

Lesson 4: Holy Spirit & Effectual Call

A. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Last week we got more of a sense of why the ‘good news’ (that’s what the word ‘gospel’ means) is such good news. But if this is such good news, why doesn’t *everyone* believe?

The answer goes back to Lesson 1. The fact is that we are sinners and do not really want God's way, even when it helps us. It's sort of like a sick person who refuses to go to the doctor, even if the doctor could save their life. We are sick but refuse to go to the source of help and be cured. It's not just that we *won't* go. We *can't*. As sinful people, it's our nature to rebel, and we are incapable of ‘choosing God’ on our own.

But the wonderful thing about God is that He still loves us. God loves us so much that not only did the Son of God die for us, but the Spirit of God comes to us to show us we are sinners, so we will believe God's promise and be justified. Even the ability to *know* that we are sinners is a gift from God; remember, because we are dead in sin prior to our conversion, we can't choose the right path or respond to an invitation (see Lesson 1).

This gift, when we see ourselves as sinners, and turn from sin to trust in Jesus Christ, comes by the Holy Spirit. What is that?

The Holy Spirit is not a ‘what’; He’s a ‘Who’! The Spirit is described in Scripture as God, the third person of the Holy Trinity. Everything that we know about God is true of the Holy Spirit: He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His Being and is to be worshipped along with the Father and the Son. Because He is spirit and invisible, we know the Holy Spirit by what He *does* more than by what He is. Jesus taught his disciples that he would give them the Spirit to live in them in a special way. Just before He was crucified Jesus taught them— and us— a lot about the Holy Spirit.



1) Turn to John 14.

a) In John 14:16 what is the Spirit called? _____

b) In 14:17 He is the Spirit of _____, whom the world could not receive because it did not _____ him or _____ him.

c) In 14:26 what will the Spirit do? _____

Jesus kept His promise to send the Holy Spirit, and He is with us now doing all Jesus said He would do.

2) Look up Acts 1 and 2.

a) According to 1:4 why did Jesus tell them not to leave Jerusalem? _____

b) What was the promise? (1:5) _____

c) In 1:8, when the Holy Spirit came to give them power, what would the disciples do for Jesus?

d) According to 2:1-4, three things happened to show that the Spirit had come. What were they? (Circle the correct three)

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| The sound of a mighty wind | ‘Tongues of fire’ on the disciples |
| Water flowing from rocks | Angels singing to announce God’s coming |
| A trumpet sound | Disciples speaking in other languages |
| A great war began | God parting the clouds |

e) According to 2:38, how could a person receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? _____

So when a person believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes upon him just as water when we are baptized. The Holy Spirit is part of God's gift of salvation.

B. THE MOST IMPORTANT CALL YOU’LL EVER GET

One of the most important things the Holy Spirit does is to cause those who are dead in sin to be saved.

1) How do we take part in the redemption Christ bought? This is explained in SC #29.

We take part in the redemption Christ bought when the _____
effectively _____ it to us.

Effective means something works the way it is supposed to. Redemption works for us because the Holy Spirit is powerful enough to make it work.

2) How does the Holy Spirit work to apply redemption to us? (SC #30)

The Spirit applies to us the redemption Christ bought by producing _____ in
us and so uniting us to _____ in our _____.

3) Again, what does 'effective' mean? _____

4) And what is effective calling? (SC #31)

It is the work of _____
who convinces us that we are _____ and _____,
who enlightens our _____ in the knowledge of _____,
and who renews our _____.

This is how He persuades and makes us _____ to _____ Jesus
Christ who is freely _____ to us in the Gospel.

6) Good work with the blanks, but what does this mean? Let's review:

a) What's our only chance of believing the gospel? _____

b) Who is it that gives us faith? _____

c) What are three things that the Holy Spirit does to call us to God? (it's in SC #31)

In effective calling the Holy Spirit makes us see how much we need Christ. He makes us want to believe in Jesus, and then He gives us the faith we need. No one would even *want* to believe in Jesus without the effective calling of the Spirit! This means that what is 'good news' to God's people isn't so clear to unbelievers. If it were not for the Holy Spirit's work in us, we would reject the gospel too. How do people *without* Christ view the gospel? Questions 7, 8, and 9 give some examples.

7) **Look up I Corinthians 1:22-24.**

When Paul preached about Jesus dying for them on the cross, what did the Gentiles think of that message? _____

And what was this message to the Jews? _____

But what was it to those whom the Holy Spirit was calling? _____ and _____

8) **Look up 2 Corinthians 2:14-16.**

When Paul preached the gospel, what was it like to unbelievers? _____

What was it like to believers? _____

9) **Look up Matthew 13:3-9.**

What did the seeds need to grow? _____

What kept some seeds from growing? _____



According to what we've learned, the soil that allows our seed to grow is the Holy Spirit. Without Him, the 'seeds' (human souls) will perish. It's the soil that gives life.

Here's one more way to look at it.

Imagine three people who sit near each other in a church. Jim is very smart and has read many books, Joy loves sports and doesn't like to sit still, and Susan is very good at music and wants to play in an orchestra.

In church the speaker explains very carefully why Jesus died for them and how they can have Him in their lives. Then he asks everyone who would like to believe in Christ to stay after church to talk some more about it.

Jim goes out thinking that the talk was very boring. Joy didn't get much out of it either, and she hurries out of the church, glad the service is over. But something compels Susan to stay to talk to the speaker, because she feels inside that having Jesus is more important than anything in the world.

Think about what you have learned about effective calling and I Corinthians 1:22-24, and explain why Susan believed in Jesus and Jim and Joy didn't want to.

"What" compelled Susan to stay?

Jim, Joy, and Susan all had a chance to believe the gospel. It's not that Susan was smarter or better or nicer. In the end, we don't believe the gospel because we're smart enough, or wise enough, or sensible enough. And it's not that God chooses us because we're talented enough, or intelligent enough, or good-looking enough, or athletic enough. We believe the gospel because the Holy Spirit enables us to have faith that *Jesus is enough*.

Memory Verse:

"Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed,' and no-one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

- 1 Corinthians 12:3



Hopefully, that creates humility in us. We don't look down on people for believing the wrong things; it could be us, if God's Spirit didn't reveal this truth to us! Instead we pray that people will accept the truth of Jesus. They cannot do this without the Holy Spirit, and neither can we!



Talk to God About It!

This lesson is a reminder that we are totally dependent on God's grace for our salvation. Lots of times we come to God with lists of requests and things that we want or need. This is good and God tells us to bring these requests to Him. But consider this: even if God *never* answered another prayer request or gave another blessing, *He has done enough for you already!* He has given you the gift of eternal life, meeting your greatest need. That's something worth thanking Him for.

Of course He will continue to hear and answer prayer and give great things to you (see Romans 8:32), but we don't want to overlook the fact that God has already paid the greatest price and given the greatest gift. Spend some time pondering how good it is to be saved from sin, and thanking God for His mercy and grace.