

allsaintsworcester



ENGAGE

Notes and questions from the talks for further engagement by
individuals or groups

The Spirit-Filled Life (1): Sent with the Spirit

Recap

In John 20:19-23 we see the Johannine equivalent of the great commission (see Matthew 28), where Jesus sends his disciples out into the world to proclaim the good news.

After the tragedy of Good Friday and the bleakness of Holy Saturday, the disciples at this time were hiding from the authorities trying to make sense of what had happened...all was lost.

Then, in an ecstatic moment like no other before or since, they saw their messiah and rabbi in front of them again; this time not bleeding and suffering, but victorious and peaceful, presenting a new paradigm for life to his dear friends.

This way of being would be costly for his first followers and if we're following Jesus closely. At the centre of Jesus commissioning is the deep reassurance that we are not alone. We go with the Spirit of God.

Read and ask

Read John 20:19-23

- Have you ever been sent to do something that made you nervous?
- Have you ever had to send someone to do something on your behalf?
- What are the challenges of being sent?
- What's the most difficult thing about sending someone to do something for you?

Discuss

In Andy's talk, he said that in this passage we can see Jesus sending us as:

Beneficiaries of peace

We allow ourselves to really believe that we are God's children, loved and forgiven.

Imitators of Christ

We are sent to the world in the same manner as the Son was sent by the Father; humbly, obediently, sacrificially and as servants.

Carriers of the Spirit

We trust that as we go, the living God is with us and in us bringing freedom to others.

Messengers of Good News

We talk about Jesus' offer of forgiveness, reconciliation and salvation so that others might come to know their heavenly father.

- Share with others in the group which of these comes most naturally and which you find most challenging.
- Why do you think this is?
- What might this tell you about your vocation, calling or gifts?

Practice

Spend some time praying for one another. Take time asking the Holy Spirit to speak, sharing prophetic words. Remember this should be edifying and encouraging and always offer words and scriptures on an 'open hand' and not using closed language such as 'God told me...'.

It is the responsibility of both the recipient of the word and others in the group to 'weigh' prophetic words and not necessarily to just accept everything that is said without question.

We all make mistakes and sometimes get it wrong and there is grace for us all in this as we practice and learn!

Recommended reading

Encountering the Holy Spirit – Jeannie Morgan

Keep in Step with the Spirit – J.I. Packer

The Introvert Charismatic – Mark Tanner

Miracle Work – Jordan Seng

Power Evangelism – John Wimber

The Spirit-Filled Life (2): God's empowering presence

Recap

In Luke 24 we join the story on Easter Sunday. We read of the women going to the tomb, seeing it empty and encountering angels. The angels share with them the good news that Jesus has risen. Hope was not lost.

We then join two of Jesus' followers on the road to Emmaus. They are leaving Jerusalem utterly devastated. All their hopes and dreams of a new Messiah had been dashed. They'd seen Jesus crucified. It was all over.

A stranger then joins them on the road, we know this is the risen Jesus, but they have no clue. It was only when they share a meal with him and break bread that their eyes are opened to who He is.

They head back to Jerusalem in order to tell the other disciples. Jesus appears to them all and begins to speak to them about what will happen. He promises the Holy Spirit will come and cloth them with power from on high.

The disciples needed the Holy Spirit to empower them for the task at hand. The moment in history they found themselves in was daunting and overwhelming. Yet also the start of a new era, the early church began, and people were beginning to understand the truth of the gospel.

Are we at another life changing moment in history? Do we need empowering again for the task at hand?

Read and Ask

Read Luke 24: 13-49

- How do you relate to the two followers on the road?
- In verse 21 we see the phrase "we had hoped..." what things have you been hoping for and not yet seen come to pass?
- Where do we see ourselves in this passage?
- What does this passage teach us about Jesus' resurrected body?
- What's our experience with scripture and has there been a significant moment when Holy Spirit has opened your mind to see something new?

Discuss

In Jess's talk we focussed on the latter half of the chapter verse 36-49. Within this part we see Jesus do three things.

Instructs – He reminds the disciples of how every prophecy has been fulfilled. He opens their minds to scripture which at the time would have just been the Old Testament. They are caught up in this story, it's not new it's a continuation. Luke wanted to remind the readers of Gods faithfulness.

Commissions – Jesus then reminds them verse 46 of the truth of the gospel. This is what Jesus has done, forgiveness of sins for all nations! He had to remind them of the task at hand. That his good news has to go far and wide. He reminds them they are witnesses to this.

Promises – Finally Jesus reminds them of the promised gift, the Holy Spirit will come and empower them to do all of this. They could not do this in their own strength. The power of the Holy Spirit would shake up and empower the church to be all that she is meant to be.

- Do you need the Holy Spirit to empower you?
- What dreams or visions have you lost hope in happening?
- Where are you expectant to see God move?

Practice

Why not share with each other your big God dreams? The kind of ones that are impossible without God. How can you encourage each other to keep praying and seeking God for them?

What has God put on your heart that you need the Holy Spirit to empower you to keep believing for?

Recommended reading

Reappearing Church – Mark Sayers

Prayer on Fire – Fred A. Hartley

Recommended viewing

Wildfires festival. The talks are all available online. The prophetic word shared from Pete Greig was within the Monday evening gathering:

<https://wildfiresfestival.com/tv/big-top-catchup-2021/>

The Spirit-Filled Life (3): prayer and the Spirit

Recap

In this third and final talk in this mini-series, Kath explored the relationship between the Holy Spirit and prayer. She helped us to see that the Spirit both helps us to pray and responds to our prayers.

Kath reminded us that lots of churches all over the world are sensing that in this cultural moment God is calling us to be a people who seek Him in prayer and contend in prayer for a new move of His Spirit to bring renewal to both the church and the world.

In her talk, Kath looked at both the example of the early church and an example from church history to help us as we seek to be a people who pray in partnership with the Spirit and for a move of the Spirit.

Kath suggested that the Spirit filled life is actually a prayer filled life. In other words, to be people of the Spirit means being people who pray. We're called to depend on the Spirit for us and partner with the Spirit for the world. We simply cannot do that unless we're praying in a whole range of ways, both individually and together as a church.

Read and ask

Ephesians 6:18 & 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- What is Paul saying to the church in these two passages about prayer and the Spirit?
- What other verses/passages in the New Testament speak about prayer and the Spirit?

Discuss

How much does our life together as a church reflect what Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18 & 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18?

- What about your midweek/life group and you individually?
- What would it look for us and for you to pray more?
- Do you believe that praying for a move of the Spirit is possible?
- What would that prayer look like if it was answered?

Practice

1. Identify how you could pray more – as a midweek/life group and as an individual

Why not commit to being at future "Hungry" prayer and worship evenings?

Could you plan an intentional time of prayer as part of your group's schedule?

2. Why not commit to praying each morning for just a few minutes for the Spirit to move afresh?

Recommended reading

Simply Pray – Johannes Hartl

Recommended listening/viewing

Revisit Rich's teaching series "Power and Presence" which looked at all of this over 4 talks (February 2019): <https://www.allsaintsworcester.org.uk/talks>