

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

As our *Life in the Spirit* church wide series finishes this week, Pastor Don reminds us that, if we're following Jesus, the Holy Spirit's power and presence should be evident in what happens both in our individual lives and in the testimony of the church as a whole. Even today, as Gateway seeks to obey Jesus' command to be His presence here in the community, there should be moments when the people around us see for themselves the Spirit's undeniable work and say, "The Lord - He is God!" (1 Kings 18:39) To get your conversation started today let everyone share which corporation they believe has the most recognized presence in the world - and how it achieved that degree of visibility...

BIG THOUGHT

The presence of God's Spirit should be evident not only in us as Jesus' followers individually but also in His church. If it's not, then we're not experiencing all that Jesus desires for us. (Acts 1:8)

1. To begin understanding the Holy Spirit's first appearance to the early church, read Acts 2:1. Who was gathered together? Then read Leviticus 23:9-23. What was the meaning behind the celebration of Pentecost (also called the Feast of Harvest)? Since we know that Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection took place during the celebration of the Passover (a remembrance of God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt), what significance could there be in the Holy Spirit's appearance at this specific festival?
2. Now read Acts 2:2-4. What did the believers hear and where did the sound come from? What did they see? (v. 3) What did the Holy Spirit do as the believers started talking (the Greek word here means 'known, spoken languages')? (v. 4) How do these signs connect to other appearances of God? (see Exodus 13:21-22 and 14:21)

3. Read Acts 2:5-12. Who else heard the sound? Why were they in Jerusalem? (see v. 1) What else did these bystanders hear? (v. 6) Why do you think Luke (the author of Acts and the author of the gospel of Luke) wanted readers to know the specific nationalities of the bystanders? What were their responses to what they were experiencing? (v. 11-13) How do you tend to respond when you experience something you can't quite understand - amazement? Fear? A little of both? Share with the group.
4. Now read Acts 2:14-36. What do Peter and the other disciples take the initiative to do? (v. 14) What question do they answer immediately? (v. 15) Why was it wise for Peter to refer so frequently to the Old Testament as he spoke? (see v. 5) Does it change your understanding of the impact of Peter's message to realize that all of this was happening less than 50 days after Jesus' resurrection - and that Jesus appeared in public for the first 40 of those days? (see Acts 1:3-4) How?
5. To finish, read 1 Peter 2:12. How does this verse show us the corporate result of our individual obedience to the Holy Spirit's work in us (see Galatians 2:22-23)? Which of the 'fruits of the Spirit' seems to be the most difficult for you to see right now? Why?

Take it Further

Talk with God and thank Him for wanting to change the world through you and your role in His Church - then ask for His help to grow you by the power of His Holy Spirit to do just that!

Daily Verse Readings

Day 1: 1 Corinthians 12:13

Day 4: 1 Corinthians 3:16

Day 2: Romans 8:16

Day 5: Romans 12:6-8

Day 3: Acts 1:8

Day 6: 1 John 4:13

Memory Verse: Acts 2:42