



Art by Ivanka Demchuk

# The Spirit Who Raised Jesus

## *Resurrection Life in the Spirit*

“The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you.” Romans 8:11

On Easter Sunday, the Holy Spirit brought Jesus back to life again. Then Jesus told his disciples that they would receive the same Spirit of Resurrection in them—a Spirit of gifts, fruit, power, mission, love, and unity. Join us for this season of Easter as we invite the Holy Spirit who breathed life into Jesus’ body on Easter to breathe resurrection life into our lives, households, church, and community.

Sundays, 10am, April 27 - June 15

4/27 Second Sunday of Easter: The Spirit of Resurrection  
5/4 Third Sunday of Easter: More of the Holy Spirit  
5/11 Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday): The Gifts of the Spirit  
5/18 Fifth Sunday of Easter: The Healing of the Spirit  
5/25 Sixth Sunday of Easter: The Fruit of the Spirit  
6/1 Ascension Sunday: The Power of the Spirit for Mission  
6/8 Pentecost Sunday: The People of the Holy Spirit  
6/15 Trinity Sunday: The Fellowship of the Spirit

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## **4/27 Second Sunday of Easter: The Spirit of Resurrection**

### SCRIPTURE:

John 20:19-23 "Receive the Holy Spirit"

Romans 8:5-17 "The Spirit of resurrection in your bodies"

### SUMMARY:

In both John 20 and Romans 8, we are given a glimpse of what it means to receive the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. As recipients of the Spirit, we now share in Christ's life, resurrection, and mission. This Spirit lives in our bodies today and assures us of our own bodies being made new when Christ returns.

In John 20, John sets the scene of the disciples gathered together in the evening on "that day," which echoes several of Jesus' last teachings like in John 14:20 when he says, "*On that day* you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you." They are gathered with great grief and fear of what the authorities could do to them or do to further stain the memory of their Lord. Some of them have heard Mary's testimony that Jesus lives, and others have not, but then he appears to them right in their midst. He need not go through a door as he is the victorious Christ, and yet he shows them his human scars from his passion. And right in the midst of their grief and fear, he greets them with *his peace*. Peace is the gift he extends to his followers because he has "made peace by the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20). As the disciples realize who is standing with them, Jesus again extends peace, adding, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." Jesus' mission has always been about sending - he was sent by the Father and he now sends his Church into the world. This sending is not simply a commissioning or instructing - this sending is done by and in the same Spirit that

raised Christ from the dead. He is breathing out his Spirit on that so that they might continue his mission. He authorizes them to forgive sins, just as he has done. He gives them all of himself.

In Romans 8, Paul describes in greater detail what it means to live in and by the Spirit and to be a person of Christ's peace. Paul emphasizes that the Spirit alone brings us into deep and genuine relationship with Jesus (vs. 9), and by him we are made alive. When we allow the Spirit rather than our own flesh to guide us, we are governed by his resurrection life and peace (vs. 6). He writes that even though these temporary bodies are still affected by sins and death, we have been given eternal life by Christ when we are justified by faith (vs. 10). In the Spirit, we are promised resurrection life because the same Spirit that raised Christ now lives in us (vs. 11). In the Spirit, we are adopted as sons and daughters of God and have access to the Father, and as his children, we are co-heirs with Christ who share in his suffering and his glory and resurrection.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. If you had been with the disciples, how might you have responded to Jesus' greeting and imparting of the Spirit? What does that gift he has given you mean to you today?
2. In what ways is the peace of Christ showing up right in the midst of your own grief and fears?
3. In what areas of your life do you long for the peace of Christ to rule and guide you? Is there a part of you that resists the rule of the Spirit or tries to live by the flesh?
4. How might life in the Spirit direct you in this particular season - is there someone God is calling you to pray for or invite into relationship with him? Is there something you're holding onto that keeps you from living fully alive in the Spirit? Is there a practice of prayer or discipleship you want to walk deeper into?

#### PRAYER PRACTICE:

The disciples were given the gift of seeing Christ in the room as he imparted his Spirit on them. We too can practice the physical receiving of the Spirit in our own bodies. As you begin a time of prayer together and at home, start by simply opening up your hands and slowly saying, "come Holy Spirit" as you take a few breaths before praying. Let him fill you and guide you as you come to the Father by the Spirit.

## **5/4 Third Sunday of Easter: More of the Spirit**

#### SCRIPTURE:

2 Kings 2:9 "Elisha wants a double portion of the spirit"

SUMMARY: Two or three paragraphs summarizing the main ideas in the passages.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. Three or four questions for group discussion to apply the truth about God and people in this passage to our lives as a church, households, and individuals.

PRAYER PRACTICE: A way to pray into this passage that connects us to God.

## **5/11 Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday): Spiritual Gifts**

### SCRIPTURE:

1 Peter 4:7-11 each use the grace/gift given to serve

### SUMMARY:

In this passage, Peter describes what happens when Christ's body, the Church, is filled with the Spirit and how the gifts of the Spirit are used to build up the body. As part of the Spirit's filling, he gives grace and gifts to his people meant to serve one another the world, just as Jesus did on earth. Just as the power of the resurrection is freely offered to all people by the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit are as well.

Peter begins saying that "the end of all things is near," meaning that the first major acts of God's plan for redemption are complete - Christ has come, Christ has died and resurrected, and now the world is ready for Christ to return again. The Christians at the time Peter wrote these words (about 30 years after the resurrection) would have known the big story of God beginning with creation, the fall, the countless saving deeds done throughout history to sustain God's people - all culminating in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, followed by the outpouring of his Spirit on Pentecost. Now 30 years later, they're ready for Christ's ultimate reign and the fullness of his kingdom to come. So Peter says, to be "alert and sober" (vs. 7) as to use this time of waiting for Jesus appropriately and effectively in building up the body. He gives some examples on how to practice this. First, we are called to "love each other deeply" (vs. 8) and generously offer hospitality to one another (vs. 9). The love and hospitality that Jesus displayed in his ministry is now meant to be part of the life of Christians. And when true and earnest love for each other takes on a tangible expression in the Church, Peter describes that that looks like each of us using the gifts the Spirit gives us to serve others "as faithful stewards of God's grace" (vs 10) to us. The word "gift" in vs. 10 doesn't imply that we each receive one gift. A gift, or charisma, is any act or talent that is empowered by the Spirit. There are many lists of gifts the Spirit gives in Scripture and in, and for each person, these can look different depending on how God has uniquely shaped them. Peter invites us to be good stewards of the grace God has given us, which means we ought to put these gifts to use rather than hide them (ie, Parable of the Talents). The ultimate purpose of this is to praise God and display his power and glory to the world (vs 11) as we build up the church. Imagine Jesus, our Good Shepherd, offering you a gift. It's beautifully wrapped and reflects his goodness. That is not a gift that you crumple up to save for later or hide in your closet - it's a gift that's meant to be opened and extended to others.

### DISCUSSION:

1. What does the Spirit's outpouring of gifts say about God and his plan for redemption in the world? How is the giving of gifts a way God loves his flock?

2. How can you practice being alert and sober minded - taking the calling God has placed on your life seriously, while not taking yourself too seriously? What does it look like to experience joy and peace in the expression of the gifts the Spirit has given you?
3. How have you seen the gifts of the Spirit at work in your own life and the lives of others? How have you seen these gifts build up the Church? How have you experienced the shepherding of God through the gifts of his Spirit?
4. As you think about the return of Christ and the fullness of his kingdom come, how can the Church begin to look like that now through the practice of using the gifts of the Spirit? What does a Church that generously offers love and hospitality look like?

#### PRAYER PRACTICE:

This week, as you go about the routine tasks of your day, invite the Spirit to pour out his gifts into those moments. As you go to work, wash the dishes, play with children, and all that your day may bring, practice the background prayer of "Come Holy Spirit, pour yourself out in and through me."

## **5/18 Fifth Sunday of Easter: The Healing of the Spirit**

#### SCRIPTURE:

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

#### SUMMARY:

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he focuses chapter 3 on the beauty and splendor of the new covenant - life governed by the Spirit and no longer by the law. Before Jesus' death and resurrection and the pouring out of his Spirit, the Jews were in relationship with God through the law, but now that they have the Spirit, they are in relationship with God through him. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, Paul says. This freedom is again meant to be understood in the context of what Paul is explaining to the Corinthians. When the Jews were under the law, they were in bondage to following the statutes of the law, and as we see throughout the Old Testament, they often fall short. But with life in the Spirit, there is freedom - there is liberty. With that liberty, sins are no longer remembered (Romans 4:4-6) and there is no condemnation of sinners (Romans 8:1).

Freedom in the Spirit is not a free pass to live in sin and shame but rather is the *liberation from* sin and shame. Freedom in the Spirit is about becoming more and more holy like God. When Paul says, "The Lord is the Spirit," he is not making a one-to-one comparison of these two members of the Trinity but rather saying that to us the Lord is the Spirit. The Spirit in our lives brings healing by reconciling our relationship with God, delivering us from spiritual oppression,

forgiving our sins, and bringing freedom from the effects of sins we have done and sins done to us. And as we become increasingly free and more like God, we will prepare for the day when he makes his new and we are fully free.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. Why does God desire a life of freedom for his people? How does the Spirit lead us deeper into freedom? How have you seen freedom transform your own life with God?
2. In what area of your life do you desire to become increasingly free? Is there a sin or pattern or go to coping skill in which you desire the freedom of the Lord?
3. How does the Spirit's gift of freedom give hope to the weary? How might those who do not know the Lord find comfort in the Spirit? How can you extend the freedom of the Lord to those in your life?
4. How does the freedom found in the Spirit free us to build up the Church and serve the body of Christ?

PRAYER PRACTICE: A way to pray into this passage that connects us to God.

Take time throughout the week to practice the breath prayer below as you seek to be more and more like God. Allow the Spirit to bring to mine areas where he is inviting you into increasing freedom.

*Inhale: Spirit of God*

*Exhale: I want to be free*

## 5/25 Sixth Sunday of Easter: The Fruit of the Spirit

#### SCRIPTURE:

Galatians 5:16-25 "The fruit of the Spirit, walking in the spirit"

SUMMARY: In this passage Paul lays out descriptions of two diametrically opposed (vs. 17) lives. Two states or experiences of existence either "in the flesh" or "in the Spirit". This is not an argument for a dualistic way of thinking (Body= Bad/ Soul=Good) rather a description of what lives look like when they are either in Christ or in Adam (1Cr. 15:22). The first life is described by a list of actions and activities "the deeds of the flesh". The second a description of what a life looks like when it is redeemed by Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. There is an interesting tension in this passage that goes back and forth between doing and being, between the natural and the supernatural.

In Vs 16 Paul commands the church to "Walk by the Spirit so you do not carry out the *desire* of the flesh" There is a distinction between intentional activity, "walking", and a natural bent or strong feeling "desire" which results in "Carrying out" or the inevitable result of the strong feelings that are based in our natural flesh. Before he expands on what he means by "walk by the Spirit" Paul, in vs 19-21 gives 15 examples of sinful behaviors, which he follows up "and other things like these", it is not an exhaustive list.

- Immorality
- Impurity

- Sensuality
- Idolatry
- Sorcery
- Enmities
- Strife
- Jealousy
- outbursts of anger
- Disputes
- Disensions
- Factions
- Envy
- Drunkenness
- orgies

In vs 21 Paul says: you have been warned in advance that if you *practice* these things, i.e. perform habitually or repeatedly, you shall not inherit the kingdom of God”, and then he immediately switches gears and writes: “But the *fruit* of the Spirit is

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Faithfulness
- Patience
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control

There is a distinction here between being and doing, natural consequences of a state of Grace and intentional choices that we make either in accordance with our regenerative state or against it. If we have the Holy Spirit within us, we are given the Supernatural gifts of Love, Joy and Peace. The Spirit makes us aware of God's love for us and gives us the disposition to love God in return. He gives us joy and peace regardless of the circumstances of our lives. If we take action to agree with and “walk” in these, they are increased and result in dispositions and actions in our character and our relationships with others.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. Regarding the deeds of the flesh, if you were to break the list into 3 categories or headings: Sins of misdirected physical desire, Sins of misdirected Faith, and Violations of brotherly love, which would go into each category? Can you relate these behaviors to the commands of God given in Exodus?
2. In Vs 21, is Paul making an argument for a works based salvation? Why does he say that if you practice these things you cannot inherit the Kingdom?
3. Why does Paul contrast the “deeds”(actions) of the flesh, with the “Fruit” (natural consequence) of the Spirit? Why also does he frame the deeds of the flesh as inevitable

(under law) and simultaneously write that we need to “walk” (take action) by the Spirit? Why is the list of fruit treated as a singular thing ( Fruit *is* rather than Fruits *are*)

4. Paul writes in vs 25 if we *live* in the spirit, we should also *walk* by the Spirit. How do we “Walk” by the Spirit?

PRAYER PRACTICE: We can seek to walk by the Spirit this week in our prayers. Praying as Paul Does in Philipians, that our love, that supernatural awareness of God’s love and our own disposition to love, will increase. We can pray for an increase in Joy and and Peace, so that our character and our lives together as the people of God can be born out of that love and joy and peace and be manifest as faithfulness, goodness, kindness, gentleness, patience and self-control.

## 6/1 Ascension Sunday: Holy Spirit Power for Mission

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 1:1-11 “You will receive power”

SUMMARY: This passage links the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection in the Gospels to the growing movement and mission of his followers described in the rest of the book of Acts, and lived out throughout the history of the Church, including our community today. The Holy Spirit is the Father’s **gift**, who **empowers** those who believe in Jesus—who are students of his kingdom—to **bear witness** to him throughout the world.

Luke is the author of Acts, and just like at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, he writes a short introduction to his intended audience, a man named Theophilus (a name which means “lover of God,” so the Venerable Bede, an English scholar saint from the 600s, says “anyone who is a lover of God may believe that this work was written for” them). Luke links his Gospel account to the book of Acts by saying that in Luke (his “former book”) he described what “Jesus began to do and to teach” (1:1). By saying that the Gospel story is what Jesus **began** to do, Luke implies that Acts will cover what Jesus **continues** to do, now through his Spirit-empowered disciples.

Luke also links Jesus’ resurrection to the lessons the disciples are learning. After his resurrection, Jesus “appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God” (1:3). The kingdom of God was Jesus’ constant theme in his teaching ministry, and that is still the case after his resurrection. Jesus’ disciples are students of the kingdom of God, receiving the “instructions” that Jesus gives “through the Holy Spirit” (1:2).

As they learn about the kingdom from Jesus, the disciples have in mind the Hebrew Scriptures that prophesied Israel’s glory being renewed in the kingdom of the Messiah, so they ask Jesus, “**Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?**” (1:6). In context, this question makes perfect sense. In the passages the apostles are thinking about, the prophets had foretold that God would defeat Israel’s enemies, establish true justice, restore Temple worship, and dwell with them in peace forever. He had promised, “I will put My Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:27).



But Jesus' response to this question is surprising: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority" (1:7). Jesus is saying that the full, eternal fulfillment of the kingdom is yet to come, even though he has overcome death in his resurrection. The part of the prophecies that is about to be fulfilled **now** is the gift of the Holy Spirit. In just "a few days," the disciples will **"be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (1:5)**; they will be immersed in the presence and power of God in a new way. Jesus says that the Spirit is "the gift my Father promised" all along (1:4).

Verse 8 is the key verse of this passage. Here, Jesus says that this gift of the Spirit is given with a purpose, a mission for the Church to fulfill: **"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8)**. Being Jesus' "witnesses" for the first-generation apostles meant speaking to what they had seen and heard from Jesus: the Good News of the Kingdom of God, as confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. The sequence of place names indicates an increasing geographic scope—the Church will speak of Jesus' resurrection in power starting where they are (Jerusalem) and eventually around the whole world ("the ends of the earth").

After commissioning his disciples in this way, Jesus ascends into heaven. The reference to "a cloud" (1:9) also echoes the messianic Hebrew prophecies, particularly Daniel 7:13-14: "with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man . . . And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him" (ESV). Jesus' ascension is his enthronement; he now reigns over the whole world. The "two men dressed in white" (1:10) are angels, who reassure the disciples that Jesus "will come back in the same way" (1:11). In the context of these prophecies, we now see that the final fulfillment of God's kingdom will arrive with Jesus' return. The mission of the Church is to bear witness throughout the world to Jesus' reign, inviting others to live in his kingdom, until that day comes.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. The word for "baptize" also means "immerse." Have you ever had an experience of being "immersed" in the presence of God? A time when it felt like God's presence surrounded you? What was that like?
2. Some aspects of the kingdom will only be fully accomplished when Jesus returns. The prophets made several promises: the defeat of enemies, the establishment of true justice, the restoration of good worship, and God's presence with his people in peace. Does one of these promises resonate with you? Is there some aspect of the kingdom that you really long to see fulfilled?
3. Jesus promised, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." What has that power looked like in your life? What have you been empowered to do by the Holy Spirit? What has our community as a whole been empowered to do by the Holy Spirit?
4. For the first apostles, being a "witness" meant talking about how they had seen the resurrected Jesus. What does it mean for **us** to be witnesses to Jesus' resurrection and reign?

5. In your life, who is someone that, if the right opportunity came up, you would want to invite to live in Jesus' kingdom? Do you feel like there's an opportunity for a "next step" in your relationship with them for getting closer to making that invitation?

**PRAYER PRACTICE:** For us, our "Jerusalem" or "Judea and Samaria" is wherever we happen to be in our everyday lives. Part of being "witnesses" is noticing the people who are already around us who could be invited into God's kingdom. This week as you go about your normal routines, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice the people around you. Pray a brief, silent prayer for the person or people God draws your attention to. Consider praying, "Holy Spirit, open my eyes." And then, "Draw this person into your kingdom."

## **6/8 Pentecost Sunday: The People of the Holy Spirit**

**SCRIPTURE:**

Acts 2:1-11 "Pentecost"

John 14:8-17 "I will send the helper"

**SUMMARY:** Two or three paragraphs summarizing the main ideas in the passages.

**DISCUSSION:**

1. Three or four questions for group discussion to apply the truth about God and people in this passage to our lives as a church, households, and individuals.

**PRAYER PRACTICE:** A way to pray into this passage that connects us to God.

## **6/15 Trinity Sunday: The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit**

**SCRIPTURE:**

2 Corinthians 13:11-14 the fellowship of the holy spirit

John 17:20-26 "Make them one as I and the Father are one"

**SUMMARY:** In John 17 we have the longest prayer of Jesus that is recorded in Scripture. While our passage for this week is focused on the last 6 verses of the 26 verse prayer, let's give a little context first. The prayer takes place during the Passover before Christ's crucifixion. It is usually titled "The High Priestly Prayer" and it can be roughly broken into three parts. In the first part Jesus' prayer centers on the Father and himself. It is a prayer of recognition of his name and his glory and the Oneness of Father and Son. In the Second part of the prayer Jesus prays for his disciples that are with him. He asks the Father to keep them from the evil one, to sanctify (set them apart) in truth as they are sent into the world. The third part of the prayer is the lectionary passage for this week, in it Jesus prays for not just his disciples, but all those who will believe in him because of the disciples' words, that is, he is praying directly for the church, his bride. He is praying for us! His prayer is that "they (we) may all be one" in the same way that the Father and the Son are one. Whew! Lets sit with that for a minute: Jesus' desire for the church is that we

would be as unified, as singular as one as the trinity is. Distinct persons with one purpose, many parts, one body. Further, that we would be in God, in unity with not just each other, but in unity with the Father, Son and Spirit.

Jesus says that the glory which he was given by God, he gives to us. He gives us the glory so that we can be one, so that we can be perfected in the world, and that through our unity the world will see and know Jesus. The unity of the Father and Son and Spirit is a sharing of glory, a glory that then is shared out to us. So what is the Glory of God? The glory of God is his person, His very Being, ineffable power, the infinite fullness of perfection, all excellency, all beauty, all joy. Not just contained within the Godhead, but are a part of God and are flowing outward from God, and refracting back to God, and we are invited into that!

In vs 24 Jesus continues and specifically prays that we will be with him (speaking of the future) that we will behold his glory and finally that as Jesus has made known to us the name of God (God's name and God's glory are often used interchangeably in scripture), and makes known to us the love of God, he prays that that same love that God directs to Jesus will also be in us. The unity we are offered is of God and in God and to God, he is the beginning, the middle and the end.

The second reading is the conclusion of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. In it he commands the Corinthians (and by extension us) to rejoice, to be made complete, to be comforted, to be like-minded and to live in peace and to greet each other with a holy kiss. And then in Vs 14 beautifully calls upon God in three specific persons with three specific attributes: The *grace* of Lord Jesus, the *love* of God, and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit.

#### DISCUSSION:

1. Why do you think most bibles title this prayer "The High Priestly Prayer"?
2. What is the Glory of God? How do we share in it? How does the sharing in God's glory impact our relationships as fellow believers? As the church local? As the church global? If we are in unity with God, how can we be in disunity with others who are also in God?
3. Why does Paul mention these particular attributes, The *grace* of Lord Jesus, the *love* of God, and the *fellowship* of the Holy Spirit? How does each contribute to the commands that came directly before, to live in peace to be made complete etc?
4. What would it look like for the Church to be One as The Father and Son and Spirit are One? Why doesn't the church look like that?

PRAYER PRACTICE: In our prayer practices this week we can pray in ways that enter into the oneness that Jesus desires for his people. As you pray this week, ask the Lord to place on your heart another believer or group of believers. A person or people that maybe you don't agree with on politics or non essential doctrinal issues or who cheers for the opposing sports team. And then pray for them. Really pray for them. Not that God would somehow change them to make them agree with you or be more likeable, but pray for their health, their families, their flourishing, pray that they would experience the love of God and His glory.