

Jesus' Church

g r o u p s t u d y



Lesson 2
The Power

this book belongs to

date

Make the Most of this Study

The following recommendations will help your Jesus' Church Study Group experience the intended outcomes:

1. Each lesson builds upon the previous lesson, so work together and find a way to cover all seven lessons in as close to seven weeks as possible.
2. Invite everyone to bring their Bibles and pens.
3. If possible, sit at a table to be able to read, write, snack, and be closer to one another.

** Supplemental teaching videos and downloadable booklets are all available through the BFAM App. Visit: <https://bit.ly/BFAMapp> or scan the QR code.*



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Though the ESV and certain English versions do not capitalize divine pronouns, they have been capitalized in this resource.

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A Solid Lives ministry

But you will receive power when the

Holy Spirit

has come upon you ...

Acts 1:8



02 | The Power

Welcome to Lesson Two of the Jesus' Church group study! Today we're going to focus on something that Jesus believed was absolutely essential for His Church. Today's lesson is called, "The Power." Let's open in prayer and ask God to speak to us today.

Before we begin this week's lesson, let's each take 30 to 60 seconds (max) to share about something you received from this past week's scriptures. [Invite everyone to share]

Thanks to each of you for sharing. At the end of this lesson, you'll find this coming week's 7-Day Plan. Once again, we'll take 10–15 minutes a day to **read** a short Scripture passage, **write** the answer to a question or two, and **pray** that God will use us that day to minister to people.

The Power of the Early Church

Okay, let's begin Lesson Two: "The Power." Last week, while studying about The Foundation of Jesus' Church, we read from Matthew 16:18 where Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus expected His Church to become strong and unstoppable, and that's exactly what happened in the book of Acts. Listen to some statements it records about Jesus' Church.

- Acts 2:41 says, "There were added that day about three thousand souls."
- Acts 2:47 says, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (NKJV).
- Acts 5:14 says, "Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers—multitudes of both men and women" (CSB).
- In Acts 5:28, the Jewish high priest said to the 12 apostles, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching."

- Acts 6:7 says, “And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the [Jewish] priests became obedient to the faith.”
- In Acts 17:6, some non-believing Jews in Thessalonica said about Paul and his co-laborers, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also.”
- Acts 19:10 says that within a two-year period, “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia [about 15 million people] heard the word of the Lord” (NIV).

As you can see, these were extraordinary and supernatural results. The question is, how did they get those results? Though there are a number of factors, one stands out above the rest. *The early church had the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*The early church had
the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The Power of Jesus' Ministry

It's simply naïve to believe that we can do the ministry of Jesus without the power of the Holy Spirit. Not even Jesus did that. Jesus lived on earth for 30 years without healing anyone, casting out a demon, raising anyone dead, or doing even one small miracle. Why is that? Because when Jesus became a human being, He willingly emptied Himself of His divine power to become like us, except without sin [Phil 2:5-8; Heb 4:15]. However, when Jesus was 30 years old, something happened to Him that turned Him into the powerful, miracle-working Jesus we know.

Let's look at Luke 3:21–22:

“When Jesus also had been baptized [in water] and was praying, the heavens were opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove.”

What was Jesus doing after He was baptized in water? He was praying. And what happened while He was praying? The heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him.

Then Luke said in verses 1 and 14 of chapter 4:

“Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit (v. 1) ... returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (v. 14).” (NASB 2020)

Do you catch that? Now that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, He returned to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit,” not in the power of the Son of God. Again, Jesus had relinquished His divine abilities when He became human, so He did not possess supernatural power until He was filled with the Holy Spirit. What’s the point? Jesus received power when the Holy Spirit came upon Him. And once Jesus received the Holy Spirit and power, He was ready to begin His ministry.

Jesus received power when the Holy Spirit came upon Him.

Jesus’ Instructions to Receive Power

Now let’s turn to Acts chapter one and see how Jesus instructed His followers. Let’s begin in verse 4:

“And while staying with them He ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, “you heard from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 So when they had come together, they asked Him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus knew that His Church could not carry out His ministry on earth without the power of the Holy Spirit, so He ordered them to wait in Jerusalem until they received it. Notice in verse 5, Jesus clarified that a Holy Spirit baptism is different from water baptism. He said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” The baptism with the Spirit is not a new way of describing salvation or being baptized in water. Jesus was talking about the same Holy Spirit baptism with power that He received just after He was baptized in water. How do we know? Because in verses 5 and 8, He said “you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” and “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” He went on to clarify that the power of the Holy Spirit would help them reach the world.

Please notice how intentional Jesus was to teach His disciples about the baptism with the Holy Spirit and power. If Jesus hadn't taught them, they would have likely gone out preaching the gospel without the power of the Spirit. One simple reason many believers are not filled with the power of the Holy Spirit is that they were never taught that they could be. Jesus modeled this important step in discipling people, and we need to follow Him by teaching people about the baptism with the Holy Spirit and helping them to be filled with the Spirit and power.

So what did Jesus' disciples do? Did they ignore His instructions and start preaching right away? No way! They did what Jesus commanded them to do. Acts 1:12 and 14 say:

"They returned to Jerusalem ... [and] were devoting themselves to prayer."

Hmm ... I wonder where they learned to pray to receive the Holy Spirit? That's what Jesus did, so it seems obvious who taught them.

So what did Jesus' disciples do? They did what Jesus commanded them to do.

Jesus' Church is Filled with the Spirit

So, let's see what happened about seven days later.

Let's read Acts 2:1-6:

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

Most of the multitude were amazed at what was happening, but some mocked saying these believers, who had just been filled with the Holy Spirit, must be drunk. That's when Peter stood up and told everyone

that what was happening was prophetic scripture being fulfilled. Look at Acts 2:14–18:

“But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.””

Before we move on, let’s ask some important questions. Why would Jesus want His followers to speak in other tongues as they all did in verse 4? We know that Jesus intended for them to speak in tongues because He predicted it in Mark 16:17 when He said, “These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues.” And why would Peter, who is now filled with the Spirit, quote the prophet Joel saying that when God pours out His Spirit on people, they will all prophesy? Jesus told His disciples that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, but why tongues and prophecy? The apostle Paul actually wrote a lot about tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14. For example, he said in verses 2 and 3:

“The person who speaks in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God ... on the other hand, the person who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation.” (CSB)

And verse 4 says:

“The person who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.” (CSB)

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh...

Can you see that? Jesus wanted His Church to receive power from the Holy Spirit both to strengthen themselves and to strengthen others in the Church. Praying in tongues builds yourself up. Prophesying, which is speaking what God wants to say to other people, builds them up. So, on day one of the outpouring of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit gave them the power so that the entirety of Jesus’ Church could be continually built up. No wonder Jesus ordered them to wait and receive. This is an important part of Him building His Church. And why does Jesus want His Church to be built up and strong? It’s both for our benefit and, of course, to change the world.

Now let's skip down to Acts 2:36 and see the impact of the power of the Spirit through Peter's preaching:

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom you crucified.' 37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?'"

Do you see that? Now that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he was boldly declaring that Jesus was both Lord and Christ, and many people in this large crowd were "cut to the heart." What does that mean? They received the same supernatural revelation of Jesus that Peter had received and, like Peter, they wanted to act on what they believed, so they asked him, "What shall we do?"

Why does Jesus want His Church to be strong? To change the world.

Peter's Instructions to be Saved and Filled

That's when Peter told the crowd exactly what they needed to do. Look at verses 38 and 39:

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."

Peter told them that if they would repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for the forgiveness of sins, they would receive the same gift (baptism, infilling) of the Spirit that Peter and the others had just received. And he didn't stop there, he told them that the baptism with the Spirit is for our children, relatives, neighbors, co-workers, and anyone else in the world who repents and believes in Jesus.

And watch how the people responded in verse 41:

So those who received his word were baptized [in water], and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

Can you see what a difference the power of the Holy Spirit makes? Being filled with the Spirit not only gives us the courage to speak to others about Jesus, but it also adds supernatural power to impact

people. That day, 3,000 people were baptized in water as new believers and were added to Jesus' Church. How? By the power of the Holy Spirit. And just as Jesus did with His disciples, Peter taught these people that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

More People Filled and Empowered

This pattern, of people being filled with the Holy Spirit and receiving power to minister, continued throughout the book of Acts. Acts 5:12 says, "Many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles." Acts 6:8 says that Stephen, who was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5), "was doing great wonders and signs among the people." Then Philip, who was also filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3-5), went to Samaria. Let's read about a few of the things, from Acts 8, beginning in verse 5:

"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the [miraculous] signs that he did. ... 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ... 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for He had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit."

So, why did Peter and John come down and pray for these new believers? Verse 15 says they "came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit." New believers need to be taught to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit, and it seems evident that Philip had not yet taught them. Remember, Jesus taught His disciples to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and Peter taught the crowd in Jerusalem to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that's why Peter and John came to Samaria.

However, Peter and John did not simply teach about the Holy Spirit. It says, "they prayed for them," and "laid hands on them." So, we can see that we not only need to teach people to be filled with the Spirit, but we also need to pray for them, and sometimes lay hands on them to be filled.

These things continued in chapter 9. Saul (or Paul) miraculously received his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit and Peter healed a paralyzed man and raised a woman from the dead. Then in chapter

10 the whole house of Cornelius was filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. In chapter 13, Paul brought temporary blindness on a sorcerer by the power of the Holy Spirit, and in chapter 14, Paul, by the power of the Spirit, healed a crippled man who had been lame from birth. And this pattern of people being filled with the Holy Spirit and then moving in power continued throughout the book of Acts, and still continues today.

So, what is Jesus teaching us in this lesson? First, that He wants every believer to be filled (baptized) with the Holy Spirit and power. Second, that the Holy Spirit's power enables us to build up ourselves, build up the Church, and minister to the world. And finally, that we must teach and pray for believers to be filled with the Spirit.

Now before we close, let's turn to Acts 19 and read and discuss the first six verses. This event took place about 24 years after Acts 2. Paul met some disciples of John the Baptist, but thought they were disciples of Jesus.

"And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' 3 And he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.' 4 And Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the One who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.' 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7 There were about twelve men in all."

Discussion Questions

1. Would these men have been filled with the Spirit if Paul had not talked to them about the Holy Spirit, or if he had not laid his hands on them to be filled? What does that teach us?
2. How do tongues and prophecy build up and strengthen Jesus' Church (remember 1 Corinthians 14:2-4)?
3. In what way is Paul an example to us of ministry with the power of the Spirit?

Before we take time to pray, let's remember to follow this week's 7-Day Plan to get the most out of this study. We'll discuss what we learned next week, so again, please bring your answers to our next meeting.

If you ... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Luke 11:13

Close in Prayer

In just a moment we'll pray (maybe stand) and ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit, even if we've been filled before. If anyone would like to be filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time, we would love to pray with you to be filled. And if there are any here, who have been filled before, would you be available to lay hands on and help those who would like to receive?

Let's expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to see evidence of His power in our lives. And just as we read about people who were filled with the Spirit speaking in tongues and prophesying, let's also allow the evidences of the power of the Holy Spirit to be present in our gathering.

Now, let's pray together.

7-Day Plan | Week Two

Day 1 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Acts 4:5–20

Write: What effect did being filled with the Holy Spirit have on Peter and John?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

Day 2 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Acts 4:23–31

Write: What benefit did these believers receive from being filled with the Spirit again in this prayer meeting?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 3 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Acts 8:26–40

Write: In what ways did the Holy Spirit's power help Philip reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 4 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Mark 16:15–20

Write: How does the power of the Holy Spirit help each of us reach the world with the good news of Jesus?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 5 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:7–11

Write: What manifestations of the power of the Holy Spirit are listed here?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

Day 6 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Acts 21:8–9

Write: What does this tell us about the Holy Spirit filling and empowering children and youth?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

Day 7 | My daily scripture and prayer

Read: Acts 16:6–8

Write: Who stopped Paul and his ministry companions from going to the Roman province of Asia and Bithynia? What does this tell us about our need to stay filled and sensitive to the Holy Spirit?

Pray: Submit yourself to God today as a member of Jesus' Church, and ask Him to use you to minister to people.

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