



SESSION 2: The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

God is a God of mission, and he had always planned that the good news of salvation through Jesus, his death and resurrection, should be shared throughout the Earth!

So, how were these defeated, discouraged believers going to achieve that, when their founder and leader had just been cruelly executed, and their doors were locked because of their fear of the Jews? The answer was 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit'. Read about this in **Acts 2:1-4**.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was given to men and women who were already believers (**Acts 1:8**). They had been chosen to be witnesses of the life and teachings of Jesus. In **John 20:22** Jesus breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit', so the Spirit was already at work in their lives. Yet, they needed a further, deeper, more powerful experience of the Spirit to fulfil their mission and calling. This became known as 'the baptism in the Holy Spirit', although other terms such as 'being filled with the Spirit' are also widely used to refer to the same experience.

Jesus was giving His followers power for service

'The baptism with the Spirit is always associated primarily and specifically with witness and testimony and service' (Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones). There were four other occasions in the Book of Acts when people were baptised in the Holy Spirit:

- **Acts 8:15-17** Revival in Samaria.
- **Acts 9:17-18** Saul of Tarsus is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **Acts 10:44-46** The Roman Centurion Cornelius gets filled with the Spirit.
- **Acts 19:1-7 12** Christians at Ephesus are filled with the Spirit.

Just as we know when someone has been baptised in water – they are usually soaking wet! – so we should know when we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit! It should show. For most of the cases in Acts that meant that they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. But we are all individuals – the important thing is that there should be evidence of the Spirit's working.

'If there is a guiding principle in understanding what happens when God touches someone, it seems to be that God treats people as individuals, each having a unique history, unique problems, and a unique calling from his or her Creator.' John White.

Read John 7:37-39. Are you thirsty for more of the river of God's blessing in your life?

Jesus still gives this power to those who ask Him!

Read the few verses in **Luke 11:9-13**. They were written about the gift of the Holy Spirit as well as about prayer. 'Ask, seek and knock', Jesus said, 'and you will receive'. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not for those who are good enough, or for those who are clever, but for all who come to Jesus and ask for it! This is where faith comes in – faith is a response to God's invitation. We come to Jesus by faith and ask Him to fill us with His Spirit, and He will!

For discussion

- What were the evidence(s) of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the life of the Early Church?
- What changes happened in the early Christian community after Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47)?
- Why do you think that 'boldness' seems to have marked the early Christians following the Day of Pentecost? (Acts 4:29 & 31, 9:28, 13:46, 14:3, 18:26, 19:8 & 28:31).
- What do you think might prevent people from seeking their own 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' today?
- How would you answer these reservations?