

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

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KEEP JESUS WEIRD: The Book of Acts and the birth of non-religious Christianity

Session 2 – Birth

DAY 1

Introduction:

The Oxford Living Dictionary defines birth as “the start of life as a physically separate being.” In our culture, we sometimes go to extremes to remember the birth of those we love, our country and our relationships. There is something uniquely captivating and mysterious about birth. It is the start of something new. Something that previously didn’t exist.

This week we will witness the birth of the church that begins with the arrival of the Holy Spirit’s presence. Billy Graham said, “The Holy Spirit illuminates the minds of people, makes us yearn for God, and takes spiritual truth and makes it understandable to us.” We will see the Holy Spirit embolden believers to spread the gospel in a new way. This Jesus movement left the world forever changed.

Questions:

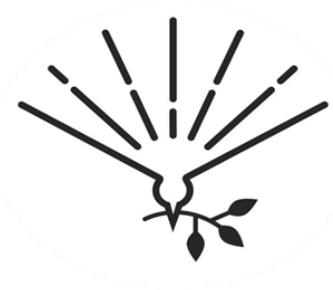
Have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit? How would you describe this presence?

Oswald Chambers says, “The Spirit is the first power we practically experience, but the last power we come to understand.” What is your current understanding of the Holy Spirit?

DAY 2

Read Acts 2: 1-4

1. Describe what happened at Pentecost. In your own words, explain why this is significant.



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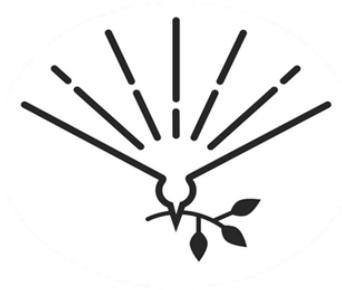


2. Many Jews had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of harvest. Why did Jesus choose this time as the day when He would pour out the Spirit on His disciples?
3. Notice in verse 2 the Spirit comes “suddenly.” When the Spirit comes in power, he comes suddenly: on His own terms and in His own time. How have you seen the Spirit work like this in your life? In someone else’s life? Name an example.
4. Discussion Question: In Exodus 18:16-18, we see God descend upon Mt. Sinai to deliver the law for the Israelites. Fire came down in one place. At Pentecost, we also see fire, but this time “tongues of fire that separated and rested on each of them”. What, in your opinion, is the significance of fire in these accounts? What does it take for your heart to burn within you for Christ in such a way?

DAY 3

Read Acts 2:5-13

1. What compelled them to run toward this house? What did they hear? How would you react to this?
2. In verse 11, the literal translation is that they were declaring “the greatnesses of God.” What is compelling about the Gospel that causes people to run to the greatness of God? How can the Spirit use you to fulfill that?



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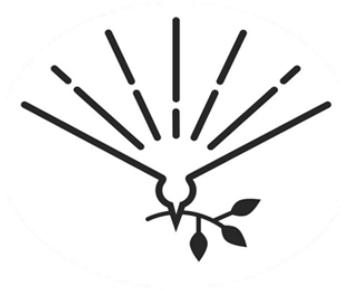


3. The people were rightly skeptical and said the apostles were drunk. Name a time when you have been skeptical of the Holy Spirit in your lives or others. How do we combat that worldly skepticism?
4. Discussion Question: Some were bewildered and explained it away, and some were in awe and asked, "What does this mean?" How can we ensure that the unexplained in our lives propels us to a place of seeking God rather than apathetically dismissing Him?

DAY 4

Read Acts 2:14-36

1. How does Peter address the skeptics? Why do you think he quotes the prophet Joel and David?
2. Read verse 21 again. "Everyone...." He says everyone who calls on Him will be saved, but then says that everyone there had a part in crucifying Him as well. This is the Gospel. How is this significant and how could you articulate this to your non-religious neighbor?



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3. Merriam-Webster defines Lord and Messiah the following ways.

Lord: one having power and authority over others

Messiah: the expected king and deliverer of the Jews.

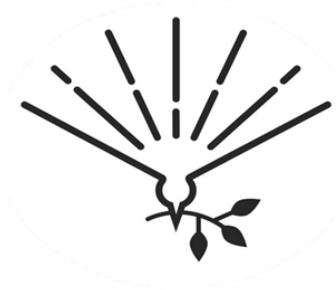
If God has made Jesus Messiah and Lord, what does that mean to the Jewish audience? What does that mean to us today?

4. Discussion Question: Peter refers to the crowd continually as “fellow Israelites...” Why does Peter keep saying this? What wisdom can we impart from Peter’s choice of words, and how does this affect the way we engage with the world around us?

DAY 5

Read Acts 2: 37-47

1. Those who heard Peter speak were cut to the heart. Read Hebrews 4:12. Have you experienced this kind of conviction from the Spirit?
2. Define repentance. Why is it needed for salvation?
3. Who can receive the promise and the gift of the Spirit? How is that encouraging news? (verses 38-39)



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4. Where and when did they break bread together? What was the condition of their hearts? Did their actions lead to the condition of their hearts or did the condition of their hearts lead them to their actions?
5. Discussion Question: The community of believers looked more like a family than they did a network of people with a common interest. What characteristics tie them together as a family? What can we do as a church body to look more like this?

DAY 6

Review Acts Chapter 2.

1. What did you learn about the Holy Spirit this week?
2. What can you take away from the Scripture to strengthen your faith?