

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Passages: Eph 1:13; Jn 3; Rom 8

Memory Verse

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Ephesians 1:13)

| Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word] | Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature] | Good Work [Behavior] |
|---|---|--|
| 1. The Holy Spirit is vital to our salvation. 2. The evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. | God is Spirit. | Be aware of misconceptions related to receiving the Holy Spirit. |

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Importance of the Holy Spirit
- B. The Evidence of Receiving the Holy Spirit
- C. Common Misconceptions About Receiving the Holy Spirit

Life Application

Defending the Truth

Memory Verse

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit identifies us as children of God, and He is a promise of our inheritance in heaven. Although there are many misconceptions regarding the Holy Spirit, once we become rooted in this biblical truth, we will be able to defend and stand firm in this important doctrine.

Spiritual Teachings

Introduction

Today, we'll be continuing our studies of the basic doctrines of our church by studying the Holy Spirit. How many of us have received the Holy Spirit? (*Allow students to answer.*) How many of us have experienced, either personally or indirectly, the power of the Holy Spirit, such as His transformative power? (*Allow students to share with the class.*) Today, we'll be learning about the importance of the Holy Spirit, the evidence of the Spirit in the Bible, and ways we can defend against some common misconceptions regarding the Holy Spirit.

A. The Importance of the Holy Spirit

1. *The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our heavenly inheritance (Eph 1:13)*

The Holy Spirit is evidence of our inheritance in heaven. We can think of receiving the Holy Spirit as receiving a voucher that makes us eligible to receive a prize, although we still have to earn and redeem the prize. In the same way, the Holy Spirit is proof of God's promise to us and the heavenly kingdom that we will inherit.

2. *The presence of the Holy Spirit during water baptism allows us to be reborn (Jn 3:5)*

In John 3:3, Jesus Christ tells Nicodemus that to "see the kingdom of God," a person must be "born again." Clarifying His words further, Jesus Christ tells Nicodemus that he must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit during water baptism that allows the baptism to be effective. If another church baptizes in the exact same way but does not have the presence of the Holy Spirit, that baptism has no effect and does not allow the person being baptized to be "born again." This is why it is crucial for the Holy Spirit to be present during water baptism.

3. *The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are children of God (Rom 8:16)*

The Holy Spirit is a sign of our adoption because with Him, we become a child of God. This special status sets us apart from the world because we no longer belong to it. With the Spirit, we are instead able to call God our Father, and as His children, we have hope of a home in heaven.

4. *The Holy Spirit quenches our spiritual thirst (Jn 4:14; 7:37–39)*

In this passage, Jesus Christ shared the wonderful news of living water with a Samaritan woman. Those who drink this living water will never thirst and can receive everlasting life. This living water is the Holy Spirit, and He is able to quench our spiritual thirst. To be spiritually thirsty means to feel as if we are always lacking something, an empty feeling that we may try to fill with our hobbies or entertainment. Though we may try to fill our hearts with the things of this world, the only thing that is able to fill that emptiness in our heart is God's presence and His spirit dwelling in us.

5. *The Holy Spirit helps us to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23)*

Bearing the fruit of the Spirit means exhibiting characteristics or behaviors that glorify God. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will naturally display these characteristics. When we do, others will see Jesus Christ in us, and we will glorify God.

6. *The Holy Spirit is our Helper in our walk of faith (Jn 14:26)*

The Holy Spirit guides us and helps us to live the way God wants us to live. Through the Holy Spirit, we can understand the teachings in the Bible and also receive comfort in times of trouble. He is our constant companion, there to support us in whatever way we need.

7. *The Holy Spirit can give us power to transform our lives (Acts 1:8)*

The Holy Spirit empowers us with the boldness and wisdom to preach the gospel and serve the Lord. He also gives us the strength to overcome any sins in our life so that we no longer fall under their control. In Ephesians 3:16, Paul prayed for the church to be strengthened through God's Spirit. Today, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to live our lives the way God wants us to live.

B. The Evidence of Receiving the Holy Spirit

The only evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. Let's look at examples in the Acts of the Apostles.

1. *The disciples receive the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4)*

The first record of the evidence of the Holy Spirit is in Acts, chapter 2. Obedient to Jesus' instructions, the disciples were all praying in an upper room in Jerusalem. "Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (vv. 3–4). During this time, there were many Jews and devout men in Jerusalem because of Pentecost. These people heard the disciples speaking in tongues but were confused because each heard them speaking their language.

Imagine standing in a crowded room with 120 people who are all talking simultaneously. It would be difficult for us to be able to hear ourselves talking, much less be able to hear what others are saying! However, the people nearby were able to hear the disciples distinctly speaking in their own native languages. This event was truly a miracle from God which teaches us that there is audible evidence when a person receives the Holy Spirit.

2. *Cornelius and his household receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10)*

The second record of this evidence is in Acts, chapter 10. The Bible describes Cornelius as a devout man who feared God and gave alms generously (v. 2). However, Cornelius was also a Gentile, and in those days, Jews and Gentiles did not associate with each other. But because of the vision that God showed him, Peter went against social norms and preached to Cornelius and his household.

As Peter spoke, "the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word" (v. 44), and they began to "speak with tongues and magnify God" (v. 46). When Peter heard them speak in tongues, he proclaimed, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (v. 47). Peter knew that Cornelius and his family had received the Holy Spirit because they spoke in tongues just as the disciples did.

3. *The disciples in Ephesus receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1–7)*

Lastly, we can see another similar occurrence in Acts, chapter 19. Paul traveled to Ephesus and met some disciples who had only received the baptism of John the Baptist. After Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, he laid hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them, at which point they began speaking in tongues (v. 6).

From these three examples, we can see how receiving the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues. The act of speaking in tongues was not a singular event that happened only when the Holy

Spirit fell upon the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. Rather, it was the crucial key that the apostles used to determine whether or not a person had received the Holy Spirit.

C. Common Misconceptions About Receiving the Holy Spirit

1. *“We receive the Holy Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ.”*

Many mainstream Christians believe that they receive the Holy Spirit once they proclaim and believe Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. However, we can see from the Bible that believing in Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit are two separate events. Let’s look at the example of the disciples in Ephesus once again.

When Paul spoke to the disciples in Ephesus, he asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” The disciples responded, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit” (Acts 19:2). The disciples in Ephesus believed in Jesus Christ but had not received the Holy Spirit yet. It was only after Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and laid hands on them that they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:5–6). This event teaches us that we do not immediately receive the Holy Spirit upon believing in Jesus. Our initial acceptance and belief that Jesus Christ is God is a separate event from receiving the Spirit.

2. *“We receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptized.”*

Many Christians believe that we receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptized. However, the Bible clearly records that receiving water baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit are two different events. Acts 8 records the example of Simon, who used to practice sorcery in the city of Samaria. The Bible tells us that he came to believe and was baptized, but he had not received the Holy Spirit yet (Acts 8:13–20). From this, we can see that we are not guaranteed to receive the Holy Spirit upon receiving water baptism.

3. *“Exhibiting virtues of the fruit of the Holy Spirit means that we have the Holy Spirit.”*

Another misconception that many Christian denominations have is that those who bear the fruit of the Spirit have the Holy Spirit. It is true that He is able to transform us and enable us to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). However, exhibiting good virtues does not necessarily mean that we have the Holy Spirit.

The Bible described Cornelius as one who “feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2). He was kind and did many good deeds, but it was not until Peter came to his house to preach the gospel that the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44). From this, we can see that even if a person is virtuous or does good deeds, this does not mean that the person has the Holy Spirit.

Check for Understanding

1. **Name five reasons why the Holy Spirit is important.**

- a. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our heavenly inheritance.
- b. The Holy Spirit allows us to be reborn and enter the kingdom of heaven.
- c. The Holy Spirit bears witness that we are children of God.
- d. The Holy Spirit quenches our spiritual thirst and gives us eternal life.
- e. The Holy Spirit helps us to bear the fruit of the Spirit.
- f. The Holy Spirit is our Helper in our walk of faith.
- g. The Holy Spirit can give us power to transform our lives.

2. What is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit? Provide biblical support.

The evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues (Acts 2:1–4; 10:44–46; 19:1–7).

3. Do we receive the Holy Spirit when we believe? Explain and provide biblical support.

No, the disciples in Ephesus believed in Jesus Christ but had not received the Holy Spirit yet (Acts 19:2).

4. Do we receive the Holy Spirit when we are baptized? Explain and provide biblical support.

No, Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit yet. He even offered to buy from Peter the power to give the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:13–20).

5. If we exhibit biblical virtues, does this mean that we have received the Holy Spirit? Explain and give biblical support.

No, Cornelius was a God-fearing man and did many charitable works, but he did not have the Holy Spirit until Peter visited him in his house and shared the gospel (Acts 10:2–3, 47).

Life Application

Defending the Truth

Now that we have learned the biblical truth regarding the Holy Spirit, the next step is to learn how to defend the truth of the Holy Spirit. Read each argument and the three verses provided for each argument. How would you use the provided verses to defend against the argument? Feel free to use other verses if needed.

Argument 1

The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a singular event that would not be repeated. The Holy Spirit was given only once, on that day, and has been in all the believers ever since.

Bible Verses: Acts 8:14–17; Acts 10:44–47; Acts 19:5–6

Possible Response

In the Acts of the Apostles, we can see the Holy Spirit descending time and time again upon different people:

- In Acts 8:14–17, the Holy Spirit came down on the believers in Samaria after Peter and John laid hands on them.
- In Acts 10:44–47, Cornelius and his family received the Holy Spirit after Peter preached to them.
- In Acts 19:5–6, the disciples in Ephesus received the Holy Spirit after Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and laid hands on them.

From this, we can see that even after the Day of Pentecost, many believers received the Holy Spirit, which means that the Holy Spirit’s descent was not a singular event but can happen again.

Argument 2

Only those who have received the Holy Spirit can say “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3), so any person who says “Jesus is Lord” must have received the Holy Spirit.

Bible Verses: Acts 8:12–16; Acts 19:2; Jas 2:17–18

Possible Response

The Bible records many instances where even those who did not have the Holy Spirit were able to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.

- One example can be found in Acts, chapter 8. When Philip went to preach in Samaria, there were many that came to believe. In Acts 8:12, it mentions that Philip preached concerning the kingdom of

God and the name of Jesus Christ. The people in Samaria, who did not have the Holy Spirit, were baptized after acknowledging that Jesus Christ was Lord (Acts 8:15–16). This event clearly shows that even an individual who has not received the Holy Spirit can acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord.

- Another example is recorded in Acts 19. The apostle Paul traveled to Ephesus and found some disciples there. These people were called disciples because they followed and believed in Jesus Christ, but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Paul even clearly asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2), to which they replied that they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit. Thus, simply because a person says, “Jesus is Lord,” does not mean that they have the Holy Spirit.

Argument 3

If an individual has love or faith, or bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit, or works mightily for God, it means that the individual is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Bible Verses: Acts 10:1–2; Acts 18:24–28; Gal 5:22–25

Possible Response

Although a person filled with the Holy Spirit can be a virtuous person, a virtuous person does not necessarily have the Holy Spirit. We see this in the example of Cornelius (Acts 10). He was a God-fearing man and even gave alms to the poor, but he did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter preached to him. Another example is Apollos (Acts 18:24–28). He was a fervent man, knowledgeable in the Scriptures, who “taught accurately the things of the Lord,” but he knew nothing about the Holy Spirit until Priscilla and Aquila preached to him. As a result, we cannot say that those who are virtuous or well-versed in the Bible have the Holy Spirit.

Testimony

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I testify. Today, I'm going to share about my experience receiving the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit has worked in my life.

Although I don't remember being too clear on what the Holy Spirit actually was, I distinctly remember how much my group members and I at SSC yearned for it. Our counselors encouraged all of us to pray hard for the Holy Spirit, since none of my group members had received it yet. It felt like we were all in this together, and we all had the same attitude that we couldn't leave this SSC without receiving it.

After two days of praying hard to receive the Holy Spirit, my group members and I started to feel a little discouraged. It wasn't until the Tuesday afternoon prayer that the pastor encouraged us to pray for our group members instead of just for ourselves because God really looks at our heart when praying to Him. If God sees that we're praying for something that we want so badly, how much more will He give it to us if we pray that our group members receive it as well. And so with that attitude, we all knelt down to pray, and by the grace of God, a couple of us received the Holy Spirit in that prayer. By the end of the spiritual convocation, seventeen of us received it in total. I don't remember the actual experience of receiving the Holy Spirit all that clearly, but I remember after the prayer session ended, three pastors came up and asked me the exact same question of how I felt during that prayer.

In my middle school and high school years, I also experienced the guidance of the Holy Spirit in my life. And, especially after being given more responsibilities in holy work at church, the guidance of the

Holy Spirit was even more evident. As I started to serve more, however, more interpersonal conflicts arose. There was one older sister that I grew up looking up to who started to put me down quite often, and because of that, almost every interaction that I had with her became heated. I realized that the reason our interactions got heated was because of our pride and unwillingness to back down. There was one time in particular when I really took offense to a remark she made to me. I remember anger building up inside of me, but something was stopping me from letting my anger out at her. I had everything that I wanted to say to her in my mind, but for some reason, I just couldn't get it out. Later on, thinking back on this incident, I realized that it was the Holy Spirit that was working in me and helping me be more of a peacemaker.

If we want the Holy Spirit to abide with us each day of our lives, we have to remember to work on it daily. One verse that really rings true for me in my experience of how the Holy Spirit has worked in my life is Romans 8:26. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This verse shows us that even at our weakest times and especially when we don't know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit abides with us and prays for us. And, even though we don't deserve it, God understands our weaknesses and promises us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

– Anonymous

Discussion

- In this testimony, how did the Holy Spirit work?
- How have you experienced the abidance of the Holy Spirit?
- How has the Holy Spirit transformed you?

Memory Verse

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." (Ephesians 1:13)

Meaning

1. This verse outlines the process of receiving salvation. First, we have to hear the gospel, then we must believe it. After we believe, then we must trust that God will give us the promised Holy Spirit, which is a sign of our salvation.
2. Receiving the Holy Spirit is how we are sealed and saved. Receiving the Holy Spirit allows us to be sure of our inheritance in heaven. The Spirit is proof that we are part of God's chosen people and that we have hope for a place in God's kingdom.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is important to our lives and our salvation. He identifies us as children of God, and He is a promise of our inheritance in heaven. Though there are many misconceptions that other Christians have about the Holy Spirit, it is important for us to understand clearly that the only evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues. Once we become rooted in this biblical truth, we will be able to defend and stand firm in this important doctrine.

Lesson 7 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. According to the memory verse, what is the process of receiving salvation?
First, we have to hear the gospel and believe it. After we believe, then we trust that God will give us the promised Holy Spirit, which is a sign of our salvation.
2. Pick two ways the Holy Spirit is important, and explain each in your own words.
See Section A.
3. How do we know that we do not receive the Holy Spirit the moment we believe or are baptized?
See Section B.
4. What is the most important aspect of the Holy Spirit to you personally, and why?
Personal answers.