



Sermon Discussion Questions

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Pentecost Sunday

1. ICE BREAKER: Talk about your experience with the Holy Spirit. Is the Holy Spirit something you are comfortable with in relation to your own faith? What are some misunderstandings people often have around the Holy Spirit?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Acts 2:1-13:

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome

¹¹(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Discuss this Scripture. What stands out to you as you read it? What questions or wonderings do you have?

3. Read Acts 1:4-5, *“⁴On 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. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”*

In this verse, we understand that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God, the Father. Why is this foundational understanding so important? Why do you think Jesus specifically told the disciples that the Holy Spirit is a gift? Why is it important to know that this gift comes from the Father?

4. Read Acts 1:8, *“⁸But 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.”*

Pastor Dale taught that without the Holy Spirit, you will not have the power to live the Christian life. What did he mean by this? What would happen if we tried to live the Christian life using only our own power?

5. The Holy Spirit gives us power to know the love of God. Read Ephesians 3:14-19:

“¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

In these verses from Paul, we read that part of the reason we need power from the Holy Spirit is in order to grasp the love of Christ. Discuss this idea. Why do we need the Holy Spirit to understand the love of Christ?

6. John Wesley is the founder of the Methodist movement. Throughout his life, even when employed as an Anglican priest, he struggled with fully accepting God's love for himself. Then, on May 24, 1738, he attended a church meeting where Romans was being read aloud. In his journal, he writes, " About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Can you relate to Wesley in his struggle to accept God's love for him? Why or why not? What does his experience teach us about the Holy Spirit? Have you ever had an experience like this? If so, describe what it was like.

7. In addition to understanding the love of Christ, the Holy Spirit also gives us the power to become like Christ. Read Galatians 5:22-23: "²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³*gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*"

Pastor Dale taught that we can't grow these fruits on our own, just by trying hard enough. Instead, we can "tend the garden" and create the environment where it will grow.

Speak to this idea. How do we create an environment that allows the fruits of the spirit to grow and flourish in our lives? Practically speaking, in everyday life situations, what does that look like? What role does the Holy Spirit have in this?

8. The Holy Spirit gives us power to do what Jesus did. Read 1 Corinthians 12:7-11:

"⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to

another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

What do these verses teach us about what the Holy Spirit does in our lives? Why do you think Paul is so specific about the different types of gifts the Holy Spirit gives? Why are we each given these gifts?

9. PRACTICE: We cannot control the Holy Spirit, but we can eagerly desire *more* of the Spirit in our lives.

As a symbol of being willing to receive, turn your hands face up. Take your time as a group, praying through these prompts. Leave time and space in between each to pray as you feel God leading you.

Father God, we thank you that you sent the Holy Spirit on the very first Pentecost long ago, birthing the church. We know you still fill us with the Holy Spirit, and we boldly ask that you would send more of the Holy Spirit now.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in each of our individual lives.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our families.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our neighborhoods.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our church.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our city.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our state.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our nation.

We ask for more of the Holy Spirit in our world.

In the name of Jesus we pray - Amen.