

Flourishing in the Fire

Adam Davidson

BIG IDEA

The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to live free, full, and flourishing lives in Christ.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 61:1-3, (Luke 4:16-21), Romans 8:1-17, Acts 1:4-5, Acts 2:1-41

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1. With a prayerful ear to the Holy Spirit, read through Isaiah 61:1-3. What do you notice about the all-encompassing effective action of the Spirit's anointing? In this great reversal of fortunes, how far does this change reach into our human condition? What brokenness do we see in our world today that is addressed by the anointing of the Holy Spirit?
 2. Luke 4:16-21 gives account of Jesus proclaiming and fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3. Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah 61. Note that Jesus' reading of Isaiah stops after proclaiming the Lord's favor, not going as far as reading "and the day of vengeance of our God." Contrast John 3:17 with John 5:22-29. What is Jesus saying about His mission in light of the final justice of the coming Kingdom of God? How does God make all things right with both justice and compassion?
 3. Read Romans 8:1-17. Paul talks about two ways of living: according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. Compile a list of either/or -- the law of the Spirit vs. the law of sin & death / life according to the flesh or Spirit, etc. This exercise alone will lead to some fascinating conversation (if you let it).
 4. Romans 8:1-17 talks about grace, the effect of salvation in Christ, and the experience of living according to the Spirit. These are all merciful gifts of God, which we could never earn by our own merit. However, Paul does say we have an obligation (8:12) to the Spirit. What does this obligation entail, and how do we participate in the life of the Spirit? What's our "role" (see 8:13, et al.)
 5. Romans 8:16 says The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. What does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit testifies to our human spirit? How does this go beyond our rational/cognitive thought and into the deeper parts of our hearts? What does this reveal about the heart of Abba Father?
 6. Acts 2:37 describes the life-changing experience that the crowd had on the day of Pentecost. After hearing Peter's Spirit-powered testimony of God's salvation through the crucified Messiah, the people are bewildered. Can you share a time where you've been so confronted by the presence of the Lord that left you unsure of what to do next? Share a "what do we do?" moment, and how the Lord led you out of that moment.

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7. What does it look like for the people of Central to live out their Kingdom calling in accordance with Peter's words at Pentecost, saying to the crowd "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (Acts 2:40). How do we not only give witness to this generation but also bring the healing that Isaiah 61 speaks of?

8. Now to get personal: how is your walk with the Lord? Do you have a growing awareness of the Holy Spirit? Are you regularly dwelling in the Word? Are you able to sense the Lord's leading moment by moment?

9. Now to get very personal: Paul is rather blunt about the either/or of living according to the flesh vs. Holy Spirit. How have you experienced this tension in your own life? What is Paul addressing in our human condition even after following Christ that gives us both challenge and encouragement?

10. Pray for each other, for Central, for West Michigan, our Waters Edge Churches, and the Church around the world as we seek the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to pour out His Spirit in fresh ways, to be aware of His presence in us, and for the awareness and courage needed to live out our Kingdom calling.