

The Importance of the Holy Spirit in the Church

Passages: As listed in the lesson.

Memory Verse

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Knowledge of God's Will [God's Word]	Knowledge of God [God's Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
The Holy Spirit wants to establish and empower the true church for God's work.	1. God is Spirit. 2. God will dwell within and fill the church with His Holy Spirit.	1. Worship God in Spirit. 2. Submit to the Spirit to allow Him to empower us.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Holy Spirit's Purpose Within the Church
- B. Surrendering to God's Spirit
- C. Worship God in Spirit

Life Application

Strengthening the Holy Spirit's Presence in the Church

Memory Verse

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit wants to establish and empower the true church to do God's work. We must pursue the Spirit in faith, worship God in Spirit, and surrender to the Spirit to do God's work.

Spiritual Teachings

A. The Holy Spirit's Purpose Within the Church

The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence of God's abidance in the church (Jn 14:16–18; 1 Jn 3:24). Without His abidance, the church cannot accomplish anything for God. But with the Holy Spirit, the church can do many mighty works for Him (Jn 15:4–6). Paul prayed that God would grant the church, “according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph 3:16). He understood that the Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us.

Although the Holy Spirit is often described as a “power,” it's important to understand the Holy Spirit is not simply an impersonal “force,” like electricity or gravity, but is God Himself. So, the Spirit is not an “unthinking” power. Instead, the Spirit expresses God's heart, character, and will. The Spirit has many important functions in the church. The Holy Spirit:

1. Reveals the truth to us (1 Cor 2:10, 14).
2. Gives us God's wisdom and revelation (Isa 11:2; 1 Cor 2:13).
3. Teaches, guides, and counsels us (Jn 14:26; Acts 15:28).
4. Convicts us of our sin (Isa 4:4; Jn 16:8).
5. Helps us overcome fleshly desires (Rom 8:13; Gal 5:16–25).
6. Gives us direction in our service for God (Mt 4:1; Acts 11:28–29).
7. Purifies and sanctifies us (Acts 15:8–9; 1 Pet 1:22).
8. Grants the authority to forgive sins (Jn 20:22–23), and imparts spiritual life (Rom 8:11).
9. Helps us bear spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22–25), and fills us with God's love, strength, and godly fear (Eph 3:16–19; Isa 11:2–3).
10. Testifies of our status as God's children and heirs of His promises (Rom 8:15–17; Gal 4:6–7).
11. Seals us to guarantee God's promises to us (2 Cor 1:21–22; Eph 1:13–14).

To summarize all of these different works, God's Spirit is given to the church to establish and empower the church to do God's work. And when the church does His will, God is glorified.

The Spirit's Empowerment

Following God's will is not always easy. Let's read Zechariah 4:7. “Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’ ” Zerubbabel was a leader among God's people when they returned from exile. He faced many obstacles in rebuilding the temple, such as the people's reluctance (Hag 1:2). This verse refers to these obstacles as a “great mountain.”

We can also face difficulties in building up the church today. There may be a “great mountain” blocking our way. At the time, God encouraged Zerubbabel, saying, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit” (Zech 4:6). He wanted to tell him this: repairing and rebuilding the broken temple is not a matter of human ability, but is done through the empowerment of God's Spirit. The same is true for us.

In the face of overwhelming obstacles, we often try to use our own abilities or knowledge to solve the problem. Sometimes we turn to others for help. But then we may realize that neither ourselves nor those around us have the necessary power or abilities to solve our problems.

While we must certainly try our best, we must learn to first rely on God. With God's help, the great mountain shall become a plain!

B. Surrendering to God's Spirit

Today, Jesus is no longer physically on earth. But He gave an important promise before He ascended to heaven. Jesus told His disciples, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (Jn 14:18). He was not only promising that He would resurrect after His death, but also that He would send the promised Holy Spirit. His disciples obediently waited in Jerusalem, and on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended for the first time in history and established the apostolic church (Acts 2:1–4; 10:45–47).

God wants to fill His church with His Spirit and dwell within it (Eph 1:22–23; 3:19). He wants to show His presence to His people. He did so in the Old Testament by filling His temple with His glory and presence (2 Chr 7:1–3). But while God's temple in the Old Testament was physical, in the New Testament, our bodies have now become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19). Jesus promised, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (Jn 14:23).

When the Spirit dwells in each of us, He is also able to dwell within the church. But we first need to allow the Spirit to dwell within us. The Holy Spirit may establish and empower the church, but we, as the body of Christ, must prepare our hearts and surrender ourselves to Him. Peter wrote, "[Be] clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet 5:5–6).

Scripture reminds us, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30). One of the most serious sins we can fall into is resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). When we resist the Holy Spirit, God cannot work in our hearts or in the church. So, the idea of surrendering to God is very important in our worship. If we are unable to submit and surrender ourselves to God, we will be unable to please the Lord (Prov 3:5–6).

C. Worship God in Spirit

1. A Sincere Heart that Follows God's Will

Jesus said, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). What does it mean to worship God in Spirit? In the Bible, our spirit often represents our inner heart (Ex 35:21; Ps 34:18). The first basic teaching of "worship in spirit" means to worship God sincerely from our heart (Phil 3:3) and not only as an outward show for others to see. For example, to truly be God's chosen people as the Israelites were, our heart to serve God must not be a mere show or act in front of others. Let's read Romans 2:28–29. When we serve the Lord inwardly, we are spiritually circumcised and marked as one who belongs to God.

For example, when we do something for others, we must have the right spirit. If we do any work without having the heart, we will often do what we call a "halfway" or "messy" job. For instance, after we finish our meal, we may want to leave right away and have fun with our friends. We know we should clean up after our mess, but since we want to play, we do a quick job just to show others that we did something. But this work is without spirit because our heart was only set upon having fun, not upon our

responsibility to clean up. We must learn to worship God sincerely, from the heart.

A second basic teaching of worshipping in the spirit is to worship according to God's will. The Bible encourages us to walk according to the Spirit and to be led by the Spirit (Rom 8:4, 14). This means that to worship in the Spirit, we must be led according to God's will, not our own. To truly worship in spirit means to act with righteousness according to God's will (Rom 8:9–10).

For example, if a friend invites us to a party on the Sabbath, we may be tempted to skip church worship and enjoy the party. Yet, we know the Bible teaches us to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, and not to forsake assembling together (Heb 10:24–25). We may make an excuse, saying, "It'll just be this once," or "I'll keep the Sabbath in my heart and still go to the party to enjoy myself." But if we worship God without following His will, we cannot say we worship God in Spirit and truth, because our actions contradict God's command.

2. Pursuing the Spirit in Faith

Because God is Spirit, we cannot see Him with our physical eyes (Jn 1:18), making Him seem very far away. We may think: "God is Spirit and doesn't really see or care about us." In reality, because He is Spirit, He is able to dwell within us. Whenever we may think God doesn't care, we simply need to kneel down and pray to understand that He does. Since we can't see God physically, we need to pursue the Holy Spirit by faith. Galatians 3:14 tells us that Christ has redeemed us, "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

If we feel like God is far away or that we can't reach Him, there may be a simple reason: we never asked God to fill us with His Spirit in faith. How do we show a lack of faith in asking for God's Spirit to fill us? For example, if we pray infrequently, or never pray at all for God's abidance, can we honestly say we are seeking the fullness of God's Spirit? If we only seek after the pleasures of this world, can we expect God's presence to fill us? If, before we even kneel down to pray, we feel like God doesn't care about us, can we really say we trust God and His love for us?

Faith means having trust and hope in something that we cannot see (Heb 11:1; 1 Pet 1:6–9). Just because we cannot see God does not mean He is not there. Very often, God is waiting for us to seek after Him so that He can reveal Himself. He is waiting for us to seek Him out in spirit and truth. He is waiting for us to show our faith in His promises. When we do so, He will reveal Himself to us and fill us with His Spirit.

3. Relying on the Spirit

To worship God in Spirit, we must trust in His Spirit to guide us and to help us. But when we trust in God's Spirit to accomplish God's will, it does not mean that we can become lazy and indifferent. There's a big difference between being complacent or lazy in God's work, and trusting God to accomplish it.

When David faced Goliath, David did not just think: "Well, God Himself can defeat Goliath. I'll just sit back and relax to see what God does." This would be an example of being lazy in God's work. Instead, David prepared what he could to face Goliath, such as

his staff, his sling, and five smooth stones (1 Sam 17:40). God helped David defeat Goliath because David put forth his own courage and effort, in addition to trusting in God's power.

Relying on God's Spirit to empower us to do God's work may seem very abstract or even contradictory, since we must still try to finish God's work to the best of our ability. But as we work, our focus should be on God's power, not on our own. When we face obstacles, we should not worry or be anxious, but trust God to open the way for us according to His good will and simply make the best decisions that we can. As humans, we cannot influence people, nature, or the turn of events before us. But God has the power to do so. When we know and trust in this, we can learn to rely on His power to help us accomplish His work.

Ultimately, when we have faith and trust in God, the result is that we are filled with His Spirit, which is the key to empowering the church. This is why praying in the Spirit is so important. When we have God's full abidance and power working in the church, no task we face will be too difficult. The reason for our great confidence is not because of our own power, but because we have God's Spirit and grace upon us. As a result of our trust and God's abidance, the church will be built up according to His will.

Life Application

Strengthening the Holy Spirit's Presence in the Church

How can we increase the Holy Spirit's empowerment of the church? Each of us as its members have our own duty to seek out the fullness of the Spirit not just for the church, but also for ourselves – this is how the church can be empowered. If we want to feel His presence and power in the church, we need to submit ourselves fully to Christ and be faithful to His work.

When we fail to align our lives with God, and instead love our sin more than God, we make ourselves an enemy of God (Jas 4:4–5). In the process of loving and pursuing the things of this world over Christ, we push God away and ignore the Holy Spirit. The Lord gave Zechariah an important message to encourage His people during the rebuilding of the temple. He said, "Return to Me [...] and I will return to you" (Zech 1:3). To strengthen the Holy Spirit's presence in the church, we have duties to uphold as its members. So, what are my duties as a True Jesus Church member?

God has given us salvation out of His love and grace alone. It is important to know that from the moment we have been baptized, we belong to God. Our covenant with Him, however, is a two-way relationship. The Lord gave us His life, and it is only right that we return the same love through our obedience and faith. There are a few main duties we must fulfill as God's children:

1. Pray

The truth is, the deeper we go into prayer, the more strength we'll have, and the deeper we go into God's presence, the more we know His ways and His will. The mark of a true Christian is found in his personal relationship with God through prayer. When we pray daily, it shows that we're living for Christ, and that we are continually depending upon the power of the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us. Let's encourage one another to build up our relationship with God through prayer. To do this, we can:

- **Often withdraw to pray:** "So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed" (Lk 5:16).
- **Pray for everything:** "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Phil 4:6).
- **Pray according to God's will and He will hear us:** "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 Jn 5:14).
- **Have faith in God:** "So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them' " (Mk 11:22–25).

2. Seek the knowledge of the truth

Colossians 3:16 teaches us to let the word of God dwell in us richly. If we do, we can "overcome the wicked one" (1 Jn 2:14). The Holy Spirit will lead us into understanding the truth when we pray and ask for understanding. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How much time do I spend meditating on the word of God daily?
- How much time do I set aside to read church publications?
- How much time do I spend listening to online sermons?
- Do I take notes while listening to the weekly sermon?

3. Attend weekly services

As members of Christ's body, we have the responsibility to attend church services regularly. Hebrews 10:24–25 states, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, and not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." This is actually a fundamental responsibility as a church member. If we do not attend, we stand to lose much, including our place in the heavenly kingdom.

4. Show affection and brotherly love to one another

It is easier to do this task when you're in a smaller church. But in a big church, it will take some time to get to know people you don't know. Let's read Romans 12:9–16. If we show love and affection to one another collectively and look for ways to care for our fellow members, we are fulfilling our duties.

5. Serve the Lord in whatever area we can

No matter what skills we have, we must serve the Lord in whatever area we can. Even if we are too young, or do not have any particular skills, we all have the ability to pray. It is important to pray for God's work and His church, to intercede for our brethren, and to ask God to send more workers for His harvest (Mt 9:38; Eph 6:19). We can also serve one another and do our best to live in peace, maintaining the unity of the church.

6. Strive to enter God's kingdom with God's virtues

We need to make every effort to "add to [our] faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Pet 1:5–7). If we do these

things, we will never stumble, and “an entrance will be supplied to [us] abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 1:11).

Discussion: How are we doing based on this list? Are we fulfilling our duties as church members to help empower the church with the fullness of God’s Spirit?

Memory Verse

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Meaning

The Holy Spirit empowers the church to do God’s work, which includes witnessing for Christ in every place, starting with those around us and expanding to the end of the earth. Our witness of Christ to others can be through our good conduct or by preaching the gospel of salvation.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What is the Holy Spirit’s presence in the church evidence of, and why is this important?**
The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence of God’s abidance in the church. Without His abidance, the church cannot accomplish anything for God. But with the Holy Spirit, the church can do many mighty works for Him.
- 2. How can we summarize the work of the Holy Spirit within the church?** God’s Spirit is given to the church to establish and empower the church to do God’s work. And when the church does His will, God is glorified.
- 3. Why is it important that the Spirit dwells in each of us?** That means He is also able to dwell within the church.
- 4. How do we worship God in Spirit?** By having a sincere heart that follows God’s will, pursuing the Spirit in faith, and by relying on the Spirit.
- 5. How can we increase the Holy Spirit’s empowerment of the church?** Each of us as members of the church have the duty to seek out the fullness of the Spirit, not just for the church, but also for ourselves.
- 6. What are a few of the main duties we must fulfill as God’s children?** Pray, seek the knowledge of the truth, attend weekly service, show affection and brotherly love to one another, serve the Lord in whatever area we can, and strive to enter God’s kingdom with God’s virtues.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit wants to establish and empower the true church to do God’s work. We must pursue the Spirit in faith, surrender to the Spirit to do God’s work, and worship God in Spirit with a sincere heart. When we do so, we strengthen the Spirit’s presence in the church, and God will empower the church to do His will and glorify His name.

Lesson 2 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. How can we witness Christ to others?
We can witness Christ to others through exhibiting good conduct or by preaching the gospel of salvation.
2. What is the Holy Spirit's presence in the church evidence of? Why is this important?
The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidence of God's abidance in the church. Without His abidance, the church cannot accomplish anything for God. But with the Spirit, the church can do many mighty works for Him.
3. How does the Spirit dwell within the church?
When we first allow the Spirit to dwell within each of us.
4. What is necessary to worship God in Spirit?
A sincere heart that follows God's will, pursuing the Spirit in faith, and relying on the Spirit.
5. Which of our main duties as God's children do you need to improve on? How can you improve on that duty? Come up with a plan to follow this week.
Personal answers.