

BACK TO NORMAL... BACK TO PNEUMA

Help!

April 25, 2021

Overarching theme: In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciple for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1st Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

John:

The Gospel according to John is written by John, one of the apostles, who was the brother of another apostle named James and all the Gospels mention their father's name as Zebedee (Mark's Gospel in addition mentions that Jesus gave these brothers the name 'Sons of Thunder'). John's Gospel is quite different from the other three (does not contain a genealogy, or any record of Jesus' birth, childhood, temptation, transfiguration, appointment of the disciples, nor any account of Jesus parables) because more than his Gospel giving an account of the life of Christ, it is a powerful argument for the incarnation of Christ. The purpose of the writing of this Gospel was to demonstrate conclusively that Jesus was, and is, the very heaven-sent Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life because he is it's only source. It was written to new Christians and also to seekers of salvation and truth sometime between AD 85 and 90. A key verse of this Gospel is: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:30-31). Some of the special features of this Gospel are: In every chapter Jesus' deity is revealed and his true identity of the divine-human nature and life-giving mission is underscored through the many titles he is given as well as through the eight miracles of Christ which John mentions, calling them signs.

The greatest sign, of course, is the resurrection and John provides a stirring eyewitness account of finding the empty tomb and various post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Of these miracles, six are unique to John as well as the 'Farewell / Upper Room Discourse' (chapters 14-17); over 90% of John is unique to his Gospel. John records seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus through which he affirms his preexistence and eternal deity.

– Adapted from The Life Application Bible, p. 1866.

Reflect on this Scripture:

John 14:12-17 NIV

¹²Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. ¹⁵"If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Introduction:

Last week we looked at how the Holy Spirit is a person, the third person of the Trinity, and not just an 'essence.' We also looked at how we can experience the Holy Spirit in our lives by asking to be filled so that our spiritual thirst is fully satisfied. This week we will look at how the Holy Spirit helps us live the Christian life to the fullest.

This Week:

The Holy Spirit is given to us for our help to live the Christian life better. If we, as believers in Christ, know that the Holy Spirit lives in us, then we have the help we need to live each day becoming more like Jesus. Just as Jesus revealed the Father through his life, as followers of Jesus we are called to reveal him to others and to show through our lives that he is at work in the world. But this can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us and we need the daily filling of the Spirit so that we continue to be like Christ to others.

When a person repents for past sins, believes and receives Jesus as one's Savior and Lord, then the person has a new spiritual birth (Jn. 3:5-8) and begins to have a new divine nature within (2 Cor. 5:17). However, the old sinful nature doesn't go away immediately and constantly wages war against the new nature and the only

way to overcome the old nature is in asking for help from the Holy Spirit by yielding to the Spirit's will and control, which is to be filled with the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18). When the Christian seeks to be filled more with the Holy Spirit then the Spirit's work is seen the person's life with the old nature dying and the new nature being lived out and this is the fruit of the Spirit or the sign of being Spirit-filled (Gal. 5:19-25).

Emotions or feelings are not necessarily part of being filled with the Spirit nor is exceptional ability or personal charisma always involved. Even to have particular spiritual gifts or service, e.g. speaking in tongues or ability to heal, is not an indication of being filled with the Spirit because each Christian is given these as the Spirit wills and for the common good of others in the fellowship of believers in Christ and for those outside of it (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Neither the freedom from problems and troubles in life and discouragements and frustrations of heart and mind are indicators of being filled with the Spirit, although with the Spirit's help the believer in Christ is given strength and wisdom to better face them (2 Cor. 6:3-10). Also, the Spirit-filled Christian is not free from temptation (Lk. 4:1-2) and does not live a life of sinless perfection because living in the world these are continued to be faced and one could falter and fall but with the Spirit's help one is able to overcome more.

Therefore, to be filled with the Holy Spirit is to truly obey Christ and to keep Christ's love commandment and by this we would display the fruit of the Spirit and use the gifts of the Spirit given to us. The primary characteristic that identifies a believer in Christ is love, the first of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). As believers in Christ, if we allow the Holy Spirit to empower our lives, we will demonstrate that type of love through our joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Questions to Ponder for accountability in the group:

1. It's easy to focus in our Christian growth on how far we have to go rather than on how far we have come. What are one or two evidences of the Holy Spirit's work in your life and in what areas do you need more help?
2. Why is it difficult for Christians to seek help from the Holy Spirit in our 'self-help' culture and focus on growing in the fruit of the Spirit rather than self-promotion, whether in worldly ways or even in spiritual things?
3. How do you move from being a Christian living a self-centered lifestyle to being an Christian living a Spirit-filled life and how would you and others know it?

Activity for the life of a disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: John 14:16-17a NIV
16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— **17** the Spirit of truth.
4. Prayerfully approach God in asking help from the Holy Spirit to obey Christ more in your life and by that to fulfill Christ's love commandment and have the fruit of the Spirit lived out for all to see.