

“Called:Be Spirit-Filled”

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Graphics: phone, world, calling, baptism, cross, spirit

Big Truth: The grace of God was poured out into the first century church through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The early church was called by God to receive that grace and live as holy saints because of Jesus. God’s grace and a life of holiness leads the church to be steadfast when struggle comes, to be unified when division seeks to tear it apart, to be wise when the world’s wisdom seeks to confuse, to be Spirit-filled when the supernatural is dismissed, and to be ready for Jesus to move in new ways. We are called to be the Church for today and always by God’s grace given to us through Jesus and the presence of His Holy Spirit.

Focus Phrase: We are called to receive the Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY! (Jesus, You are Lord...)

B. One of my favorite science and technology stories so far this year is the fact that, in December of last year, a lab in California shot 192 high-powered lasers at a tiny diamond and generated more energy than it used through the “ignition” of nuclear fusion. (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-04440-7>)

C. Growing up as a science-fiction geek, I always dreamed that some really smart scientists would find a way to not only achieve controlled nuclear fusion, but that we’d have an endless source of clean energy that could power our homes, trains, planes, and automobiles...and space ships and extra-planetary bases.

D. Of course, just because scientists did that in a lab one time doesn’t mean that next week, we’ll be able to power all our electric cars or leave the hallway light on or that we’ll be living somewhere outside the Milky Way Galaxy.

E. BUT, it does mean that, as humans, we’re beginning to understand more and more about what God already knows about power...how to produce it and how to harness it. I think God doesn’t give us the answers to things like nuclear fusion because if we knew it all, we’d FOR SURE use it for good AND evil.

F. So, why am I talking about nuclear fusion this morning? Simple. This morning’s message is all about **power**. It’s not about nuclear power, but a far greater power in the lives of those who believe that God is the author of all life and his Son Jesus who lived, died, and rose again for you to be forgiven of every sin and raised to new life. It’s about a power that’s not from a man-made lab, but from the nucleus of Almighty God himself. **It’s the power of the Holy Spirit!**

G. That power is so great that not only does it give us, as a church called by God, use spiritual gifts to glorify God, but it’s a downpayment for everything that God promises will come in the future when Jesus returns.

- H. We're called to be a church for today and every tomorrow. We're called to be STEADFAST in God's grace, UNIFIED around the Cross of Christ, and WISE in God's wisdom and strength. All of those things are God's plan for the church. But they aren't possible because we try harder or convince people with logic or strength. Those things are possible only through the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- I. So, this morning, in part 4 of this sermon series, we are CALLED: to BE SPIRIT-FILLED.
- J. Nuclear fusion is really cool and I pray that in my lifetime, I'll see it used for the good that God already knows it can. Yet, I know that our lives are powerless without the constant presence of the Holy Spirit.
- K. **We are called to receive the Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ.** (write that down in your notes)
- L. Let's turn together to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 to see if we can't set off a nuclear explosion right here in this sanctuary this morning! Paul, remember, wrote this letter to the young church in Corinth. He wrote this letter about 3 years after he planted the church...now ready to give them more guidance in some of their division and struggles and persecution.
- M. Ready? Sunglasses on? Let's DO this! We're CALLED to be SPIRIT-FILLED. The world needs the CHURCH to answer that call and shine the radiant light of Christ to those who are in darkness.

2. Scripture

A. READ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- i. (Let me stop there for a moment.) Paul talked a lot about weakness and strength, foolishness and wisdom, in his previous section. He said that the message of the cross was weakness to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. But God's power and wisdom are what give us salvation, even though the world thinks is rubbish.
- ii. Now, Paul gives the church insight into the REASON or SOURCE of the power and wisdom of God for salvation...it's in the Cross of Christ.
- iii. To do that, he humbly wrote to remind them that he didn't come with lofty or eloquent words when he came to preach to them and plant the church.
- iv. In fact, he had a one-point sermon: **Christ was crucified.** That was the whole sermon! You only WISH I had one point sermons each week!
- v. He reminded them that through that **one point**, even though he was Paul and had encountered the risen Christ and he'd been called and empowered by Jesus himself, he didn't come with arrogance and long speeches. He came in weakness...in fear...in much trembling. And, listen, I don't think

- Paul was unsure of the message or his call. I think Paul came humbly and fearfully, because of the sheer power of the message he held in his hands.
- vi. I imagine that the scientists who finally achieved nuclear fusion in a lab didn't boast and brag about how amazing THEY are. I bet they stood there with their mouths gaping open in AWE of what they'd just witnessed. And, I can also imagine that they were a bit fearful and trembling at the thought of what that moment was going to mean someday. Talk about awesome!
 - vii. Paul knew that his message was NOTHING apart from the POWER of the Holy Spirit that filled the message. The Holy Spirit WAS the source of power, not Paul or his words.
 - viii. The HOLY SPIRIT IS what made the message so powerful that Paul had to decrease so that the message was proclaimed with power.
 - ix. The last thing Paul wanted was for anyone to think that they could believe or be saved by the words HE spoke to them...or the WAY he spoke them... or some logical argument he gave.
 - x. The reason he spoke in his human weakness was SO THAT the people would see and experience the POWER of the Holy Spirit.
 - xi. I see glimpses of this all the time. I AM an introvert who was painfully shy growing up. That's why I became an engineer. Yet, for some crazy reason, God uses people like me to proclaim the greatest truth ever, to people, out of love and a heart for people to be saved. Each week, I pray, "Lord, speak to me and through me." It's the power of the Holy Spirit working through my weakness that we hear, trust me.
 - xii. Paul's point is that our hope and faith don't rest in human wisdom, but on the power of God. We are called to be Spirit-filled! We are called to receive the Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ.
 - xiii. Let's read the second part...starting in verse 6...

B. READ 1 Corinthians 2:6-16

- i. This whole section is based on **contrast**.
- ii. Paul was clear to identify two spirits. One spirit has a lowercase 's' and the other has an uppercase 'S'. The first is the spirit of this age and the second is the Holy Spirit.
- iii. The spirit of this age is the human spirit that is in each of us. In that culture, the spirit (lowercase 's') was the mind, body, and heart. It's our human conscience and our human will. It's our desires and our awareness of being alive and to know we're human.
- iv. For Paul, this age in which we live now is evil. So, when he used the term, 'spirit of this age' he was speaking of something that's not attuned to God's

holy purposes. It's the wisdom of the rulers of this age, which Paul said don't understand the things of God. If they DID, they wouldn't have killed Jesus, for instance.

- v. Those who only have the human spirit in them speak of human things, human solutions to human problems, and human hopes and dreams.
- vi. Paul calls people without the Holy Spirit un-spiritual. At first hearing, that seems harsh, but that's not how Paul sees it. Paul knows that those whom he calls non-spiritual are really **pre-spiritual** with the potential to BECOME spiritual because the Holy Spirit is wooing everyone to become Spirit-filled...to be become spiritual, mature, filled with the Holy Spirit.
- vii. John Wesley, the founder of the Wesleyan Methodist movement, described that Holy Spirit movement before we're aware of it as PREVENIENT GRACE - the grace that goes before. Every person is subject to prevenient grace. The Holy Spirit is working on them so that they can respond to the call of God to be chosen and saved...to be FILLED with the Holy Spirit... to understand the things of humans AND the things of God...to know the mysteries of God...to receive and use spiritual gifts...and to SPEAK of those things to others...for God's glory and to build up the body of Christ. For contrast, he set the spirit of this age against the Spirit of God - the Holy Spirit. If the human spirit is the will, mind, and desires of humans, the Holy Spirit is the will, mind, and desires of the Triune God. While the human spirit knows only human things, the Holy Spirit knows the things of God - which includes all human things as well.
- viii. The Holy Spirit reveals to those who are indwelled with the Holy Spirit the mysteries of God - things like forgiveness, grace, love, mercy, and faith... AND also reveals and empowers believers with spiritual gifts.
- ix. But there's one more piece of this, church. Not only are we as individual believers called to be Spirit-filled, but the CHURCH is called to BE SPIRIT-FILLED together. We receive the presence of the Holy Spirit - to celebrate in worship, in prayer times, and in every meeting and ministry.
- x. Paul told the church that they can discern the things of God and of man through the collective presence of the Holy Spirit. They can have the mind of Christ to be confident, clear, and bold in her witness to the community and the world.
- xi. It's all because we're filled with the Holy Spirit, as a church...as a body of believers in this incredible gospel about Jesus.

3. Application

- A. In order to be a church for today and every tomorrow, we must allow the Holy Spirit to lead and to fill us.

- B. When each of us becomes a true believer in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we are filled with the Holy Spirit.
- C. Yet a room full of Spirit-filled people doesn't ensure that we have a Spirit-filled church. The process of allowing the Holy Spirit to fill the Church, starts with the parts of the body being filled with the Holy Spirit, indeed. But the body parts who make up the whole body must intentionally connect the Spirit of Jesus in each of us together so that we are Spirit-filled as a whole.
- D. One of my mentors, Rev. Dr. Maxie Dunnam, loves to greet a group of people with these words: "The Spirit of Jesus in me greets the Spirit of Jesus in you, and brings us together in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." What would it change in our church if we understood that the Holy Spirit is not just in me and in you, but the same Spirit is in US, together?!
- E. Here's our encouragement, commission, and charge for today, church. In order to answer the call to BE SPIRIT-FILLED:
 - i. First, receive the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Not just as individuals, but as a body.
 - b. The reason we're baptized in the presence of the congregation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is to make our faith public, to receive God's grace in community, and to enter into the full life of the church. We enact our desire to die to self and be raised to new life in the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ.
 - c. When a group of Spirit-filled, baptized believers all get together in a particular place - despite our differences of age, gender, life experience, hopes and dreams for the future, or any other thing - we become united as one body when we RECEIVE the Holy Spirit as one.
 - d. And when the Spirit of Jesus in you meets with the Spirit of Jesus in me, and we agree together to receive the Holy Spirit's presence and power in our midst, the people of the church BECOME the CHURCH. This church is not a building...it's US, ONE SPIRIT-FILLED BODY.
 - e. In order to be a church called for today and every tomorrow, we must receive the Holy Spirit together. Come, Holy Spirit, Come!
 - ii. Then, that empowers us to have and share the mind of Christ.
 - a. The Holy Spirit IN US gives us the mind of Christ.
 - b. What is the mind of Christ? Paul told the church that the mind of Christ knows the things of God. The mind of Christ is literally the very mind of Jesus Christ, who is alive and praying for us right now.
 - c. The basic tenet of the Christian faith is that Jesus rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus

is praying for us to be steadfast, unified, wise, Spirit-filled and ready for his return and his mission.

- d. The mind of Christ is what listens for, knows, and thinks about the things that God knows and thinks about. And, amazingly, you and I are GIFTED the mind of Christ when we are filled with Holy Spirit!
- e. Another part of having the mind of Christ is using our spiritual gifts. That's a sermon for another day, but every Spirit-filled believer is given spiritual gifts and expected to use them for God's glory. The Spirit will guide us and activate those in our church. Some have the gifts of leadership and administration. Some have the gifts of prayer and prophecy or wisdom. Others are gifts as servants and helpers. Others have miraculous gifts of healing or speaking in tongues. Still others are filled with encouragement for others or knowledge.
- f. The mind of Christ gives us the POWER to use EVERY spiritual gift and teaches us HOW to use them, to be the church that changes our community and this world together.

4. Conclusion

- A. We are called to receive the Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ.
- B. This morning, we may not have the expertise or even desire to unleash nuclear fusion in our sanctuary, although that might be scary!
- C. We DO have something even more eternally powerful - we have the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- D. In a moment, we, together, will invite the Holy Spirit to come upon us in two very powerful and specific ways. The first is to bless and receive new professing members into our congregation. And, while it may seem as simple as taking vows to be faithful to the church, God is here and God is listening.
- E. The second way the Holy Spirit will be received is through the sacrament of Holy Communion. That, too, may seem like a simple ritual. Yet, as we pray for God to transform those elements into the real presence of Jesus in our midst, we also ask God to transform our hearts to receive Him once again - to receive the Holy Spirit to have the mind of Christ.
- F. If we can do THAT, you can keep your fusion...I'll take the Holy Spirit of Jesus! Will you join together with me?
- G. Let's pray... (Come, Holy Spirit, Come...fill us!)**