



## SESSION 1

# THE EMPOWERED CHURCH

**Theme:** Christ sent the Holy Spirit to begin and empower His church.

### I. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the Church

#### A. Peter's \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 16:13–17)

Jesus commended Peter for recognizing Him as the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Membership in Christ's church has always been through \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

#### B. The church's \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 16:18)

\_\_\_\_\_ referred to \_\_\_\_\_ as the church's foundation.

Every believer who shares Peter's faith in Jesus becomes a " \_\_\_\_\_ " that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to His church and uses to \_\_\_\_\_ His church.

### II. Jesus Made \_\_\_\_\_ to His Followers

#### A. About the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_ (John 16:7; Acts 1:1–5)

When people trust Jesus for salvation, the Spirit immediately \_\_\_\_\_ them, making each of them a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and a member of Christ's church.

#### B. About the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 1:6–11)

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would \_\_\_\_\_ the disciples and empower them to become \_\_\_\_\_ for Christ.

### III. The Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ Believers

#### A. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 2:1–3)

The sound of \_\_\_\_\_ and tongues of \_\_\_\_\_ signaled the Holy Spirit's arrival.

#### B. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_ (2:4–18)

The Spirit-filled believers began sharing the gospel in \_\_\_\_\_ that they had not previously \_\_\_\_\_.

#### C. \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit's \_\_\_\_\_ (2:36–41)

\_\_\_\_\_ thousand people trusted in Christ for salvation and were baptized.



# Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

## MONDAY

*Read Matthew 16:13–18.*

Understanding Jesus' identity is essential for salvation. Reread verse 15. How would you answer Jesus' question?

Pray for courage to confess your faith in Christ to others with boldness and confidence.

## THURSDAY

*Read Acts 2:1–3.*

The sound of wind and tongues of fire proved the Holy Spirit's presence. What evidence do you have of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life?

Just as fire spreads, the gospel spreads throughout the world. How might you participate in spreading the gospel around the world?

## TUESDAY

*Read John 16:7; Acts 1:1–5.*

Jesus promised the presence of the Holy Spirit. What difference does the Holy Spirit's presence make in your life?

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Helper, or Comforter. How does the Spirit help and comfort you?

## FRIDAY

*Read Acts 2:4–18.*

Believers no longer need to speak in tongues, but the Spirit still empowers us to be witnesses for Christ. What do you need to be a witness for Christ? Boldness? Courage? Confidence? Ask the Spirit to empower you with these things.

What will you do this week to rely more on the Holy Spirit's power?

## WEDNESDAY

*Read Acts 1:6–11.*

What should we be busy doing as we wait for Christ's return?

Jesus told the disciples to begin witnessing at home, in Jerusalem. Where is your "Jerusalem"? How can you be a witness in your town?

## SATURDAY

*Read Acts 2:36–41.*

According to Peter's sermon, who may receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38, 39)?

How might you become more aware of the Spirit's work in your life?



## Tough Questions Answered



### What if I don't feel the Spirit's presence?



On the day you were saved, you might have felt God's presence as the Holy Spirit came into your life. But what if you no longer have those same feelings? Is it possible to lose the Holy Spirit's presence?

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to stay with His followers and never leave them (John 14:16, 17). Our feelings don't determine the Spirit's presence in our lives. God gives the Holy Spirit to every believer at the moment of salvation. From that moment, the Spirit is always with us regardless of our emotions. At certain times, we may naturally feel His presence. But feelings are temporary and don't indicate the Spirit's presence or absence.

**Feelings are temporary and don't indicate the Spirit's presence or absence.**

Sometimes believers follow their physical, sinful desires instead of following the Holy Spirit's guidance. When this happens, they have not lost their salvation. Neither has the Spirit left them. But at those times, believers allow their flesh to control them instead of giving the Spirit control.

We may grieve the Spirit with our sinful actions (Eph. 4:30) or quench the Spirit by resisting His promptings in our hearts (1 Thess. 5:19). But His sorrow over our sin doesn't mean He has abandoned us. Nothing a believer can do will ever prompt the Spirit to leave that person. Just as nothing we do can earn the Spirit's arrival, nothing we do can make Him leave.

Part of the Spirit's work in our lives is to seal our salvation (Eph. 1:13). He guarantees the hope of our eternity with God and promises to complete the work He began in us (Phil. 1:6). We can trust God to keep that promise.

When you feel distant from the Lord, you might need to take steps to draw closer to Him and to follow the Spirit more closely. But never doubt the Spirit's presence or your salvation based on your feelings. If you're saved, you can never lose the Spirit!

# The Leaning Tower of Texas



Ocean Tower once stood near the Gulf of Mexico in South Padre Island, Texas. The 31-story condo offered luxury apartments within a strong, hurricane-proof structure. Well under construction, the skyscraper had reached its highest point when builders discovered major cracks in the supporting columns. The sandy ground beneath couldn't support the building's weight. Ocean Tower had begun to sink into the earth! When it began to lean, the building became known as "The Leaning Tower of South Padre Island."

Developers assured buyers they could fix the foundation, their apartments would be completed, and the building would be "stronger and safer than ever." The plan, however, proved to be too costly. The building was declared unsafe and was demolished in 2009.

Only a solid foundation keeps a building strong and standing firm. The church's strength comes from its foundation—Christ, the solid rock. He will never fail, and through the Spirit's power, the church will stand firm. Not even the gates of hell will overcome it (Matt. 16:18).



## Memory Verse Review



### Memory Verse—Acts 1:8

Before His ascension, Jesus met with His disciples in Jerusalem. He promised the coming of His Holy Spirit to live within them and empower them to be witnesses for Christ, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading outward into Judea, Samaria, and eventually throughout the world. Jesus expects believers today to continue spreading the gospel, beginning at home and working together through the church to proclaim the gospel to the world.

1. How might you be a better witness for Christ in your school or community?
2. Who in your life needs to trust in Christ? Pray for boldness to be a witness to him or her.
3. How will you become more involved in your church's efforts to spread the gospel?

**Additional Memory Verses**—Matthew 16:18; John 16:7.

## Measuring Growth



Jesus declared Himself the church's foundation. Christ builds on the foundation by adding believers to His church. After ascending into Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to empower the church. The sound of rushing wind and the sight of tongues of fire signaled the Spirit's arrival. The Spirit gave believers the power to proclaim God's message in many languages. Today, the Spirit empowers all believers to witness for Christ and to live for Him.

Look for the following indicators that you recognize the Holy Spirit's role in your life.

1. I believe the Holy Spirit lives within me and makes me a part of Christ's church.
2. I trust the Spirit to empower me to share the gospel and to live daily for Him.
3. I am aware of specific ways the Spirit moves in my life and in my church.