



CORE VALUES

CREW LEADER GUIDE: THE MARK OF A SPIRIT-FILLED CHURCH - CORE VALUE SUNDAY

Message Summary:

Drawing from Acts 1 and 2, this sermon explores the formation and growth of the early church, emphasizing that authentic Christian community is not simply a matter of personal effort or good intentions but is the direct fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence and work among believers. We highlight that the disciples' unified devotion to prayer preceded the outpouring of the Spirit, which in turn produced a community marked by sacrificial love, awe of God, and genuine fellowship. We are challenged as believers to move beyond passive church attendance to active, Spirit-empowered engagement with God's word, with one another, and with prayer, while recognizing that an ongoing awareness of God's presence transforms behavior and sustains true community.

Key Points:

- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was preceded by the disciples' unified, devoted prayer in the upper room, demonstrating that communal prayer is a catalyst for God's movement
- The early church was devoted to four foundational practices: the apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer
- An ongoing awareness of God's presence produces the sacrificial, others-centered behavior seen in the early church, rather than personal effort alone
- The spirit of mammon is a real spiritual force that competes against dependence on God, and the practice of tithing and generosity breaks its hold
- Biblical community requires active engagement, not passive participation, and believers are refined both by God's word and by genuine relationship with one another
- Jesus's command to love one another as he has loved us dismantled social, ethnic, and economic barriers, and the church is meant to reflect that same unity
- True spiritual maturity is marked by deep dependence on God, not independence from him
- The Essentials Experience was introduced as a tool to help believers grow in their knowledge of God and deepen their engagement with the church community

Key Scripture:

- Acts 1 and 2 (primary text), focusing on the ascension of Jesus, the day of Pentecost, and the description of the early church's devotion and community life in Acts 2:42-47
- Isaiah 40:31, which speaks of renewed strength for those who place their hope in the Lord
- Matthew 11, in which Jesus invites the weary to come to him and find rest
- John 13:34, in which Jesus gives the new command to love one another as he has loved his followers
- Galatians 5:22, referenced in the context of the fruit of the Spirit versus self-produced effort
- Ephesians 2:8-9 - Salvation by grace through faith, not by works
- James 4:14 - Life being like a vapor
- Revelation 7:9 - Every tribe and tongue worshipping God
- Joel 2:28-32 - The prophecy quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost



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Discussion and Reflection

1. The sermon describes the early church as being filled with a constant sense of awe and awareness of God's presence. In what practical ways can you cultivate that same awareness in the midst of your daily routines and responsibilities?
2. The message identifies four pillars of devotion in the early church—teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Which of these four do you find most challenging to consistently prioritize in your own life, and why?
3. Acts 2 describes believers who spontaneously began meeting needs around them once they became aware of God's presence. How might a deeper awareness of the Holy Spirit change the way you see and respond to the needs of people in your immediate community?
4. The sermon draws a distinction between hoping in an outcome or circumstance versus hoping in the Lord himself. Can you identify an area in your life where you may be placing your hope in something other than God, and what would it look like to shift that?
5. Ps. Jesse describes the spirit of mammon as a force that convinces you that without money you cannot survive or be significant. In what ways have you personally experienced this tension, and how has generosity or tithing challenged that mindset?
6. Jesus redefined the command to love others by saying to love one another as he has loved us rather than simply as we love ourselves. What is the practical difference between those two standards, and where do you feel the gap most in your relationships?
7. The sermon suggests that God often uses seasons of brokenness and loss of control to bring us back to dependence on him. How have you experienced this in your own faith journey, and what did you learn about yourself and God through it?
8. The early church gathered both formally in the temple and informally in homes, suggesting that both structured worship and intimate community are essential. How does your current rhythm of faith reflect or neglect that balance?

Practical Challenge:

Here are a few ways to help activate key next steps this week:

- **In the Word:** Set aside time this week to read Acts 1 and Acts 2 in full, without the use of your phone. Find a physical Bible if you have one. Ask God to show you something you have not seen before, and bring what you discover back to the group.
- **In Prayer:** Identify one person in your group or in your church family who is walking through a genuinely hard season. Reach out to them this week, not just to check in, but to pray with them directly — over the phone, in person, or in a voice message.
- **In Generosity:** Ask God to show you one specific, practical need someone around you has this week. It does not have to involve money. It might be time, a meal, a phone call, or showing up. Act on what he shows you.
- **In Community:** If you are not yet in a crew or a consistent smaller gathering outside of Sunday services, take one concrete step this week toward finding one. If you are already in one, invite someone who is not.