



Small Group Work Sheet

John 16:5-15 - The Holy Spirit in Action

July 21, 2013

Part 1 - Ice Breaker

1. Teaching on the Holy Spirit is often neglected today. What have you been taught in the past about the Holy Spirit? About who he is? About what he does?

In your conversation, spend more time on what do people think that the Spirit does, as that is what this text addresses. It is possible that the focus will be on the supernatural, namely the supernatural spiritual gifts.

Part 2 - Sermon Review

2. Read John 16:7 How is it 'to our advantage' that Jesus depart and the Spirit comes? Read Lk. 22:54-62 and note Peter's actions, then read Acts 2:36-41 and note the change in Peter.

It is the Spirit of God that seals us and is the guarantee of our salvation (Eph. 1:13-14). Jesus declares that is good for him to go away because of the perfect plan of God: that he should die an atoning death for us and that we should receive that gift of salvation through his Spirit.

Additionally, it is the Holy Spirit who enlightens the hearts of humanity, awakening to the gospel (cf. John 6:63). If Jesus were not to depart, then the Spirit would not come; if the Spirit would not come, then who could be saved?

The Spirit also empowers us. The change we see in Peter in these verses was not due to grit or determination. It was because the Spirit of God had fallen on the apostles (Acts 2:1-13). We don't see this remarkable change in Peter alone. All of the disciples fell away (Mark 14:27), and we see this remarkable change in all of the disciples (remember what Pastor Kurt said a few weeks ago concerning the persecution and death that faced each of the disciples.

In your Life Group discussion, try to steer the conversation towards this truth: salvation would be impossible without the Spirit's coming. That's why Jesus declares that the Spirit comes to convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment: without that conviction from the Spirit, there would be no realization of the need to repent.

- a. What are the ways that the Spirit's coming was crucial for the early church? For us today?

This question builds off of the previous answer. Focus less on the issue of supernatural displays of power and more on salvation and tangible expressions of empowerment in the face of fear.

Francis Chan describes this predicament facing the disciples and us today:

"When the disciples heard that two thousands years ago, I'm sure it was hard for them to grasp. How could it be better to trade a human Jesus—a man they could talk and eat and laugh with—for a Spirit they couldn't physically see?" (*Forgotten God*, 35)

- b. Do you really believe Jesus' words that it is better for him—God in the flesh—to depart so that the Holy Spirit may come? What does your answer say about the Church's understanding of the Holy Spirit today? What are some ways that we can cultivate a greater understanding of the Spirit in our lives?

Avoid addressing the question of whether Christianity would be more believable or easier to live out with a physical Jesus here rather than an invisible Spirit. While that is a small part of it, it is not the main focus of John's writing here.

My prayer is that by this point they will recognize the truth in Jesus' words: that the coming of the Spirit was a part of the plan of God in order to bring salvation to humanity. If Jesus did not depart, then that meant the plan either failed or is incomplete. The Spirit ensures our salvation by testifying of who Christ is to the world (vv. 8-11) and to us (vv. 12-14)

3. Among other things, Jesus declares that the Holy Spirit is 'the Helper (ESV)' or 'the Advocate (NIV)' (v. 7). What are some ways that the Holy Spirit helps believers?

In earlier sermons on the Holy Spirit, Pastor Kurt has mentioned that this term is difficult to translate into English because it encompasses so many words. Neither translation is wrong or more correct than the other—make sure you emphasize this to instill confidence in the translated Word of God in your Life Group!

Both terms (and other translations) attempt to capture one small piece of who the Holy Spirit is.

a.

Assuming that discussion is not completely heretical, there won't be any wrong answer to the question about how the Holy Spirit helps; with that being said, some will be 'more right.'

- a. Read 1 Cor. 12:1-11. How are the spiritual gifts a form of help from the Spirit? Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Take some time affirming the spiritual gifts of those in your Life Group.

This could take up a significant amount of time in your Life Group. Encourage all to participate, not just those who have taken a 'spiritual gifts assessment.' While valuable, these assessments are not authoritative. A better way to identify spiritual gifts is through the body of Christ.

If someone says they don't have any spiritual gifts or if they don't know what they are, then affirm the spiritual gifts you see as a group (assuming that you know the participant well enough).

Think of examples how you can use your spiritual gifts to serve (a) your Life Group and (b) Faith Church.

Other spiritual gifts lists can be found in Rom. 12:3-8; Eph. 4:11-14.

It is important to note that spiritual gifts are not the 'end-all be-all' for how we serve in church ministry. For example, one of the spiritual gifts listed in Eph. 4 is the gift of evangelism. But just because you may not have the spiritual gift of evangelism doesn't mean that you aren't called to evangelize (which is a command given to each Christian). The same can be said for hospitality and some other gifts.

- b. Read 1 Cor. 12:7, 21-26. What are the purpose of spiritual gifts? What are some tangible ways over the next few weeks that you can use your spiritual gifts for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12b)?

God has given us spiritual gifts for two primary reasons:

- (1) To produce unity in the body of Christ. (Spiritual gifts help us to recognize that we are finite and we need the other believers to fulfill the Great Commission.)**
- (2) For the good of the church. (In a similar vein, our spiritual gifts are given in order that we might more effectively complete the Great Commission as a church, as well as support our brothers and sisters. We are given spiritual gifts in order to equip one another in ministry [cf. Eph. 4:12].)**

Encourage your Life Group to think of tangible ways to serve one another and the church over the coming weeks with your spiritual gifts.

2. Jesus also declares that the Holy Spirit will glorify him (v. 14). In which ways does the Holy Spirit glorify Jesus? What are the ways that the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus in us?

The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ through testifying to him in our hearts and in the world. At the same time, we are used by the Spirit to glorify Christ. It is the Spirit in us that brings glory to Christ in us.