

The Normal Christian Life: *Not Weak, Not Weird, Not Wandering*

Week Two: *Have We Been Undersold the Gospel?*



Many churches simply avoid the topic altogether. Fearful that people might misunderstand, get swept into false doctrine, sensationalize an experience, or become overly emotional, many pastors never teach about the *“baptism of the Holy Spirit”* promised by Jesus in [Acts 1:4-8](#) and manifested several times in the early church (see [Acts 2:1-4](#), [Acts 4:31](#), [Acts 8:9-25](#), [Acts 10:44-47](#), and [Acts 19:1-7](#)). As a result, many believers have been sold an incomplete Gospel. They correctly have the narrative of redemption, salvation, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to live a righteous life (see [Romans 8:1-27](#) and [Galatians 5:16-25](#)), what theologians often call *“the indwelling”* of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian has the Spirit of God dwelling in them from the moment of their salvation (see [John 3:5-6](#), [Romans 8:9-10](#), [Romans 8:16](#), and [2 Corinthians 5:5](#)). But there is another aspect of the Holy Spirit’s activity in our lives. John the Baptist promised the believer would not only be baptized in water as he had practiced, but they would also be *“baptized with the Holy Spirit”* (see [Luke 3:16](#)). After his resurrection, Jesus told his disciples to wait to begin their ministry until after they received this gift. We, too, should consider if this promise is for us, and what we should do to receive all that God has for us (see [Acts 2:14-18](#), [Acts 2:32-33](#), and [Acts 2:38-39](#)).

So What? What am I supposed to DO with this?

- **Decide if my American contentment** is enough for me, or if I truly want more of God. Do I want God enough to do the hard work of seeking Him for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
- **Gather the ingredients** and then let God be the chef:
 - **Do not return to “normal”** – *Be so hungry that I cannot seek anything else until God provides.*
 - **Wait in a focused seeking** – *not a passive waiting.*
 - **Seek God together** – *create my own “Upper Room” with other believers hungry to seek after God.*
 - **Receive by faith** – *believe for a distinct and measurable experience with the Holy Spirit.*

This week, make a commitment to *invest four blocks of time* to meditate on God’s Word slowly and carefully, to reflect on the internal leanings of your own heart, and surrender to God for His help.

- You can also watch our *“Daily Six”* video series released each day this week—*Monday through Thursday*—that parallels these readings from the Book of Acts.
(<https://www.youtube.com/@mounthopechurch1651>)

Day One: A Specific Instruction to Wait

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 1:1-11](#).

Reflect: Jesus told his disciples to wait in a specific location for a specific outpouring of God’s promise. By telling them to wait there, Jesus was asking them to pull away from their normal daily routines for a season of intentional—and likely quite intense—seeking. By asking them to wait for a specific promise, Jesus revealed that the outcome was more than a general presence of God’s Spirit with them, but rather a distinct and measurable experience that they would recognize. He was very specific that this particular work of the Holy Spirit would empower them for ministry.

- *What is Jesus asking you to pull away from to intentionally and intensely seek God? What would be hard about that for you?*
- *When you consider what it means to “wait,” do you visualize something passive, or something more proactive?*
- *How would you know the season of waiting is complete?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me what you want me to pull away from to find all that you have for me in the Holy Spirit. Search my heart and reveal to me what I need to surrender to you. Fill me with your Spirit. In Jesus’ name!*
(ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 33:20-22](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Two: A Commitment to Praying Together

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 1:12-26](#).

Reflect: We learn from these next verses that the disciples indeed sought God fervently, but they did not do so in isolation. They gathered with 120

believers to seek God together. The text also suggests they were focused “constantly” in prayer. Jesus taught his disciples that praying together has a unique strength to it (see [Matthew 18:18-20](#)). If we are hungry to seek the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the biblical model is that we do so together with other believers, not alone. This model of seeking God together enabled the believers to make important decisions about their direction as a community with God’s leading, not their own wisdom.

- *Are there other believers in your life with whom you regularly seek God? What do you pray for? Do you pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, or do you just pray for God to answer specific desires and needs?*
- *If you do not regularly pray together with others, why is that so? What barriers keep you from praying with others? Are those barriers something God could help you overcome?*

Pray: *God, lead me to the brothers and sisters you desire me to pray with on a regular basis. Help us to seek the outpouring of your Holy Spirit in our lives. Help us overcome any awkwardness about praying together. Lead us to all that you have for us. In Jesus’ name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Psalms 133](#) and [134](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Three: The Promise Provided

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 2:1-35](#).

Reflect: The prophet Joel—among many other Old Testament prophets—recorded the promise that someday, God would pour out His Holy Spirit into the lives of His people. When Jesus fulfilled that promise by asking his disciples to wait in Jerusalem and seek God for this, and when the Spirit was indeed poured out upon them, a massive impact was made on those who were in Jerusalem at the time. Exactly as Jesus had promised the power of God to be his witnesses (see [Acts 1:8](#)), the disciples began to preach the Gospel across cultural and language barriers by the supernatural enablement of God (see [Acts 2:4-12](#)). Thousands of people came to Christ, and the church became radically attractive to many who were far from God.

- *How does mission and serving God’s purposes fit into your image of yourself? Is serving God merely an adjunct activity that gets squeezed into the margins of life when available, or is it the most*

important and strategized component of who you are? Why is God’s mission for you important to you, or why is it not?

- *Where do you need God’s supernatural empowerment to serve Him? How do you believe God wants to use you?*

Pray: *God, reveal to me in the power of your Holy Spirit exactly how you want to use me. Empower me for the mission and purpose you have for my life. Fill me with your Spirit and lead me to those you want to impact through me. Make yourself attractive to others through me. In Jesus’ name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Isaiah 6:8](#) as your own prayer to God!)

Day Four: The Results of Repentance

Read slowly and carefully meditate upon [Acts 2:36-47](#).

Reflect: When the people saw the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and heard Peter explain what God was doing, they were “cut to the heart.” Genuine repentance is a natural outflow of any movement of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is a change of heart, a pivot towards a new way of living. When the disciples and those who trusted Christ along with them—*about three thousand in number*—began to live in the way the Holy Spirit was empowering, much awe, wonder, joy, and favor came over them. They were able to ultimately experience what most humans long for more than anything else: belonging, care, togetherness, and purpose.

- *What do you need to repent of in your life? If there are any of the obvious “big sins” of a moral nature, of course that is an important point of repentance. But are there other more subtle areas in your life—attitude, focus, priorities, or relational habits that the Holy Spirit wants to transform in you?*
- *Do you trust the promise of the Holy Spirit and the example of how He worked in the Book of Acts is for you? Why or why not?*

Pray: *God, search my inmost being with your Spirit and reveal to me where I need to surrender and submit to you in repentance. Identify for me what subtle aspects of my heart are not in alignment with you. Empower me by the Holy Spirit to walk according to your ways. Cleanse me, heal me, restore me, and awaken me. In Jesus’ name!* (ALSO: Consider praying [Psalm 51:10-17](#) as your own prayer to God!)