

Life in the Holy Spirit

Study outline in six sessions

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Adapted from a study of the same title by Rev Alan Walker



Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [Study 1]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

1]. The Promise of The Spirit.

Readings: John 14:15-18;, 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15.

- Is God active in your life?
- Do you sense the love and care of the Holy Spirit?
- Is God "there" for you when the going gets tough?

The answer to these questions may be Yes or No!

This study explores the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we approach this study we need to be open to new thoughts and ideas from a God who as Father loves and cares for us, all of the time.

A]. Love and Obedience, the key to receiving the Holy Spirit.

Read John 14:15-18

- Are there any blocks to me receiving the Holy Spirit?
- Are there any fears which hold me back.
- How might these be answered?

B]. The Spirit comes as Teacher, continuing the ministry that Jesus began.

Read John 14:25-26.

- What will the Holy Spirit teach us?
- What is the point of the Spirit's teaching?

C]. The Spirit as Counsellor {Parakletos:}

{lit. "one called in to help", To stand alongside}.

Read: John 15:26-27.

- How does a counsellor act?
- How will/could this counsellor help me?

D]. Now the Spirit is in the World.

Read: John 16:7-15.

- What is his task in the World?
- What difference will this make to me.
- How can your love for God express itself?

- Describe a time when the Holy Spirit comforted you.
- How do you receive guidance from the Spirit?
- What concern is the Spirit placing on your heart?
- Has the Promise of the Spirit been fulfilled in your life as Jesus promised?

Points for prayer.

What new thing have you learnt, or what thought or idea has been re-emphasised again for you?

What difference will this make to your Christian walk tomorrow?

Thank God for the things you have learnt.

Pray for His help to put these new things into practise. If you have particular concerns bring them to the Lord as you pray.

Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [Study 2]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

Readings: Acts 2:1-21. 2:37-47.

Last time we looked at the nature of the Holy Spirit and saw that He is loving, caring, and one who stands alongside us in a personal way. He is in the world to continue the ministry of Jesus. We saw that his nature mirrors the nature of Jesus.

The day of Pentecost

What does the day of Pentecost mean to me? When we see the change that Pentecost made to the experience of the disciples and recognise our own weakness as the church we are often lead to ask if this experience is relevant to us today. Is the Spirit still available to us?

Christianity rests on two major principles, The complete finished work of Jesus Christ & The continuing work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave the power that energised the early church is He still energising the church today?

A]. Read: Acts 2:1-4. They were all together in one place 50 days after the resurrection. Wind and fire are the images used to describe the coming of the Spirit as he filled every one.

- What do these images convey to you?
- How would you describe being filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What might be the result?

B]. Read: Acts 2:5-10. The ministry results of the filling.

The 5 groups of peoples represent a wide variety of nationalities.

- Could this mean that the Good News is for everyone?
- What might be the personal implications for me?

C]. Read: Acts 2:11-13. What might the "mighty works of God", contain?

Some were amazed others reacted differently.

- What for us is the significance of Pentecost?

D] Read: Acts 2:14-21. Peter's first sermon.

- How would you describe the elements of this address?
- What is the conclusion?

The results of Pentecost

When God speaks things happen.

- Is your faith making a difference in your life?

The event of Pentecost showed that when the Holy Spirit is activated in lives change occurs.

A]. Acts 2:37-40.

- What is Peter's 3 fold plan?
- What is remarkable in verse 39?

B]. Acts 2:41-45. These verses speak of results.

- What elements can you see as results of the Spirit and why?

C]. Acts 2:46-47. These verses speak of the community life of the new believers.

They worship praise and fellowship together.

They belong to a new community of faith.

- What does the message of Pentecost say to you today?
- What might it be saying to your congregation?
- What signs of the Spirits action in your life do you have?
- What evidences do you still hope for?

Points for prayer.

Spend some time in quiet allowing God to show you anything which may be holding you back from receiving more of the blessing the Holy Spirit has for you. Pray with one another for openness to God's love.

Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [Study 3]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

Readings: Acts 8:14-17, 19:1-7, 2:1-4 & 2:41-42.

As we saw last week there is a special action of the Holy Spirit which gives to the believer new power to witness and serve the Lord. The test of the presence of the Spirit is in action. Love for God is Christ's command to us.

There are 3 passages which provide biblical evidence of a special filling of the Holy Spirit and it is these passages we will look at tonight.

Read Acts 8:14-16. Peter and John represent the conservative Jewish church government.

- Could non Jews receive Christ?
- As non Jews ourselves do we still have reservations about some people who are different from us receiving Christ?

God is not predictable in the way He moves forward.

Here we see an example of an experience of the Holy Spirit after beginning to follow Jesus at baptism. It points to something beyond conversion.

Acts 8:17; They receive with the laying on of hands.

- If we find something lacking in our discipleship perhaps we are still waiting for a fuller blessing of God's Holy Spirit?

Acts 19:1-2; Paul's question and their response tell us 2 things? They lacked power which was visibly obvious and they could have received the Spirit at baptism.

- How would Paul address us if he were to see us?

Acts 19:3-4; John's baptism is of repentance and looking forward to events still to come. This is not re-baptism. They had never been baptised into Christ. Jesus makes the difference.

- Are we still looking forward to something still to come?

Acts 19:5-7; They are baptised and receive the Spirit and we see a change. Praise and proclaim.

We need to note here not the process but a reality. The Spirit has come and changed [1] Jews.; [2] Samaritans.; [3] Gentiles. He is thus available to all. But note also that this is not a description of how baptism should be but a recognition of vital importance, that they each believed Jesus to be Lord, and received the Holy Spirit.

- What does it mean to receive the Holy Spirit?
- When does it come?
- What does it mean for us today?

Acts 2:1-4. The disciples had for some years followed Jesus. At Pentecost a new additional power came to them.

- How do we know?
- What was this new power for?

The scriptures spend only a few verses on the "wonders", but the great emphasis is on the proclaiming witness to the Good News of Jesus. They were all filled. It is a corporate experience but personal to each one. Each is equipped. Let us not call this "a second blessing", but rather recognise that God always has more to give, and we need more. Even to you God has more to give, no matter where you are in your Christian walk.

Acts 2:41-42. The infant church has great power to witness and God honours that Spirit filled witness with growth. Pentecost is a repeatable experience and has happened and is happening in many parts of the world today. Wales, Tonga, Bolivia. Christ calls us all to fruitfulness. Biblically that means having children, increase. This is the acid test for us as Christians.

- Has there been a time in your life when you have had a new sense of God's power?
- As a follower of Jesus do you believe that the Holy spirit is present with you day by day?
- Do you then need a special blessing of the Holy Spirit?
- Is there anything we can do to prepare for this further baptism in the Holy Spirit?
- Are we prepared or unprepared?
- Paul's question to the 12 at Ephesus is important to each one of us, "Did you receive the Spirit, when you believed?"

Perhaps now is the time for you to receive more of what the Holy Spirit has for you? Spend some time in quietness in your group asking for the leading

of the Holy Spirit. You may like to pray for one another and you could use a prayer using these words or your own.

"Father we thank you that Jesus is Lord and we want him to exercise his Lordship in our lives. May we be open to receive your Spirit. And so we pray, come Holy Spirit to N..... your servant. Fill him/her with the fullness that Jesus wills. We ask this in the Name of Jesus who died for us. Amen."

As you close use this prayer:-

"God our Father, we thank you that in your love you fill us with your Holy Spirit. You bring your good gifts to us and enable us to experience your presence. We thank you for equip us today and filling us with the fullness of your love. Send us out in the power of your Holy Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory."

- Why then do we seek certain gifts above others? Or, why do we not seek the gifts in the first place?

Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [study 4]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

Readings 1 Corth 12:4-11.

In last week's study we looked at our need of the Spirit and now we look at the gifts he brings.

There are several lists of Spiritual gifts in the Bible:- Eph 4:11ff. Rms 12:6ff. as well as others. What we conclude from this is that no one list is comprehensive. Spiritual Gifts are a reflection of God's nature and power, as well as his love.

- What gifts have you received from the Spirit and what gifts have you seen in others?

A Spiritual Gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ out of God's grace for use within the context of the Body.

Read 1 Corth 12:4-7.

In a life that is open, the Holy Spirit comes and brings his gifts. The emphasis is that there is only one Spirit who gives his gifts.

- What does this say about the gifts?

V. 4. Variety of gifts. The gifts express God's truth in many different ways. Certain gifts are given to certain people. Each person is gifted uniquely. These gifts together totally equip the church for its witness and service.

- What does this tell us about the church?

V. 5-6. Service and work are energized by the Spirit. Effective work and service is only limited by our capacity [willingness] to receive the filling that the Spirit has for us.

- How can we effect our capacity for Holy Spirit?

V. 7. "For the common good".

- What is the purpose of the gifts? The gifts are given not for our sakes but for the sake of others.

Gifts of the Spirit

V.8. Wisdom and Knowledge. Wisdom is not a mere knowledge of the facts but is seeing with insight into the deep things of God. Knowledge is based on the ability to remember. This is understanding the things of God and the way of salvation. Both these gifts are linked with proclamation, so this is connected with the ability to speak out in witness to the Lord and also about the way of salvation.

V.9. Faith. This is not just the ability to believe in the Grace of God for salvation. It is the ability to believe for example that God will provide. Healing is bodily as well as Spiritual healing. It is connected to the idea of wholeness. In the 3rd century the church seemed to lose this gift and Cyprian wrote that it was the sin of the church which blocked the gift.

V.10. Miracles, prophecy, discernment. Miracles are the demonstration of God's power in the world. Prophecy is the ability to see what God is doing and will do. It is not primarily foretelling but forth-telling. This is one gift which has always been subject to the church. It is for a call to repentance, renounce injustice or violence or what ever else God is saying to his people. Discernment is the ability to distinguish between what is true and false. It sensitizes us to the truth.

Tongues & Interpretation. The ability to communicate to God in languages never learnt and /or to receive and communicate a message direct from God for the church. Interpretation is the ability to make known to the body what was the content of the message. In public worship interpretation is important.

V. 11. Paul ends where he began. All gifts are from the same Spirit no one has room to boast.

- Why would Paul emphasis this point?

When the Spirit comes he brings with him the gifts which are right for us. These gifts are effective in our normal situation.

- Why are spiritual gifts necessary?
- How gifted are you?
- How gifted do you want to be?
- Is there a particular gift you need in order to serve Jesus better?
Why not ask another member of the group to pray with you about the gift/s you might need. Luke 11:13.
- Be ready to identify the gifts you see in others present in the group.

You may like to conclude with this prayer or pray in your own words:-

Heavenly Father: you poured out the Holy Spirit on believers at Pentecost, drawing them together in the mission of the church. Give to us a greater enthusiasm for your work and keep your Spirit with us, so that united and in peace we each may live new lives as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, who is the head of the church, our strength, our Saviour and our Lord. Amen

Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [Study 5]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

The Fruit of the Spirit. Reading Galatians 5:16-25.

Last time we thought about the gifts we would like to ask for from our Father. We begin tonight by thinking about the fruits. Jesus said "By their fruits you shall know them". We instinctively know that he is right. A Christian should be different. How can this be so? The fruit of the Spirit are not gifts, they are the result of using the gifts. Fruit is not the result of effort but the consequence of accepting what God has given us and using it. We can immediately see the implications for our study. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot be what God intended for us. Fruit demonstrated come from indwelling power.

Read Gal. 5:16-21.

Verse 16-17.

- What is the biggest limiting factor in our demonstrating the fruit?
- The physical side of human nature is good (Gen. 1:25) yet there is a conflict between desires of the body and of the Spirit.

V. 18. Being a Christian is not trying to obey God's law. In the Spirit we come under a higher authority than our own.

- What does this really mean?

V. 19-22. The works of the flesh describe the lifestyle of self. Paul describes them under 4 main headings.

- 1]. Immorality and impurity. Christianity has always challenged the standards of the pagan world.
- 2]. Idolatry and witchcraft. Magic is an attempt to control God rather than being controlled by God.
- 3]. Enmity [lit. being an enemy] and strife. Care of self interests rather than understanding others.
- 4]. Intemperance. Alcohol is perhaps the most costly habit we see as a nation.

There is a high price to pay for being a worker of the flesh; it is to be a stranger to the fellowship of God. The joy of being God's people is not possible if we are in bondage to the desires of the flesh.

- How can we change this course of life?

Read Gal 5:22-25.

In opposition to the desires of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit. The result of the rule of the Holy Spirit. These qualities build harmony and justice and create happiness.

Love: "agape" Love which wills the best for everyone. Our love comes from God's love.

Joy: The Holy Spirit is a happy spirit. Joy is a reflection of the Spirit's presence. A joy which does not depend upon circumstances.

Peace: "shalom" wholeness. The result of being reconciled to God. Gal.4:6.

Patience: Is the result of total reliance on God. Waiting for Him to act, not linking our moods to the circumstances.

Kindness: An ordinary quality of life yet how important. [1Cor 13:4]

Goodness: Christians are people of "the way". We have a standard which is most often at odds with the world's way.

Faithfulness: It is a quality which lets others know that we can be trusted. The faithful see things through to the end.

Meekness: Possibly the least understood of all aspects of the fruit, it reflects great strength. Meekness flows directly from the confidence of God.

Self-control: By self-control [Revised Standard Version] or temperance [King James Version] we really mean Christ-control. Keeping a balance on all the drives of human nature so that they nurture and strengthen the whole personality. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we master our own lives.

- Consider what conditions in life help you demonstrate best the fruit of the Spirit?

We act as Christians because we belong to Christ. "We are not our own we are bought with a price", yet every day the victory has to be claimed again. However we as Christ's ones have the privilege of the companionship of the Spirit. We walk with [by] him. There is no such thing as a self made saint! Someone once said that "a saint is someone who by word and deed proves that God lives".

The assurance of the Christian is not "self-assurance", but Christ-assurance!

Can you recall a time when you walked by the Spirit in a particular incident?

Have you ever seen Christian love in action?

How can we achieve the desire to walk with the Spirit and so harvest the fruit? From the gifts comes the fruit.

In your closing prayers give thanks to God for the fruit of the Spirit that are in the people of your group.

Thank God for the continuing presence of the Spirit, constantly refreshing us with both gifts and fruit.

Thank God for the opportunities which allow you to exercise the fruit which he brings.

Life in the HOLY SPIRIT [Study 6]

(adapted from a study by Rev. Alan Walker)

In this study we have explored many aspects of life in the Holy Spirit. Of course there is still much more we could say and study about how the Spirit comes to us and effects us. We have noted our need of the Spirit and that each one of us has the promise that we are gifted by God as his people. So to begin our final study let us review what we have studied together over the past few weeks.

- 1]. What has been the most important discovery for you?
- 2]. What has been the most difficult issue you have had to grasp?
- 3]. In what way might your life be different because of the scripture promises we have explored together?
- 4]. What can we learn as a group of believers for our studies in order to be more effective as Christians?

Read Galatians 3:1-5.

As we can see from the opening sentence Paul feels quite strongly about what he is going to say! He then reminds his hearers that receiving all the things of Christ come through believing, so we begin in the Spirit by faith. Thus if we are to go on towards the goal then this to must be by faith.

- What is the "goal" towards which we press?
- How would you describe human efforts?
- What effect does trying to attain the goal by human efforts have?
- From our passage we conclude that life in the Spirit develops and grows not by human effort but faith? Does this make a difference?

Ephesians 5:8-21.

Having recognised above that faith is our watch word so we read here in Ephesians how a life lived in the Spirit is conducted.

- What are the practical implications which come from this reading? How might some of them be implemented in our own life and/or in the life of our church congregation?

As we leave this study the verse which should continue to ring in our ears at all times is verse 18. It is not a verse about temperance!!!. However it does remind us that we are to go on being filled with the Spirit. In other words remain open constantly to all that the Spirit has for us. Let us never be closed of from the in filling of the Spirit who brings life.

How have you enjoyed the study and how could a future study be structured better?

What issues or topics would you like to study in the future?

Do you have among you any potential leaders who might with help, be prepared to begin a new group in a future study?

Close with prayer. Let each member of your group be prayed for, either work in pairs or through the leader or through a time of free pray. How it is done is not important but that each member of your group be prayed for is.