



Going Deeper: Week 1 – “Is anyone thirsty ... ?”

Introduction

Everyone is on a journey of some sort or another. 2,000 years ago the early church started a journey that would transform the world. Today is Ascension Sunday where we remember Jesus ascension into heaven, 40 days after the resurrection and 10 days before Pentecost. What better week to start our 5 week mini-series on the Holy Spirit.

Read: the accounts of the Ascension in Acts 1 v1-11 and Luke 24 v46-53. Both accounts were written by Luke.

Question: In these passages, what does Jesus call out as the main purpose of sending the Holy Spirit?

The title we have chosen to give the series is: “Is anyone thirsty ... ?” and it is based on John 7 v37-39.

Read: John 7 v37-39. When we come to Jesus, believe in him, repent and commit our lives to Him, Jesus said that ‘living waters will pour out from our hearts’. Therefore it is impossible:

- to be a Christian and not have the Holy Spirit
- to be ‘More people, more like Jesus’ without the Holy Spirit
- to be a healthy, relational church family without the Holy Spirit

Question: how much do we welcome the Holy Spirit to fill us, direct our life and our ministry?

Replanted plants, need well-watered soil. When we replant DCF into Hope Church, we need to replant into soil saturated with Living Water. Again, what better time to re-evaluate our spiritual health as individuals and as a church family.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

Read: Core readings of John 14 v15-20 and John 15 v26. Extra study John 14, 15 and 16.

There are a number of times that Jesus explains the person and work of the Holy Spirit in John 14, 15 and 16. In the [Alpha on-line material](#) they pull out 3 main points:

1) Who is the Holy Spirit?

First of all, who is the Holy Spirit? Well, he’s a person. ‘He will testify about me.’ Some people think the Holy Spirit’s like an ‘it’, or like a force. No, the Holy Spirit is a person. Or sometimes he’s referred to as ‘the Spirit of Jesus’. He’s the way in which Jesus is present within you. If you have prayed for Jesus to come into your life, the Holy Spirit came to live within you. The Spirit of Jesus came to live within you.

You see, what Jesus says here is he will be sent by the Father. ‘The Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.’ So the whole Trinity is involved in this: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is a person, like Jesus – in fact, the Spirit of Jesus – who, like any person, thinks, acts, loves: the most wonderful person in the world, who comes to live within you. So the moment you say, ‘Come into my life,’ you will never be alone.

Mother Teresa said, ‘The greatest problem in the world is not actually starvation; it’s loneliness.’

It’s kind of cosmic loneliness: being in God’s world without God. And the moment you experience the Holy Spirit living within you, you are never alone.

2) What is the Holy Spirit like?

Jesus tells us here what he’s like: he says ‘the Counsellor’. It’s a difficult word, the Greek word there, to translate. The literal Greek word is Paráklētos, which means: para is ‘alongside’ and kletos is ‘called’: so it’s ‘one who’s called alongside’. Sometimes it’s translated ‘the Comforter’. He’s the Encourager. He’s the Advocate, like an advocate in court who’s on your side, the one called alongside of you. In the ancient world, if a little ship was in

trouble, they'd send a big ship out to draw alongside the small ship and lead it into the safety of the harbour. The big ship was called a paráklētos. And Jesus says the Holy Spirit's like that: he's the one who draws alongside you. Problems in life: you do not need to go through them alone. It's an amazing difference to go through life with the Paráklētos, with the Comforter, with the Advocate alongside of you all of the way. That's what he's like.

3) What will he do?

Jesus says: 'He will testify about me.' Because the Holy Spirit doesn't point to himself. He's kind of self-effacing. You'll say, 'Well, I haven't heard much about the Holy Spirit': he'll be pleased about that, because his role is to testify about Jesus, to point you to Jesus, to explain Jesus to you so that you understand about Jesus.

This is a very helpful point that Alpha on-line materials reinforce – the Holy Spirit points to Jesus. So in our experience in DCF or other churches you may have attended before DCF, if your experience of the Holy Spirit did not point to Jesus you need to be very wary.

Question: if you were to provide an answer to these three questions (1 Who is the Holy Spirit?, 2) What is the Holy Spirit like? 3) what will he do?), what would you say? Do you see the Holy Spirit as a person who draws alongside to help you live a Godly life? When you call on the Holy Spirit, what is the context or reason normally?

Is anyone thirsty ...?

Read: John 7 v37-39. This is the core text for the series and what Jesus is saying is packed with metaphor and meaning. The Scripture Jesus is referring to is Isaiah 58 v11. There are also similarities with other texts in Isaiah and John's gospel.

Read: Isaiah 58v11, Isaiah 55v1, Isaiah 12v3 and John 4 v13-14.

What Jesus is saying is also quite radical – look at the context. Jesus stands up and shouts this out on the last day of the Festival of Booths / Tabernacles. As part of this festival the Jews would construct makeshift shelters (to symbolise tents), reside in them for a short period and remember God's faithfulness to the Israelites during the 40 years in the wilderness. For Jesus to use metaphors relating to thirst and water are very apt. Jesus is recognising that the Jewish nation are still lost and wandering around in the wilderness and saying come to him, he is the solution, he is the Messiah !

Questions: Are you wandering around the wilderness when it comes to understanding the Holy Spirit? Do you feel uneasy talking about the Holy Spirit? Are you anxious or fearful? Why?

Question: Have you spotted it - the significance of the series title?

'Is anyone thirsty ...?' – the thirst doesn't refer to thirsting after the Holy Spirit, rather thirsting after Jesus – as a result there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The second point is the '...' If you want to experience more of the Holy Spirit working in your life or in the life of the church – this is a very good thing – but why? What is the '...', what is the motive? The Holy Spirit is not about us ! Rather He is to point us to Jesus !

More of the Holy Spirit so that:

... I can be more like Jesus

... I can help others to be more like Jesus

... they can be healed so that they can be saved or have a deeper relationship with Jesus

... they can be restored or set free so that they can live a life aligned to the purpose Jesus has for them

Question: If we are wanting more of the Holy Spirit in our lives or in church family life or in church services or during worship times - -why? What is our motive? To honour Jesus or make ourselves feel better? Pause for a moment and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if your desires and motives are of Him or, self-seeking.

Commit: Journey with us over these 5 weeks to leave any negative pre-conceptions behind, to not focus on what other people say but rather to;

1. keep it Biblical
2. keep it prayerful
3. live and serve not through your strength, but through the infilling and power of the Holy Spirit

Next Sunday: Week 2: "Who is the Holy Spirit?"