**Week 3 – Holy Spirit Empowerment**

**Purpose:**   
The inner work of the Holy Spirit, *to form the nature and identity of Christ within us*, is not the only work of the Holy Spirit. There is also the empowering work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered by the Spirit. While different Christians have explained this in different ways, the fundamental point is that there is more than conversion and the new birth to the Christian life. There is such a thing as being empowered for service. God wants us to be the beneficiaries of both the risen Christ (being born again) and the ascended Christ (the Pentecostal empowering).

**Objectives:**

* Explain the significance of the command of Jesus to wait for the empowering of the Spirit to the disciples.
* Discern how to overcome the paralysis of ***either/or*** theology with a ***both/and*** theology.
* Ask & receive a fresh empowering of the Holy Spirit!

**Overview:**

Jesus **commanded his disciples to wait** for the empowering of the Holy Spirit *(Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5; 8).* They obeyed this command and prayed, in unity, for many days for the Holy Spirit to come *(Acts 1:14; 2:1).*

*How do we obey this command today, and how do we pray in this way?*

As we answer this question, we must address the confusion that often exists in understanding what it looks like for the Holy Spirit to come upon us for empowerment.

The wider church has often suffered from the paralysis of disagreement between Pentecostals and conservative evangelicals over the biblical language about this, or what John Wimber (founder of Vineyard Movement) called the problem of labels.

* ***Evangelicals*** believe regeneration is the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit *(1 Corinthians 12:13).* Following Paul, and reading Paul into the narrative of Acts, they teach that receiving the Spirit is simultaneous with conversion.
* ***Pentecostals***, using the narrative of Luke-Acts, believe the baptism in the Spirit is an empowering experience “subsequent” to regeneration.

Wimber argued that Paul and Luke use language differently, and do not mean the same thing by this term. This was his conclusion:

*It is a simple fact: God has a work of* ***conversion****; God has a work of* ***empowerment****. It can occur simultaneously, it can occur sequentially, it can occur with a long intermission in between the two, or it can occur in a short period of time, but the bottom line is that it needs to occur. It is the infilling empowering of the church and we need it in order to accommodate the work of God. Conversion is truly a baptism in the Holy Spirit. There is no reason that we cannot use baptism to refer to subsequent fillings of the Spirit as well, and I do.*

***Rather than an either/or view on how the Holy Spirit comes upon believers for empowerment, this is a both/and statement. We need not pick sides, rather be open that the Spirit of God moves in ways that are not always linear.***

Moving forward then, we at Vineyard believe that the ***coming of the Spirit*** is the same as the coming of the kingdom. The kingdom of God came (through the Spirit), or broke through, at multiple points and continues to work.

Below are the diverse ways that the Holy Spirit works to encounter & empower God’s people.

1. We, and all creatures, relate to the Holy Spirit by virtue of creation *(Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6; Psalm 104:29, 30).*
2. We, and all humans, relate to the Holy Spirit by virtue of human life, making us divine image bearers *(Genesis 2:7; Job 34:14 15; Ecclesiastes 12:7).*
3. The Holy Spirit relates to unregenerate humanity through conviction of sin *(John 16:8 11).*
4. The Holy Spirit relates to Christians in terms of regeneration *(John 3:3, 6).*
5. The Holy Spirit relates to Christians in terms of transformation *(2 Corinthians 3:18).*
6. The Holy Spirit relates to the regenerate person in terms of power for service *(Acts 1:8).*
7. The Holy Spirit will relate to regenerate humanity in terms of glorification *(Ephesians 1:14; 1 Corinthians 15:51 54).*

**Discussion:**

* What has been your understanding on the empowering of the Spirit? What have you been taught? What view do you think is held by your church leaders? What has been your experience? Spend time discussing your views and the view at Vineyard.
* What does it mean to you today, to obey the command of Jesus to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit? What does it look like in your everyday life? In your ministry?
* Spend some time as a group praying like the early disciples did in Acts. Take some time preparing ourselves for a fresh empowering of the Holy Spirit!