



Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: LIVING IT - HOLY SPIRIT

ACTS 1:8, ACTS 2, JOHN 16:13-14, GALATIANS 5:22-23, EPHESIANS 1:13 * 8/3/2025

INTRODUCTION

What is the most dramatic thing you have ever witnessed? Do you enjoy telling people about what you experienced? Why or why not?

What, in your own words, does it mean to be a witness? Why do you think Jesus chose that word to describe what His followers would be in the world?

What is a common misconception about the Holy Spirit that you've had to work through in your own life? What are some principles you use to help you determine if you're hearing from the Holy Spirit or your own mind?

Acts 1:8 gives the church, both past and present, its marching orders. We are to faithfully share with the rest of the world the story of what Jesus has done for us. We can do so confidently because we believe that we have been changed by Jesus, empowered and filled by the Holy Spirit, and sent out as witnesses to change the world.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 1:8

What does “power” from the Holy Spirit mean in this context? In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit’s power in your life?

How does the Holy Spirit enable believers to be witnesses?

Why is witnessing described as expanding from Jerusalem outward?

How does this verse shape the mission of the early church and the church today?

Acts 1:8 challenges every believer to recognize the Holy Spirit’s power as essential for effective witness. It also encourages us to see our faith as part of a global movement, beginning locally but extending everywhere. The promise of the Spirit equips us to boldly and faithfully share Jesus’ story, empowered beyond our natural abilities.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 2

How do the disciples respond to the coming of the Holy Spirit? What are some ways the crowd reacts to the disciples speaking in different languages?

What message does Peter preach to the crowd? How does Peter explain what has just happened? What is the response of the people after Peter's sermon? Do you think it adds or reduces confusion that we don't often see such visible displays of the Spirit's power in the church today? Why?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 16:13-14

Who is the “Spirit of truth” Jesus is referring to?

What does it mean that the Spirit will “guide you into all the truth”?

How does the Spirit's role differ from human teachers or leaders?

Why is it important that the Spirit will “glorify” Jesus?

How might this promise have comforted and encouraged the disciples?

This passage is part of Jesus' farewell discourse to His disciples just before His crucifixion (John 14–17). Jesus promises the coming of the Holy Spirit to continue His work and guide His followers after He is gone. In verses 13–14, Jesus encourages believers to depend daily on the Holy Spirit for guidance, wisdom, and truth. It reminds us that spiritual insight is a gift, not a human achievement. The Spirit leads us deeper into Christ-centered faith, helping us live in alignment with God's will and prepare for what lies ahead.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 5:22-23

What are the nine qualities listed as the fruit of the Spirit?

Why do you think Paul uses the word “fruit” instead of “fruits”?

Why is it important that these qualities are described as the fruit of the Spirit and not just behaviors to strive for?

How do these characteristics reflect the nature of God and Christ?

What does it mean for these qualities to be evidence of the Spirit's work in a believer's life?

What does Paul mean by saying “Against such things there is no law”?

In Galatians 5, Paul contrasts the works of the flesh (vv. 19–21) with the fruit of the Spirit. He's urging believers to live by the Spirit, not according to sinful desires. The “fruit” here is the natural result of a Spirit-led life, not self-produced moral effort. These verses invite deep reflection: is the Spirit producing this kind of fruit in my life? Growth may be gradual, but the presence of these qualities—even in seed form—is a sign of spiritual vitality. Our job is not to force fruit, but to stay connected to the Vine (Christ) and let the Spirit work.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EPHESIANS 1:13

Why is hearing and believing the gospel essential for inclusion in Christ? What is the “gospel of your salvation” referring to?

What significance does the "seal" of the Holy Spirit have in the context of salvation?

What does this verse teach us about the role of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life?

Paul is writing to the church in Ephesus to remind them of the spiritual blessings they've received in Christ. In verses 3–14, he describes God's work in salvation—from the Father's choosing, to the Son's redeeming, to the Spirit's sealing. Verse 13 focuses on how individuals personally experience salvation and offers both clarity and comfort. We are saved not by religious effort but by hearing and believing the gospel. And when we do, God doesn't leave us wondering if we're secure—He seals us with His Spirit.

APPLICATION

Why is the Holy Spirit such a confusing and challenging topic for believers? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life? If you could lean into the power of the Spirit more, what would you want him to do for you? What should be different about your life if you believed and acted upon that benefit? Of all the things the Spirit does for us, which is most important to you right now? Why?

The Spirit is always communicating in various ways. Brainstorm together ways that we can pay more attention to the various ways the Holy Spirit want to speak to us.

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”- The Greek word for “power” (dunamis) implies strength, ability, or miraculous power. This power is a divine enablement from the Holy Spirit, not merely human effort or enthusiasm. The coming of the Holy Spirit is a turning point, equipping believers for the work ahead (fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2).

“And you will be my witnesses”- The Greek word for witness means those who testify to what they have seen and experienced. The disciples are called to proclaim Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and lordship. Witnessing involves both words and actions, reflecting the gospel's truth and power.

“In Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”- Jesus outlines a geographical progression for the gospel's spread: Jerusalem – the disciples' immediate city and center of Jewish life. Judea and Samaria – the surrounding regions, including both Jews and Samaritans (historically estranged groups). Ends of the earth – the Gentile world beyond Jewish territories. This progression emphasizes the gospel's inclusive and universal scope.

Acts 2

Verses 1-4: The Coming of the Holy Spirit- The disciples are gathered together when a sound like a violent wind fills the house, symbolizing God's powerful presence. Tongues of fire appear, resting on each believer—this signifies purification and empowerment. They begin speaking in various languages (tongues), enabled by the Spirit to proclaim God's works across language barriers. This event fulfills Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8 and Joel 2:28–32 about the Spirit's outpouring.

Verses 5-13: The Crowd's Reaction- Devout Jews from many nations are bewildered because they hear the disciples speaking in their own languages. Some accuse the disciples of being drunk, highlighting skepticism toward the miraculous. This diversity underscores the universal scope of the gospel.

Verses 14-36: Peter's Sermon- Peter addresses the crowd, explaining the event as fulfillment of prophecy (Joel). He proclaims Jesus as the promised Messiah, recounting His life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. Peter's sermon confronts the crowd with the truth that Jesus is Lord and Messiah, calling them to repentance.

Verses 37-41: The Response- The crowd is "cut to the heart" and asks, "What shall we do?" Peter calls them to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. About 3,000 people respond, marking the birth of the Christian church.

Verses 42-47: The Early Church Community- The new believers devote themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. Signs and wonders accompany them, and they share their possessions generously. This community grows rapidly, praising God and enjoying favor with all people.

John 16:13-14

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes..." - The Holy Spirit is identified as the Spirit of truth, emphasizing His role in revealing God's truth. This contrasts with false teachings and deception that the disciples and future believers will face.

"...he will guide you into all the truth." - The Spirit's guidance is comprehensive and ongoing, not limited to a single moment or teaching. This means the Spirit helps believers understand Scripture, God's will, and the deeper realities of the Christian life. The Spirit's guidance leads to spiritual maturity and discernment.

"He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears..." - The Spirit's testimony is not independent but perfectly united with the Father and the Son. This shows the unity within the Trinity and assures that the Spirit's revelations are authentic and authoritative.

"...and he will tell you what is yet to come." - The Spirit will reveal future events or truths that Jesus' followers will need to understand. This includes guidance for the growth of the church and endurance through persecution and challenges.

"He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you." - The Spirit's primary mission is to point people to Jesus, not to Himself. The Spirit glorifies Jesus by revealing His work, nature, and teachings. This underlines the centrality of Christ in the Spirit's ministry.

Galatians 5:22-23

Paul uses singular—“fruit,” not “fruits”—emphasizing that these qualities form a unified whole. They are not separate virtues we pick and choose, but a package produced by the Spirit. This fruit is the evidence of internal transformation, not external rule-following.

Love (agape): Self-giving, sacrificial love that seeks others’ good (1 Cor. 13).

Joy: Deep spiritual gladness rooted in God, not circumstances (Phil. 4:4).

Peace: Harmony with God and others; the inner calm from trusting Christ (John 14:27).

Forbearance (patience): Enduring difficult people or situations with grace.

Kindness: A gentle, caring disposition; love in action.

Goodness: Moral integrity; doing what is right and helpful to others.

(Inward/disciplinary qualities)

Faithfulness: Loyalty, dependability, and trustworthiness in relationships and to God.

Gentleness: Humble strength; controlled power used in kindness, not harshness.

Self-control: Mastery over sinful impulses; discipline empowered by the Spirit.

These virtues don’t need to be restricted or regulated—they fulfill the law rather than break it. A life led by the Spirit naturally aligns with God’s desires; no law is needed against such character.

Ephesians 1:13

Paul is likely addressing Gentile believers here (“you also”), affirming that they are fully part of God’s family through faith in Christ—just as Jewish believers are. “Included in Christ” speaks of union with Christ, the central blessing of salvation (cf. Eph. 1:3–12).

The “message of truth” refers to the good news about Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection to save sinners. Salvation begins with hearing the gospel (Romans 10:17)—a necessary first step toward faith. This truth is not abstract philosophy but a personal message—“your salvation”—calling for response.

Salvation is received not by works, but through faith—a personal trust in Christ and His finished work. This moment of belief is a turning point when the believer becomes spiritually united with Christ.

In the ancient world, a seal signified ownership, security, and authenticity. Paul uses that image to say: The Holy Spirit is God’s mark of ownership—you belong to Him. The Spirit guarantees security—you are protected in Christ (cf. Eph. 4:30). The Spirit is God’s authenticating presence—proof that your salvation is real. The Spirit was “promised” by Jesus (John 14:16–17; Acts 1:4), and His arrival (Acts 2) confirmed that God’s redemptive plan was unfolding.