:8; Acts 17:30; 1 Peter 1:4).

As a result of the impromptu speech given on the porch of the temple, Peter and John undergo the first persecution in the book of Acts. Though it was uncomfortable and inconvenient, their imprisonment was relatively mild compared to what is about to happen to the Apostles and other Christians in the rest of Acts.

This healing and teaching were seen and believed by those who witnessed it, and the number of men who believed grew to about 5,000. The good words and works of the Apostles were more proof of the power of the Holy Spirit within them.

## REFLECTING

- **Think back to the message on Sunday. What stood out to you? What was a new thought for you?**

## OPENING QUESTIONS:

- 1. How do you typically respond to people asking for help on the street? Why?**
- 2. Has God ever used someone to meet a need in your life in a powerful way? If so, share what happened.**
- 3. Has God ever used you to meet someone else's need in a powerful way? If so, share what happened.**

## DIGGING IN:

- 1. Read Acts 3:1-10. Why do you think Luke includes so much detail about the lame man in verses 2 and 7-9?**

2. How do you think this scene would have been different if they gave the man what he was asking for? What lesson can we learn from this?

3. Peter never misses an opportunity to preach about Jesus. What allowed Peter to have the opportunity to speak to the crowd on this day?

4. Read John 14:25-26. What is one of the benefits the Holy Spirit brings to us?

5. Read Acts 3:17-26. How does Peter use guilt in the sermon? How does he offer hope? Why are both important?

a. Guilt:

b. Hope:

6. Peter again urges the crowd to repent in light of the way they had played a part in the death of Jesus. Compare Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19. Do these passages contradict each other, or how are they both true?

Compare:

Acts 2:38

Acts 3:19

7. Read Acts 4:1-4. What happened to Peter and John since they gave credit to Jesus? What do you think would have happened if they had taken credit for themselves?

## CHANGE QUESTIONS

*(This is for personal application. Allow time for silence, personal reflection, and discussion if people are willing.)*

- 1. Am I willing to trust the Holy Spirit for the right words to say when Jesus needs to be brought into a conversation?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. What are some physical and spiritual needs of people in your life? How can you help?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3. Who can you help in order to turn the credit over to God?**

## WRAP UP

The impact of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Apostles is evident. Not only did they perform miracles because of his power, they were able to speak impactful words to the crowds because of his wisdom. Good deeds and good words are at the heart of the gospel. The ability to do likewise in our lives comes from the Holy Spirit. The Apostles would have never imagined a ministry without doing good deeds. Jesus' ministry on earth was filled with healings, miraculous feedings, and attention given to the poor. The Spirit of God is leading the Apostles and converts to the same foundation of ministry Jesus himself used in the gospels.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### CARE

- **How can we pray for each other?**
- **How can we pray for our church?**

