

How would you describe the difference between a heart of stone and heart of flesh?

Acts 1:8 NLT - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Two immediate results of the Spirit living in the disciples were their bold witness and healing work. Jesus told his followers that their ministry would occur in four distinct locations.

Given our current constraints, how do you see God using you, your church, and the church at large to share the life-saving message of Jesus in each of the following places: neighborhood, surrounding community/region, places people avoid, and worldwide?

WRAP-UP

The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is a reason to celebrate and worship God. He represents the guarantee of God's promises to us. The presence of God's Spirit brings us power to do His work and be His witnesses in our neighborhoods, the community and to the world.

Memory Verse

The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him. - Ephesians 1:14 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge: Find a way to share God's love and good news this week.

"Pentecost" Pastor David Hutsko

INTRODUCTION

This weekend New Life celebrated Pentecost Sunday with a time of praise and worship. It was a pause between our studies of the Holy Spirit and the book of Acts. Let's take a look at what happened at the first Pentecost. After issuing the Great Commission to make disciples, baptize and teach all nations, Jesus ascended into heaven. But God was not leaving his people alone. God's Holy Spirit came to comfort and empower the newborn church. When the Holy Spirit appeared to the disciples, signs and wonders followed. In the book of Acts, we will see how the church responds to the challenges and blessings that lie ahead.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

What do you see as the challenges facing New Life in the immediate future?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. First Fruits

Acts 2:5-8, 11b-13 NIV - 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ... 11b...we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

The Christian community associates Pentecost with the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church. It is observed 50 days after Passover. We may fail to realize that this began as a significant Jewish

festival; the Feast of Weeks. In fact, all God-fearing Jews were required to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to observe this festival by bringing the first fruits of their wheat harvest. That is why so many foreign Jews who spoke other languages were in Jerusalem in Acts 2.

1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 NLT - 20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. ... 23 But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

How does Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23 link Jesus to the observance of the Jews at Pentecost? If Jesus is our first fruits, who would be the harvest to come (v.23)?

Acts 2:38-41 NLT - 38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles--all who have been called by the Lord our God." 40 Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation!" 41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day--about 3,000 in all

After receiving the Holy Spirit, Peter preached powerfully to the Jews in Jerusalem. What would you say was the resulting "harvest"?

2. The Spirit Comes

Acts 1:4-5, 8 NLT - 4 Once when he was eating with them, he commanded them, "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. 5 John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ... 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

1 Samuel 10:6 NLT - 6 At that time the Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them. You will be changed into a different person.

Jesus prepared his disciples to receive the Holy Spirit.

How does Jesus refer to the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4? How do you feel about the Holy Spirit being God's gift to you?

The disciples were told they would receive power² and they would be witnesses. The Spirit has the power to change us into a different person (1 Samuel 10:6). In fact, the Greek word used for power, *dynamis*, has the same root from which we get our word dynamite.

² *dynamis* -strength power, ability.

Romans 8:11 NLT - 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

What does Romans 8:11 tell us about how powerful the Spirit is and the difference it makes when the Spirit comes to live in us?

Acts 2:2-4 NLT - 2 Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. 3 Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. 4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

What were some of the physical evidences of the Holy Spirit's power at Pentecost? What was the evidence of the spiritual power and change that He brought?

3. Power & Presence

Ezekiel 36:26-28 NLT - 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations. 28 "And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be my people, and I will be your God.

God's promise of the coming Spirit from Ezekiel was finally manifest to the disciples at Pentecost. Miraculous changes take place when God's Spirit resides in us.