

Built by the Spirit

9/20/2026

Ella Claire, do you mind telling me a little bit about yourself? My name's Ella Claire, and I'm a really big cat person. I just signed up for drama club, and I'm doing dance and gymnastics. Excited to sit down and chat with you a little bit, specifically about your decision to follow Jesus and choosing to get baptized. So tell me a little bit about what led to that choice.

I was on the way to CIY, and on the bus, I was just like kind of in my own little world. And I could like hear something but not hear it. It was— it's like really hard to explain. And then I just like really like locked in during like services and taking notes and worship time and like all the things. By the time I got home, I was like, hey, Mom, I kind of want to have a little pool party, if you would say.

You got baptized 2-ish months ago, right? Kind of around there. I think so. How would you say your life looks a little different? Since the baptism?

I always used to feel like really lonely a lot, but now it just kind of feels like somebody's with me. Ahem. Who would you say is the biggest spiritual influence in your life? My mother. Why your mother?

She was always just like, I want you to find your faith, but like, I also don't want to like force you. Well, thank you so much for sitting down and chatting with me today. Thank you for having me. Of course.

Morning. I'm a little disappointed about the sound system announcement 'cause I thought there was gonna be a part of the sound system that when I talked my voice could be transformed into Don Fisher radio voice as I'm like, resurrection! You know what I mean? True story, his twin brother's a pastor, Don Fisher, so wouldn't you love to go to that church? In the beginning!

Whatever. Anyway, I guess that's not part of the plan, but it'd be nice to have a radio, different voices you could put into to transform my voice or Shawn's voice, whoever's voice. So anyway, world record for a car traveling 1 mile. This is from Guinness Book of World Records. This is actually someone pushing a car for 1 mile, all right?

All right, 2020, a man from Finland took 13 minutes and 26 seconds. To push a car 1 mile. Not to be outdone, the American Clint Phillips in 2024 did it in 9 minutes, 46 seconds, pushing a car 1 mile. His daughter has the women's Guinness Book, 14 minutes, 6 seconds, pushing a car 1 mile. Now, if you're interested in doing that, if you start at the office door, go around the building twice, and then go a fast way all the way to the Frisbee golf course, don't stop at the tree, but that's about a mile, so maybe sometime this week some of you can organize, not really, no liability there.

I apologize in advance if any high school kids are here that your parents don't want you to do that, so don't do that. So that's world record time, right? Came across another world record though,

world record of a car with a real engine going a mile. Ford GT, 1,700 horsepower, 22 seconds to go 1 mile.

What a difference a spark makes, right? It's called a combustion engine. Spark lights the chemical, chemical reaction turns into mechanical power, And I'm sure none of us would wanna go 12, 9-minute miles with somebody pushing us. We'd rather go fast with a spark, right? What a difference a spark makes.

See, the reality is me, my Christian life, your Christian life, you can live it totally, I can live it totally without the Holy Spirit. I can come to church, Give money, volunteer, I can do all those things. But like pushing a car, it's me and after a while it starts to feel heavy, eh, I'm not that excited about it and I'm tired. All right, a church can do the same thing. There's one of my favorite authors, a guy named A.W.

Tozer who was a pastor in the Chicago area in the 1950s and he said a church can do all kinds of activity and they can accomplish it all without the Holy Spirit. So what a difference a spark makes, right? And shouldn't we want that? Shouldn't we wanna understand how do I live my life? 'Cause sometimes we do feel like we're just pushing the car of Christianity.

You look good, you give good, you volunteer good, but inside you're just like, I'm exhausted. So we're looking at a passage today that's about the spark, the Holy Spirit, the flame. All right, so this is a series, it's called Built. Started it last week, Sean started it last week talking about the church is built different. So the whole series is about what is the church?

What are we? Who are we? What does it mean to be the church? And this passage we're looking at today is the beginning of the church, kind of the birthday of the church, if I can say it that way. So a little bit of background.

So you have the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and all of them end with the resurrection. All right, resurrection of Jesus. The book of Acts is what follows next. Some people call it the Acts of the Apostles. I've heard some people call it the Acts of the Holy Spirit, but it's basically, this is what happened next after Jesus' resurrection.

So Jesus was with the disciples for 40 days after his resurrection. With the disciples, there were a group of them, maybe 100, over 100 people that were with him, counting his mother, other women, other men, but the disciples as well, teaching them, helping them, reminding. But then after those 40 days, he said, I'm gonna go to my Father. So he ascends into heaven and he tells them before he goes, wait for the gift my Father's promised to you. And they would've known he was referring back to something he said that's written in John 14 about the Holy Spirit coming.

They didn't totally know exactly what he meant, but they knew something. So he said, wait. He didn't say, go put together a plan for what you're gonna do to reach the world in the next few days. He said, wait.

Wait, and then go to the next slide here. He says this. He says, I want you to wait because, and I want you to read this with me. This is why he says to wait. In other words, Don't go do something, wait, all right?

Because why? Read it with me. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Say the word and yell it with me one more time. 1, 2, 3.

Power, all right? He said you're gonna receive power, spark, flame, fire, passion. You need that. You can have plans, you can have procedures, you can have big ideas, but without power, and he's talking about this supernatural power, it's not gonna happen. So he leaves them and he says, go and wait.

So they all go, 120 of them or so, back to Jerusalem to an upper room in a house and they wait. They wait, day 2. Day 3, it was up to as many as 10 days. They were just waiting. And if I'm in that group, I'm probably like, hey, what are we waiting for?

We're waiting for power. Well, what does that mean? I'm sure they were like, what are we gonna do? They probably ate, they probably talked. We're waiting for something, they don't know what.

But they're eager and they're waiting and they trust Jesus. So they wait, they wait, and they wait. And then Acts chapter 2 tells us what happens. So I'm gonna read it again, but I want you to close your eyes. You may have heard this story before, but I want you to envision the story.

So it's an upper room of an ancient house, 120 people in there, probably eating, praying a lot, and this is what happens. So try to see, put yourself at the table with some of them or in the room or in the corner of the room. See what's happening. So when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were staying.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them, and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

You can open your eyes, but what an experience. If you slow that down, this is weird. But they knew something, they probably knew pretty quickly, they'd been around Jesus enough, his miracles, they probably knew this is, something's unique happening and we think it's It's God. Flames of fire, some of them start speaking in languages they never learned and they, what happens after that when they spill out of the building, they're speaking to people who are in Jerusalem for this big holiday Pentecost and they start hearing the gospel of Jesus in their own language that these guys never learned before. And they're like, what's going on?

And then Peter, fisherman Peter, impulsive Peter, is the one that delivers a sermon to all these

people who had gathered and 3,000 people get saved. Give their lives to Jesus. So what a difference a spark makes, right? What a difference a flame makes. So let's just unpack this passage a little bit and kind of look at some things.

So first thing, just the term Pentecost. Opening line, it says, when the day of Pentecost. So Pentecost was not invented by the Pentecostal Church, but Pentecost, penta, what building in Washington, D.C. has 5 sides? Pentagon, so Pentecost is 50. 50-day celebration and in the Old Testament it was the 50 days after the spring harvest.

They had a big celebration for the harvest. It was a celebration of gratitude. So the Old Testament holiday of Pentecost, it had a Jewish name to it but it was Pentecost. They celebrated with gratitude what God had done for them. Then after they, when they had left Egypt, 40 days, 50 days later is when God gave Moses the 10 Commandments up on the mountain.

So it was also a celebration of God, not just thanks for the gratitude for the crops, but gratitude for God giving them the law and telling them the way to live that would bring them joy. So that was Pentecost, and Jewish people celebrated it for centuries. And it was one of those kind of holidays, festivals that every Jew was expected and they wanted.

It was a time of celebration. They'd often go to Jerusalem for the celebration. That's why all these people were there from all kinds of countries. So we're told that on the day of Pentecost, this is what happened. Now again, Jesus had ascended to heaven after 40 days.

So on this 50th day, which was part of the Pentecost celebration, that's when Jesus told them to wait and that's when all this happened. So just to give you some context to that. So it has some Old Testament context And they were making these connections about gratitude and the giving of, God giving his law, now he's giving the Spirit, all right. So that's Pentecost. Second thing I wanna highlight, go to the next slide.

I want you to look at all the theys and them. Where's the slide? They, them. It's just me, sorry. There we go, there we go.

All right, say the yellow words with me in order, ready? They, they, they, they. Them, them, them. Who is that? Who's the they and the them?

Who are these people? Well, just 2 months earlier, they had failed Jesus miserably. Peter denied him, the rest of them ran away. They had spent time arguing about who was the greatest.

They really weren't totally understanding the mission of Jesus. So it's like, what's going on here? Who are these people? Well, they were failures. They were failures.

They were Peter. They were failures. But not anymore. But that was recent.

Does that sound like you? It sounds like me. I think, wow, these people at Pentecost, they must have been like the Hall of Fame people. Well, they are now, but they weren't then. They were ordinary people like you and me who really wanted to follow Jesus.

We've had our times, we stumble and fall, we can't figure it out, we don't understand it, but our heart's there. We just can't do it all right. That's they and them in this passage. That's you and me right here. Don't think I can't be that.

Well, this Holy Spirit thing is for those people. Those people were these people before the Holy Spirit came upon them. So don't ever write yourself out of this story. This story is about them and they then, but it's about you and me now. 'Cause they were people like you and me that hadn't had it all figured out, made mistakes, fought with each other, didn't know.

So the book of Acts, big picture, is a story of ordinary people Being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the things Jesus said they could do. All right, the book of Acts is the story of ordinary people, you and me, being empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the things Jesus said they could do. Kinda changing the world. That's the book of Acts. All right, now to the main part of this passage.

Go to the next slide.

Read the yellow with me. Filled with the Spirit. One more time. Filled with the Holy Spirit. That's kinda the primary part of this passage.

You have the wind. I was also disappointed without a sound, with the new sound systems we don't have like a wind machine or fire, no, just kidding. Cue the flames of fire, right? But wind, tongues of fire, and that's not necessarily something that's always gonna be repeated in history, but what's repeated in history is They were filled with the Holy Spirit. What does that mean?

Again, these are ordinary people.

The book of Acts talks about the Holy Spirit using a couple different other terms. Sometimes when you're baptized, if you're baptized, we're baptized into the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit becomes part of you then, comes inside of you then. Book of Acts talks about receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit being poured out on people like you and me.

The Holy Spirit falling on people and the Holy Spirit coming upon people. So there's this clear sense the Holy Spirit has some kind of invasive reality in the lives of ordinary people like you and me. So we're not gonna focus on the tongues, languages spoken, mighty rushing wind, but let's at least all agree, and we can all see this, Something supernatural came from heaven and invaded the lives of these men and women and it changed them forever. That's Pentecost. Something supernatural came from the invisible world and invaded the lives of ordinary people like you and me, changed them forever, changed the world forever.

It's not about trying to repeat The phenomena, although God can do what he wants to do, but you look at that history of revivals in this country or around the world, those phenomena, the wind and the tongues, those aren't often repeated, but what is repeated is something changes with these people because something invisible invades them.

So he might, some people might say, well, how many times does this happen? 'Cause I thought when I was baptized I had the Holy Spirit. But if you look at the book of Acts, the many times it's mentioned, Acts 2, they're filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 4 says Peter's filled with the Holy Spirit again. Acts 4, all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit after a prayer meeting.

Acts chapter 9, Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 13, Paul again was filled with the Holy Spirit. Acts 13, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. So I thought it was a one-time thing. What's going on here?

Some churches, some denominations will say, well, you have the Holy Spirit one time, that's it, when you're baptized. Others will say, well, there's a second blessing where the Holy Spirit comes on you and something new happens. I had a professor when I was in seminary that said people ask me, do you believe in the second blessing of the Holy Spirit? He said, yes, I do. And a third and a fourth and a fifth.

He said, I believe in multiple blessings of the Holy Spirit. He said this because I leak. I need the Holy Spirit over and over and over again. So when you read the book of Acts and Paul and Peter were filled with the Spirit again and again, it's like they were getting more and more of the Holy Spirit in their lives. So whether your theology is once or twice or whatever, can we at least all agree we leak and there's always more of the Holy Spirit we can have in our lives?

Always more, right? So then we might ask the question, so how does this happen?

How does the Holy Spirit fill me, you?

So typically, sometimes we think it's emotion or enthusiasm. And I love to sing, but singing loudly with other people doesn't stir, that can stir some emotions that it's not necessarily the Holy Spirit. It can be, But sometimes it's just enthusiasm and emotion. Sometimes it is the Holy Spirit, but do we have to sing enough, sing and sing and sing enough so the Holy Spirit finally says, okay, I'll come? Is it, no, it's not that.

In the Old Testament, that was like the prophets of Baal would repetitively try to get God to do something. We're not that way. So how do you get the Holy Spirit? Well, the Bible's pretty clear. In John chapter 14, Jesus said, The one who loves me will obey me.

And if you obey me and show your love to me that way, I will show myself to you. My Father will show himself to you. In other words, I will have intimate relation with you.

And then Peter, in the book of Acts, just a few chapters later, he says the Holy Spirit is God's given to those who obey him. Oh, so you're saying, so wait a minute. So obedience is a prerequisite for getting more of the Holy Spirit? I thought God's love was unconditional. No, his love is unconditional.

He loves you no matter what. His filling of you, his intimacy with you, his empowering you, that's incredibly conditional. The Bible says obedience cleans out the vessel for you to have a full measure of the Holy Spirit. His love for you doesn't change. You got unconditional love.

But his filling of you, the Bible's really clear, it's conditional on obedience. So if there's something in your life that God's telling you to do and you don't do, or he's telling you to stop doing and you haven't stopped doing, the Bible says you're grieving the Holy Spirit, the book of Ephesians. You're grieving, you're stopping up the hose.

He still loves you, but if you wanna be filled and you're not quite sure why you don't feel this passion and joy of Christianity, but yet you're dabbling in disobedience, that's why. And it's not, I'm not trying to sound harsh with that, 'cause God's showed me things in my own life that I had to get rid of so my cup would be bigger and cleaner. So that's the clear precondition of the Holy Spirit filling us.

But then the question is, okay, but what does it look like? Again, I was watching a reel the other day where it was a church where they were dancing on the stage and I'm not even gonna try to dance that way 'cause to me it looked a little silly. I'm just saying, all right. Silly is not a theological word, it's just a Matt word, right. And I thought, is that what, if I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, do I do all what I see the crazies doing on television or in real life or whatever?

It's like, no, that's not the Holy Spirit. Hold on, my ears. There we go. Anyway, so that's on the Holy Spirit. What happens in the book of Acts after they're filled with the Holy Spirit?

Let's look at that. 'Cause if you wanna know what happens to me when I'm filled with the Holy Spirit, what happens? Well, what we see happening in the book of Acts is they're filled with supernatural boldness, supernatural generosity, signs and wonders, miracles that God does through ordinary people. Supernaturally. There's supernatural goodness.

They have supernatural forgiveness towards somebody they don't think they can forgive. And then supernatural joy pops up a lot in the book of Acts. So again, when you see the book of Acts, it's like, what are the results of being filled with the Spirit? Well, there's a fresh sense of repentance. Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit and they're struck dead and you're like, whoa, that seems like harsh God.

God's saying, I want clean vessels. Nobody ever lied to the Holy Spirit. But there's a fresh sense of confession and repentance. I love what I see online with all these college students at different campuses getting baptized and people are saying revival's happening. Revival's starting.

Revival doesn't happen 'til repentance and confession of sin starts post-baptism. That should be part of it. But what else happens in the book of Acts when they're filled? And this next one is not my favorite, but people's lives are disrupted, especially spiritual leaders and the whole church. Their lives are disrupted because the Holy Spirit has taken over their lives and the enemy hates that.

So you're like, I don't want disruption in my life. I don't either.

When I used to, as a kid, go to McDonald's and get a Big Mac, I never wanted the special sauce.

It's from the pit, right? I don't like it anyway.

But if I said to them, I want one without the special sauce. Oh no, you have to have the whole thing. Like, why? So I want the Holy Spirit, but I don't want the special sauce of disruption and persecution in my life. God will say, sorry, sold as packaged.

And it's not a mean thing of God, that's just how it is because if the Holy Spirit is really working, Satan will be working and persecuting and disrupting your lives. I'm 64, I don't want disruption. I eat the same thing for breakfast, try to go to bed, I'm a creature of habit. So I don't want disruption, but I do if I want the Holy Spirit. So it's confession of sin, disruption in the lives of people.

You see a refreshing restoration of the fear of the Lord. And I don't mean like phobia fear, but they're like respect. Even in towns in the book of Acts of people who weren't even Christians, they saw how the Christians were among each other and what was happening supernaturally, and these people were in awe of what was happening, and it attracted them to Jesus. But you also see in the book of Acts great joy.

Yeah, you see persecution, you see disruption. Here's some other things that happened in the Book of Acts in different cities. One city was in an uproar, one city was in turmoil, one city was in confusion, one city was rocked and had a great riot. All right.

Filling of the Holy Spirit, confession of sin, disruption, great joy. If you want great joy, and I don't mean like fake joy, we all know, I can fake joy, you can fake joy, I can be happy. I'm not talking about happiness, I'm talking about deep joy, and you want it from the Holy Spirit, you cannot skip the other steps. The Holy Spirit, if he's active in your life, the enemy will be active in your life. But if you want great joy, The book of Acts tells us that's all worth it.

It's worth it. Great joy. I mean, it shows up so many times in the book of Acts. Even a city was full of great joy 'cause they saw what was happening through the work of God. So here's the question of the morning.

Do you want this?

This, do you want to be filled by the Holy Spirit? And you might say, well, I am, I'm a Christian. No, I

get that. But let's all say we know there's more of the Holy Spirit. None of us are 100% filled.

Do you want that?

Are you prepared for that? Yeah, we all want the great joy, but obedience, confession, purity of heart prerequisite, and then there might be disruption and discomfort to get to joy, yeah. But do you want that? Do you want the whole thing? Are you ready for what's next?

'Cause there's more. And that's a decision you have to make and I have to make. So there's a lot of big things that God's gonna do in and through this church.

There's great plans. There's great programs. But they won't even have an effect at all unless the people of the church say we want more of the Holy Spirit. That energizes anything leadership does in the church. But it's people who are saying I want more of the Holy Spirit.

I wanna be that kind of supernaturally forgiving and generous and bold. I want that. That's what the church needs. That's what this church needs. Can you imagine Bloomington if multiple churches had people that honestly were being filled with the Holy Spirit, disrupting, but something's changing.

Wouldn't it be neat if in the kingdom of God they would say something's happening in Bloomington at that church and this church and at Sherwood Oaks and in that church and something's changing in that community because the average ordinary people like you and me have said to God, I want more, I want more. I want more for me. I want more in my marriage. I want more in my relationship with my kids. I want more.

I want more of the Holy Spirit's joy in my life.

One of my favorite songs we've sung here many times, it's called King of Kings, but there's a line, it talks about the resurrection of Jesus, which of course is the starting point of it all. But then there's a line that says, talking about Acts 2, and the Church of Christ was born.

Then the Spirit lit the flame.

What a difference a flame makes, right? The Spirit lights the flame, and then an explosion of joy, an explosion of conversions.

Wouldn't it be neat if they were to be saved? There is grow— there is joy in that great city of Bloomington because of people like you and me at this church and other churches said, we want more of the Holy Spirit and we're not gonna give him any conditions.

So close your eyes, I wanna ask you to do something for me. Not for me, for God. So I'm gonna ask you to, if you mean this, I want you to whisper a prayer that only you can hear and I want you to say to God, if you mean it, and I'll say in a second, I want more. You're telling God, I want more

of the Holy Spirit. No conditions.

I know what happened in the book of Acts. No conditions. I want more. And if you don't mean that, if you don't want that, that's okay. Just don't try to, don't pretend.

Just don't say it. Nobody'll know, all right? So I'm gonna say 1 through 3 and just whisper it loud enough so you can hear it but you're saying to God, I want more, all right? 1, 2, 3, go.

God, we don't know. I don't know. Only you know what you just heard. Only you know the people who said, I want more. Only you know those who want more of you, and only you can do that.

So would you, since you've heard our prayers, would you answer our prayers individually and as a church, and would you give us more of the life-giving, bold, joy-filled power of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives and in the lives of this church. And we ask this all in Christ's name, amen.

So we finish every Sunday with response, and that was a response right there to say I want more. But we also do communion, and here, and there's stations around that have the little cup and the bread in it. If you're new, the bread's in the bottom, the cup's in the top, and you'll figure it out. So Jesus said the night he was betrayed, 50 days before Pentecost, right? He said, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, and he was referring way back to their deliverance from Egypt, freedom.

Every time you eat this and drink this, remember me. Jesus says, remember me. And I always like to tell people, watch for— maybe this week remember that he promised the Holy Spirit to those who obey him. He promised it. So maybe as you take this juice and bread into you, you're remembering and you're claiming the promise of Jesus.

You said if I invite more of you in me, you'll do it, right? There'll also be people— we don't assist by rows. Just come on up, you get the communion and take it back to your seat. You can take it there, you can take it up here. It's up to you.

And then there's people on the outside who have an orange lanyard on. They're to pray for you. You might just say, I want more. Could you pray for me that God would give me more? They're there for that.

And so let's respond to Jesus. Let's respond to the Holy Spirit.