

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the small group study of *Priceless: Finding Your Value in God* these sermon outlines will use similar Scripture passages to reinforce the same themes as the study regarding the strength offered through God's Holy Spirit.

Introduction: What do you think of when someone mentions the Holy Spirit? Maybe you think of people getting all emotional as they dance around the room. Others think of the Spirit as a force like electricity. You plug into Him to get charged up, but you can't have a relationship with Him. Usually when churches are having a revival, they invite the Spirit to come and light the fires. One pastor was visiting a church in California when his attention was drawn to a banner that hung on the wall. The words read, "Come Holy Spirit. Hallelujah!" Just above the words was a picture of a fire burning. The bishop was also interested in the sign directly beneath the banner which said: "Fire extinguisher." All of these ideas have some level of truth to them, but they fall short of a good representation of the Person that Jesus promised would come. Let's take a look at Who it is that the Father sent and what it is that He came to do.

1. The Spirit came to continue Jesus' work. (John 14)

One night near the end of Jesus' ministry, Jesus and His disciples gathered together in an upstairs room. They had just celebrated the Passover. It was a time to remember the goodness of God as He had protected Israel from the destruction of the death angel and in the process had set Israel free from slavery to the Egyptians. Memories, good memories. After the meal, Jesus humbled Himself and washed their feet. This act so shocked them that it would stay in their memories forever. This too was a good memory...a strange one, but a good one. Jesus took advantage of this gathering to tell the disciples that soon they would no longer be gathered like this again. He was going away. Usually when a person makes a departure announcement, it prompts the hearers to think about all the good times that they had together.

But Jesus wasn't interested in focusing on memories. He was focused on the future. He had a job to do the next day. And He had to get *them* ready for the job that they were going to do for the rest of their lives. So He told them about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He described the Spirit as "another" comforter (Jn. 14:16). The word "another" there means "another of the same kind." You once had a Camry, and then you bought a new Camry. You bought "another" car. By using this word, Jesus was saying that the Spirit was going to be the same kind of helper that Jesus had been. He was going to continue the work that Jesus had begun. It's just that now the help that they received would come from within them instead of outside of them which means that help would be available all the time for the rest of their lives! Jesus even

says that not only would they continue His work, but they would do greater works because of the presence of the Spirit in their lives (John 14:12). He promised that the Spirit would remind them of all the things Jesus had said so that they could get guidance from Him and be able to write down the words and works of Jesus (John 14:26). A short time before the Passover, Jesus warned them that persecution was coming. But He told them not to worry because the Spirit would tell them what to say when they were challenged (Matt. 10:18-20; Luke 21:12-15). The work of Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, was going to continue. It continues on today.

2. The Spirit came to show Jesus' power. (Acts 1-2)

One day after Jesus had ascended to heaven, His disciples were gathered together once again. The group was larger this time because the original disciples were joined by about a hundred other followers of the Way. Jesus had told them to wait at Jerusalem for the coming of the Spirit (Luke 24:49). They obeyed and the Holy Spirit came on them in a powerful and obvious kind of way (Acts 2:1). They experienced visible and audible signs and they began to speak in other languages (Acts. 2:2-4). They then left that room and began to mingle among the crowd that had come to Jerusalem for Pentecost. Everyone who heard them was amazed at this display of the power of Jesus as manifested through the Holy Spirit.

What happened on that day was a fulfillment of two promises that Jesus had made. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus gave His disciples their commission to spread the Gospel everywhere they went and to train those who responded to the message. Right before Jesus gave that command, He said these words: "All power is given unto me" (Matt. 28:18). This is both a statement and a promise. "Do what I tell you to do because I'm your authority" but also "Don't worry about any opposition to your message because I hold all the power." In Acts 1:8 – which restates this commission – Jesus said, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you". The power that Jesus promised and that He was the source of came into the disciples' lives through the Spirit. Promise number one was fulfilled.

The second promise that Jesus made is found at the end of Matthew 28:20: "I am with you always". In John 14, Jesus told His disciples that He was going away and in Acts 1, He did it. How could Jesus be present with His disciples then or now if He went home to heaven? The answer is through the indwelling of the Spirit. God's Spirit reminds us of the words of Jesus (John 14:26). It's almost as if it was Jesus present in the room speaking. The words of the Spirit convict just as the words of Jesus did (John 16:8). And the Spirit is the one who confirms in our hearts that we are God's children and will be in the presence of Jesus forever (Gal. 4:6; 1 John 4:13). Promise number two has been fulfilled.

3. The Spirit came to give Jesus' blessings.

One morning in obedience to the command of Jesus, a little seven-year old boy gathered together with other 2nd graders in a Sunday school class. At the conclusion of the lesson the teacher gave that day, that boy bowed his head to ask Jesus Christ to become his Savior. At that moment, he received what he asked for – salvation – and much more that he knew nothing about. At that moment, he became one of the most powerful people on planet earth because at that moment, God's Spirit came to live inside him and gave him some of the greatest blessings that Jesus has to offer.

a. Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12)

To that little boy and to every person before or after him that prayed that same prayer, God gave one or more of the spiritual gifts. These gifts are listed in Romans 12, Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 12. These gifts are all about doing – empowering someone to accomplish a task. Some of the gifts and the positions they empower were given for the building up of the church. But the main purpose of these gifts is to convince everyone in the church how much they need each other to be involved and thereby promote unity in the church.

b. Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)

God also gave that little boy the fruit of the Spirit. Now, that fruit was in its infancy, but it would grow. And as it did, that little boy would grow in His character to become more and more like His Savior Jesus Christ as he allowed the Spirit to have control of his life. That's the main purpose of the fruit – to promote character growth in the church. The gifts of the Spirit are about doing. The fruit of the Spirit is all about being. Christians have to *be* the right people in order for them to be able to *do* the right thing.

Conclusion: It may seem odd to finish this message by spending time talking about a little 7 year old boy when the other characters that experienced the Spirit were such heroes of the faith. But that's the point. What was available to the people of the Bible is available still today. Jesus did not leave them without a Comforter. And He hasn't left us either. The Spirit is available to all who will come and take Jesus as their Savior.

Chris Talton is a graduate of Liberty University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served in three churches for a total of 13 years. Currently he teaches Bible at Colonial Hills Christian School just outside Atlanta, Ga. He and his wife of 26 years, Tammy, have two grown children and one grandson.