

“Show a Little Spirit”
Series: Cliff Notes on the Bible
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Today we start a new section of our Cliff Notes on the Bible series: Wildfire: The Unstoppable Power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was Jesus’ final, and perhaps most surprising, gift to his disciples. On the day of Pentecost—nearly 2,000 years ago—God’s Spirit was poured out in power, changing everything.

The Holy Spirit was not new, however. The Spirit of God was present at creation—hovering over the waters, breathing life into our world. The Holy Spirit is not an afterthought or an add-on, but fully God—an equal part of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Spirit came upon particular people for particular moments—prophets, judges, leaders—empowering them to do what they could not do on their own. The Spirit came... and then the Spirit went. But Jesus promised something radically different. As the Last Supper Jesus tells his disciples that it is better for them if he goes away—because then He will send the Holy Spirit. Not just to be *with* them, but to live *within* them. To guide them, teach them, remind them of truth, and give them strength.

At Pentecost, that promise became reality. The Holy Spirit was poured out—not on a select few, not for a limited time—but for all who believe. No longer distant. No longer temporary. God’s own presence, permanently dwelling within ordinary people. Like us!

Pentecost wasn’t a quiet moment. It wasn’t polite or contained. It was loud. It was visible. It was undeniable. Instead of just talking about Pentecost, let’s step into it together. In your bulletin, you’ll find a red slip of paper. When you see the flames appear on the screen with the word **NOW**, stand and boldly speak—or shout—the words of praise written on your paper. I’ll raise my hands to cue you. Keep repeating them until I bring my hands down. If you can say them in another language, do it. If you can’t find your paper, shout out Hosanna! Let’s make enough noise so that the people shopping at McCaffrey’s know something is happening here.

It’s 31 AD.

You are sitting in a borrowed home in Jerusalem, waiting. Forty days ago, you experienced the most miraculous thing – Jesus, your beloved rabbi and friend rose from the dead just as he said he would! Since then, he’s appeared to you and your fellow apostles many times. Thomas, ever questioning Thomas, was even able to see the holes in his hands, to touch his wounds.

Recently while sharing a meal with you and the other apostles, Jesus commanded you to not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends the gift he promised. “John baptized with water but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 1:5. And so you wait. But for how long? How will you know? Will John too rise from the dead and baptize you again? A few days ago, Jesus appeared once again and said, “You will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere, in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the Earth.” Acts 1:8. And then Jesus was gone—taken up into a cloud right before your eyes. And so you sit in the upper room of the house in Jerusalem, praying with the others in your group. Over a hundred followers have now joined you and the other apostles. And you wait. And pray. 10 Days have passed since Jesus last appeared to you. How long Lord? How long? It’s crowded; You are getting a bit restless— shouldn't you just go do something. Peter reminds you what Jesus said, wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit. How will you know? Today is Pentecost – the Festival of Shavuot— a time to give thanks to God for the harvested crops. The town is crowded -- Jews from nations far and wide gather in Jerusalem for this joyful celebration.

Suddenly there’s a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, filling the house where you are sitting. It's like nothing you’ve ever experienced. Tongues of fire appear and settle on all the believers. Everyone begins speaking in other languages. You and your fellow apostles cannot contain your joy and explode out onto the village square. **FLAME; HANDS RAISED** Praise God in the highest heaven! hallelujah! God is good! Our God is worthy to be praised. Praise to the Lord!

Jews throughout Jerusalem hear the commotion, come running and are bewildered. These people are all from Galilee and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, visitors from Rome, Cretans, Arabs. And we hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done.” They stood there, amazed and perplexed. “What can this mean they ask each other?” Acts 2:7-12. Others in the crowd scoff at them saying, “They’re just drunk, that’s all!”

This must be what Jesus had told you about – the baptizing with fire – the coming of the Holy Spirit, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus. Shavuot also celebrates the giving of the law to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. You remember stories told of your ancestors traveling in the desert for 50 days to Mt. Sinai, where God spoke to Moses through a burning bush and delivered the Law, the Ten Commandments - on tablets of clay. And now God is speaking through another fire – the Holy Spirit; 50 days after the resurrection of his son.

Through this new fire, Jesus told you God is now sending the gift of his own spirit -- The Holy Spirit, to write the law in the hearts of all believers, and whose power would now be within them instead of on tablets of clay to guide and help them be faithful to God. The crowd is getting louder. You step forward with the other apostles, and Peter takes charge, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem. Make no mistake about this. These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o’clock in the morning is much too early for that.” No, what you see is what was predicted long ago by the

prophet Joel: “I will pour out my spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions...I will pour out my Spirit even on my servants – men and women alike – and they will prophesy.” Acts 2:14-18.

Peter goes on to give the sermon of a lifetime, and his words pierce the hearts of thousands of the people listening. They ask, “Brothers and sisters, what should we do?” Peter replies, “Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive this gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, to your children, to Gentiles – all who have been called by the Lord our God.” Acts 2: 38-39

Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day – about 3,000 in all!

What an amazing day.

And here’s the part we sometimes forget – Pentecost didn’t end that day. When we say yes to Jesus, when we allow him into our hearts, our lives, we too have full access to the power of the Holy Spirit – living in us, teaching, guiding and empowering us to take forward his message of love and forgiveness.

So why is it often still hard to share God’s message? What gets in the way?

Intimidation; Feelings of Inadequacy - The Lies we believe -- Jesus couldn’t possibly use me – do you know my past? I am not qualified – I don’t have a seminary degree, any training. I have so many questions - I’m still figuring this all out myself.

Peter – the apostle who led 3,000 people to Christ on one day was not a great speaker. He was a fisherman by trade. Impulsive, hot-headed. Denier by reputation. Three times he denied even knowing Jesus in his beloved rabbi’s toughest hour. On his own merit Peter is definitely not qualified. When he stepped forward that day on Pentecost, I am pretty sure he did not have an eloquent sermon prepared. When he stepped forward that day, he did so in the power of the Holy Spirit – he simply let God speak through him. And 3,000 people were saved.

Choosing Worry, Fear over Faith. My head is overflowing with worries. What if I don’t make the team? I’m so busy caring for my mom, I don’t even have time to think. If I lose my job, how will we afford college? If only I hadn’t lost my temper; then we wouldn’t be in this mess. The anxiety is slowly killing me. These are my problems, my worries. I am consumed with trying to take care of them myself. I don’t have time for anything else, and I can’t ask anyone for help. Once again, we turn to our friend Peter. Impulsive Peter the denier has become spirit-led Peter, the Rock upon which the church will be built. Later in his ministry, Peter says --“Give all your worries to God for he cares about you.” 1 Peter 5:7. It can’t be that simple, can it? Carrying these struggles ourselves is foolish. Are we saying we don’t trust God fully? Even with sin, when we mess up, God says when we take our sin to God and ask for forgiveness, he will bear the weight of those struggles too.

What changed Peter wasn't confidence, education or courage – What changed him was the Holy Spirit filling the space that fear used to occupy.

If the Holy Spirit truly lives in us, the question isn't whether He is present. The question is whether we've made room for him to move. How do we fan those flames – how do we keep the Holy Spirit active and flowing through us? The habits are simple – you probably have heard them before. But they are foundational – God's gifts to draw us closer to him.

Spend time in God's Word.

The same spirit who inspired Scripture speaks through God's Word to shape us, correct us, and encourage us. That's what our Cliff Notes series is designed to help us do – spend time each day in the Bible reading God's Word. It's not too late to join in - Scan the QR code in your Bulletin to download your own copy of our Cliff Notes.

I am always amazed how many times my daily Bible reading is JUST what I need to hear. Or how God puts someone on my heart who just might need that Word. This is how the Holy Spirit works through us.

A few years ago, a neighbor's husband died. I did not know her well, mostly to wave and say hi on walks. I felt the Spirit put on my heart to reach out. I went to the Viewing, sent a sympathy card, but the Spirit pushed for more.

One morning reading his Word through the devotional book *Jesus Calling*, I felt **God** calling me to share that book. Ugh. Remember God, I didn't even know her well. She might think I was pushy or weird. I might offend her. So I dragged my feet. Weeks passed. Still feeling that prompting. Finally, like a petulant child I said "Fine," wrapped the book in an envelope, wrote a short note and stuck it in her mailbox. And waited. A couple weeks passed – nothing. See, I knew she would think I was weird. And then a text. She thanked me profusely for giving her that book. It was just what she needed that day. And she was amazed – the day I put it in her mailbox was her late husband John's birthday. How did I know she wondered? I didn't. God did.

Spend time in prayer. Prayer helps us align ourselves with God's will. When we pray, we create space to listen, not just speak. Prayer slows us down long enough for the Spirit to lead us. And sometimes the most spirit-filled prayer is simply "Here I am. Speak Lord."

Worship –Worship recenters us and reminds us who God is. Praise him in the morning before your feet hit the ground, praise him in your car on the way to work, praise him at night before your eyes close for the day. Praise him here with your family of believers. Yesterday 118 Women praised God right here in the Vineyard for the 2026 Women's Retreat. If you were part of that retreat, stand up. It was an amazing day of worship, prayer and praise. Ladies, if you weren't able to join us, we hope to see you next year! Worship uplifts our hearts so the Spirit can move freely.

Use your Gifts. The Holy Spirit gives each of us gifts, unique abilities for the building up of the body. When we hold back our gifts out of fear, comparison or comfort – we suppress the spirit. The Spirit moves through us when we freely offer the gifts we've been given.

When we allow the spirit to move through us, we must now share the good news about Jesus with each and every person we meet – maybe even stand on a street corner

preaching. Whoa – stop right there. I am not an evangelist – I can't speak eloquently; I definitely don't have that gift!

What were Jesus's last words to his apostles before he ascended into heaven? "And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8b. Jesus asked us to be witnesses – not evangelists. To live a life that demonstrates our faith and God's presence within us. So that when people look at us, they see something different – the way we talk, how we walk – a peace, settled assurance of God's love and grace. The Spirit at work.

I sometimes question whether I am making an impact, am I doing what you want me to do Lord. Am I doing enough? Anyone else?

We may think the Holy Spirit only works in big, dramatic moments. But more often, He works in quiet faithfulness.

Many of you may have heard or seen last Sunday, that I have a grandson Riley who I get to spend time with each week.

Thursdays are my Riley day. We play monster trucks, build train tracks, hunt for bugs, go to playgrounds, read books, dance, and just enjoy being together. We talk about God – I've sung him Jesus Loves Me since birth and he loves to sing the "Johnny Appleseed Grace." -- Anyone else? The "Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen, Amen" part at the end is his favorite. He's only 2 ½, I didn't think he was old enough for much more. Mostly what I do is love him. And then one day I got this text from my son Dan with the words, "This is because of you Nana..." (video of child saying "Jesus is right here in my heart and He never came out.")

God took my simple act of love – and used it. That's how the Spirit works.

Riley now has a brother – Frederick James Marr – Freddie -- born March 2nd.

One day Riley will help his brother know where Jesus is – right here in our hearts.

So this week, When the Spirit prompts – answer. When He nudges – move. Knowing that the same fire that fell at Pentecost is alive in you.