

The Holy Spirit | Week 4 - The Holy Spirit Will Empower You

Message Big Idea

The Holy Spirit empowers us, inviting us to be conduits for God's mission and miracles.

Scriptures

Mark 2:1-12, John 16:7, John 14:12, Ephesians 5:18

Points to Keep in Mind

1. Some background to the story of Mark 2 might be helpful. It was common for people to assume that a person's sin was the cause of an ailment. In one place, Jesus contradicts that theology (see John 9). In the story of the paralyzed man, Jesus doesn't argue the theological point, but within that world of meaning reveals he is the one who forgives sin and is Lord over all (he shows he is Lord of the Sabbath later in the chapter).
2. Jesus is not saying we will do greater things in the sense that we will "One-Up" his miracles with bigger miracles. This doesn't mean that if Jesus fed 5,000 people, we ought to feed 6,000. It also doesn't mean that if Jesus used three words to raise Lazarus from the grave, we ought to raise someone with two words. Jesus is saying that the works of His followers will be quantitatively greater. Jesus says that there will be much more of the same miraculous mission we see in his life because his work will be multiplied through all his followers.
3. The teachers of the law are alarmed to hear Jesus say he can forgive sins. In their world of meaning, you had to go to the temple to be forgiven for your sins through the temple system of sacrifice. Jesus is acting as though no matter where he goes, the temple is present – that he is the temple itself. For ancient Israel, the temple was the place where heaven and earth intersected, and God's presence dwelled, and Jesus is acting and living as if he is now the place where heaven and earth intersect. This action of Jesus is at the heart of the Christian understanding that Jesus is God in the flesh.
4. The temple theology of Jesus can also be seen in the Apostle Paul in his writings. He applies temple language to the Church as a body of believers and the individual bodies of Christians. He says we are the temple of the Holy Spirit in the context of individuals Christians (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the Church as the gathered community (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). We share the same vocation as Jesus. Wherever his Spirit-led people are, that is where heaven and earth intersect. That means we are empowered for mission and miracles.
5. The life application questions of the guide are geared to get your group to share authentically how open they are to the Holy Spirit and how each can be filled with God's Spirit. In the corresponding message, the steps are 1) Slow down, 2) Read Scripture, and 3) Respond with courage when God leads you.

Additional Questions

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism
4. Additional Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 6:19, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, see also Jesus's riddle in John 2:18-22 where he associates himself with the temple.