

God Uses Gospel Focused, Spirit Driven, Humbly Teachable Jesus Followers

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles, or you can take your devices as well, and go to the book of Acts, chapter 18, if you're visiting with us, you can pull out that black Bible in the chair in front of you, and go towards the back and find page 108, 108 in that black Bible, Acts chapter 18, we'll start in verse 23, and we'll go through the end of chapter 18 into chapter 19, the first seven verses there.

I'll turn those off. So again, chapter 18, starting in verse 23, 18-23, through chapter 19, verse 7. We'll read the passage, then we'll do our study. And having spent some time there, Paul departed and passed successfully through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus. He was mighty in the scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord. Being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John. He began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

[1:45] When he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. And when he arrived, he helped greatly those who believed through grace. For he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Chapter 19. And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus and found some disciples.

And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believe? And he said to him, no, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit. And he said, into what then were you baptized? And they said, into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.

And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. And there were in all about twelve men.

[2:49] December 30th, in the Guardian, excuse me, the Guardian, online journal, the article read, the title of the article read, how to make a New Year's resolution you won't quit in a week.

That sounds kind of neat. How to make a New Year's resolution you won't quit in a week. Every year you make the same promises, and every year fail miserably.

So this New Year, why not try a whole new approach? So he gives twelve ways on how you can make a New Year's resolution that you won't quit in a week. And I'm just going to give some of them, not all twelve.

Here's the first one, number one. Don't choose too few. He says, choose at least a dozen, preferably more. Number three, don't let the drink dictate.

Any resolution you made while drunk or crying on New Year's Eve doesn't count. Even if that resolution was to stop getting drunk and crying at New Year's Eve's parties.

[4:00] Forget about it. Actually, you probably have. I was hysterically laughing at that one. I guess you didn't think that was funny. The fourth one is even funnier.

Resolutions made upon waking the next day are also non-binding. You're not always going to feel that hungover, and you deserve a right to reconsider all rash pronouncements once you're able to keep a cup of tea down.

I just think that was funny. I don't know why people do that on New Year's Eve. It doesn't make any sense to me, but so they do. Number five, avoid the top ten resolutions, like losing weight, and then this, and then that.

Number six, be realistic. Number ten, don't revisit all resolutions. And then number twelve, he gives, lower your expectations. There's others that he gives.

So we come to this part in Acts. Just do it. Be who you are. Let God use you to fulfill his mission. That's kind of the theme of the book of Acts.

[5:06] Today, we're going to see how God uses gospel-focused, spirit-driven, humbly teachable people. Jesus followers. I'm actually going to give you a New Year's resolution in just a moment from this title.

But in our passage today, we will see how God uses gospel-focused, spirit-driven, humbly teachable Jesus followers. Jesus followers were focused on the gospel, driven by the Spirit, humble and teachable.

Humbly teachable. I like to make up words. Preachers like to do stuff like that. I'll put in a statement for you. God uses Jesus followers who focus on the gospel, personally and relationally, are driven by the Holy Spirit, and are humble and teachable towards others' correction.

What I can do, I'll put it in a New Year's resolution for us. Here's a New Year's, not that you don't have others, but maybe you like to do New Year's resolutions.

Here's one for you. New Year's resolution, that I will focus on the gospel in my personal life and in my relationships with others. That I will be driven by the Holy Spirit in all my endeavors.

[6:29] That I will be both humble and teachable towards others correcting me. Now mind you, if you take this as a resolution, you realize what this means.

You have to be involved in other people's lives, and you have to let them be involved in your life.

That's the catch. It doesn't work when you go up in the mountain. There's my church up there.

That's not the New Testament, or the Old Testament for that matter. That's not how it works. You have to get involved in people's lives. If you really want to focus on the gospel, if we really want to be driven by the Spirit, if we want to be humble and teachable when others correct us, and even humble and teachable as we're correcting others, then it means we have to get involved in each other's lives.

And maybe, understand that as you take this, maybe might take this as a New Year's resolution, what goes on with that is you start to get more involved being part of God's church. Within the body.

Now I'm not saying that God doesn't use those who don't focus on the gospel, or He doesn't use those who are not driven by the Spirit, or are not humble or teachable. I'm not saying that.

[7:47] But in a sanctifying, making us holy process, it comes down to this. God uses those who submit to His Word. God uses those who submit to His Word.

And we see that glaring at us in Apollos. A man who was focused on the gospel.

A man who was driven by the Holy Spirit. A man who was humble and teachable, ready for someone, a couple, Priscilla and Aquila, to come and give them some more direction.

He is the epitome of what we're speaking about this morning. This begins Paul's third missionary journey.

Third and final missionary journey. Unless you want to count his journey to Rome. Even though this really doesn't count as a journey. Because he stayed in Ephesus, we'll find out next week, for more than two years.

[8:56] He didn't do that with the first or the second journeys. And you'll see, kind of starting a little bit today, we'll kind of look at that, but especially even more next week and a week after that, how Ephesus became a key ministry place for Paul.

So let's start in verse 23 through verse 25. If you kind of take in stride with verse 23, verse 22, Paul then at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, seems like he went to Jerusalem, went down to Antioch, and then verse 23, spending some time there in Antioch, he departed Antioch, and left to go through the Galatian region, in Phrygia, ministering to those whom he served in the past, strengthening all the disciples.

So he went back through the other churches. Initially the purpose of the trip was pastoral.

Strengthening the churches, strengthening all the believers, strengthening the Christians.

And yet a new mission would end up coming into play. So this is all happening, okay? So then the scene shifts, here in verse 24, while that's happening, while he's strengthening the churches and

everything, something's happening in Ephesus.

Remember? He left Priscilla and Aquila there in Ephesus, and then he went back. So now the scene shifts back to Ephesus, and there's this guy.

[10:27] Apollos comes on the scene. Notice, he was an eloquent man, or well educated, being from Alexandria. Alexandria. And let's talk about Alexandria for a moment.

Alexandria was the Roman seat in Egypt. The second largest city in the Roman Empire. A pretty big, huge Jewish population.

It was known for its educational opportunities and philosophy. It was the leading intellectual and cultural center. Thus, he was eloquent, he was well educated.

It makes sense being from Alexandria. The home of Jewish philosopher Philo, he was from Alexandria. It had a huge museum, 400,000 volume library in Alexandria.

Jewish scholars produced the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint. That was done in Alexandria. So, key city.

[11:32] Important city. Actually, you see later on in church history, Alexandria becomes a real prominent city. Until the Muslims take it over. But notice, it also says there in verse 24, he was mighty in the scriptures.

Apollos was mighty in the scriptures. He understood how the Old Testament proclaimed to God's people, the coming of the Messiah. How salvation would come through Messiah Jesus, and God's plan for Jesus Christ.

He understood that. Notice it says, verse 25, this man had been instructed in the way of the Lord. fervent in spirit, and he was speaking and teaching accurately, the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John.

He was a major influential teacher of the faith. Maybe he spoke about, remember when John the Baptist said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Maybe he was saying that too.

Maybe he was showing that from the Old Testament. We're not told all the details. But it is kind of weird. Because it says, teaching accurately the things that are in Jesus, instructing the way of the Lord.

[12:43] How does that coincide with what it says at the end of verse 26, that Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and explains him the way of God more accurately?

Well that's kind of weird. How does that go together? What does that mean? To teach him the way of God more accurately?

Well, think of it this way. His proclaiming was not inaccurate, so to speak, but more just like, incomplete. Maybe he, now Luke doesn't give us the details.

So we're kind of guessing here. Maybe he didn't know that Jesus had to suffer and die for sinners. That's how God specifically saved his people.

I mean, you remember John the Baptist. Remember he sent some of his disciples to Jesus? He said, hey, are you the expected one? Or we're supposed to be looking for somebody else?

Remember that? So even John the Baptist was kind of like, hey.

[13:44] So maybe there was some parts of that, that Apollos wasn't sure about. Maybe, maybe he didn't know about that. How God would specifically save his people. John knew about Jesus, but not the details. So it seems Apollos was truly a believer.

But remember, this is a transition time. Between the old and the new. The old covenant and the new covenant. It was a time of transition. Apparently, Priscilla and Aquila believed that he had true saving faith.

Since they did not urge him to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you don't see that in the text. Or be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. So it seems that Apollos recognized Jesus to be the Messiah.

The other weird part though, is notice it says there in verse 25, being fervent in spirit. Some of your Bibles have it lower case. Some of your Bibles might have it capitalized.

Why? Because it either means spirit, in other words, it could, you know, he was enthusiastic, excited in spirit, his spirit. He was on fire, you know. He was like moving around, or stuff like that.

[14:54] He was really excited. You know, maybe he had too much chocolate, or something like that. I don't know. Or, fervent in spirit, or, fervent in the Holy Spirit.

Given the fact that, A, he was not baptized again, and B, the disciples of John, in chapter 19, which we'll look at in a second, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit was demonstrated that they were believers, through Paul laying his hands upon them, they received the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophesying.

It seems best that this means he was fervent in the Holy Spirit. I think he was. It's debatable. I get it. Somehow, he had the Holy Spirit.

Though he needed more info. I mean, this guy was solid, educated. He knew the Old Testament was just incomplete. So, notice 26.

He began to speak up boldly in the synagogue. I mean, he was on fire, this guy. Fervently in the Holy Spirit. Boldly in the synagogue, in the emphasis about the Lord Jesus Christ.

[16:06] And then Priscilla and Aquila, here in Apollos, they pulled him aside in private. Just a little side note. When you're going to correct someone, it's better to correct someone privately than publicly. Note to self.

You want that correction from others. If you want to be the one who's doing that correction with others, we talked about that just a moment ago. Make sure you're doing that privately. What did they do?

They informed him of the way more accurately or explained more carefully or they filled him in on something. They gave him the total information on the Messiah. Again, Luke doesn't give us the details.

It seems like maybe they told him about how God would save his people by Jesus' substitutionary death, life, death, and resurrection.

Maybe they told him about justification is sealed by Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Maybe they showed him even more so unpacking how God saved his people by the promise of Jesus' return.

[17:16] The baptizing in the Holy Spirit now, maybe they told him about that. Maybe they told him that he's going to be doing the baptism of the Holy Spirit now, but the winnowing fork, remember John the Baptist talked about the winnowing fork is in his hand, and the winnowing fork, which means judgment, that's going to come later.

So these are the major tenets of the Gospel, specific tenets about Jesus' life and his righteousness can be credited to your account. Jesus' death, his substitutionary death on behalf of sinners.

His physical resurrection. And how he did that for all those who turned away from their sin and put their trust in Jesus Christ alone. You know, friend, that's the Gospel.

And if you're here today, you're not a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is the Gospel that you must hear. That's the Gospel by which you can be saved. By which anybody can be saved.

Repent and trust in Jesus alone. Not in your good deeds. Not in your New Year's resolutions. Or your failed resolutions. You praise God as you failed in those resolutions.

[18:25] And you say, I'm a failure. I should be condemned. And yet, Jesus Christ saves me by his person and work. And God loves me in Jesus Christ.

Please have mercy on me. That's the Gospel. So focus. Let's take a moment right now and just focus on the Gospel. And the fact that God brings forgiveness.

He brings His grace. He brings His compassion and love for us in Jesus Christ. He gives us the power to change us. To renew us. To transform us.

Those are the aspects of the Gospel. And that's the Gospel we should be focusing upon. And that's the Gospel that as you do, maybe if you would do this New Year's resolution, that would be the Gospel for you to focus on this year.

Because it's the one and only true Gospel. There's only one. So God used Apollos effectively since he was committed to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

[19:26] Plus, He was fervent in the Holy Spirit as well as humble and teachable when Priscilla and Aquila corrected Him. What a demonstration of what we're seeing today. known as verse 27 and 28.

No re-baptism is mentioned. But he, Apollos, desired to go to Achaia. He actually ended up in Corinth, which we'll see in a moment. The church in Ephesus, they wrote to commend Apollos to the believers there to welcome Him.

And when He arrived, He held greatly those who believed through grace. He was a huge help to them. To those who believed through God sovereign grace, His undeserved favor. He benefited and encouraged the believers.

How? How did He do it? 28. He powerfully refuted the Jews in public demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. He would overwhelm the Jews in argument. Those are great because they're saying to themselves, this guy's on our side. Good thing. He was focused on the Gospel. God uses different people in different ways.

[20 : 42] God planted the seed of Apollos water, but God is the one who caused the growth. In 1 Corinthians 3, we read that on purpose this morning.

In verse 6, I planted of Apollos water, but God was causing the growth, so then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now He who plants and your waters are one, but each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

For you are God's fellow workers, you are God's field, God's building. Let God use you to fill His mission. We're just called to focus on the Gospel. We're called to be driven by the Spirit.

We're called to be ready to receive correction and even give that correction with humility and with teachability. And we would end up seeing, if we went through 1 Corinthians, how Apollos became a huge popular person with the Corinthian believers, the Corinthian Christians.

So now we transition here in chapter 18 into chapter 19, how Paul's work at Ephesus. Then we're going to see some other of these principles come out.

[21 : 55] But just a few initial things I want to look at. This ministry that takes place in the city of Ephesus. It'll be huge in Paul's ministry.

It'll be tremendous. He'll remain in the city for over two years. He'll have a major impact on the city. Lives were truly transformed in the Gospel.

Transformed by the Gospel. So much so, there is economic ramifications for people becoming Christians. We'll see that in the coming weeks.

I also want to take a moment to speak a little bit about the city of Ephesus. If you mind, just let me take a moment. It was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire, a provincial capital. It was located on a number of land and sea trade routes.

So a key city. Plus you have the great temple of Artemis was there, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Not to mention the cult of Artemis, the practice of magic, a lot of evil there in Ephesus.

[23 : 05] Immorality, debauchery. And what we'll see here is when Paul comes back to Ephesus, he first does ministry with these disciples of John.

These twelve needed to be rebaptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, which depicted new life. It depicted the spirits washing it and they're becoming part of the church.

So notice how it begins here. Verse one, as all this was happening, this is all taking place with Apollos and then he leaves and he ends up in Corinth.

Well then Paul comes back to Ephesus. So while Apollos is in Corinth, Paul arrives in Ephesus and he encounters these disciples of John.

Now some, notice it says some disciples there at the end of verse one. Some think that they mean, or Luke means disciples of Jesus. Given the context it seems best he means these twelve guys were disciples of John the Baptist.

[24 : 15] That's kind of where I land. But here's the question though. Notice it says verse two, and he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said to him, no we have not even heard whether it is the Holy Spirit.

So did these guys believe in Jesus? When you believed? I slightly favor they were believers.

There's others that make a huge case that they were not Christians. But I think they were similar to the situation in Samaria with the Samaritan believers.

These Samaritans, they believed in Jesus Christ, and they were even being baptized, but they had not received the Holy Spirit. That's kind of where I think these guys are at. And they said, we haven't even heard if there's a Holy Spirit.

What do they mean by that? I think they mean, in other words, they had not heard the Spirit of God had come. We didn't know the Spirit of God had come. And there's a close connection between the Spirit and baptism, by the way.

[25 : 21] So that's why I notice Paul asked them in verse three, into what then were you baptized? And they said, into John's baptism. Now the reason they could be genuine Christians and give this type of response about the Spirit was because this was a time of transition from the old to the new.

So they not even heard the Holy Spirit had come. They knew about Jesus, but not the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, the one promised in the Old Testament, who would dwell inside the followers of the Messiah, as part of the new covenant.

So notice what Paul says. He says, John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in him, who was coming after him. That is in Jesus. The baptism that John gave was a baptism of repentance, a baptism of preparation.

Preparation for the one coming, which is the Messiah. The one coming after John. Luke made the point in his gospel, and he made the point in the book of Acts, that Messiah brings the Spirit.

Luke made the point in his gospel, and in the book of Acts, the Messiah is the one who brings the Holy Spirit. Remember, John is the one who testified, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[26 : 48] So notice what happens in verse 5, when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. So after hearing the completed message of salvation, these were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Now we're not told the details, but Paul told them about the fullness of Jesus coming, and the Spirit coming, along with that. Now what I want to do, if I can just take a few moments, I need to speak about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

I think somebody even had a question about that. Somebody ran into somebody about, well, did the Holy Spirit, was the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? What's the ministry of the Holy Spirit now in the New Testament?

What is it all about? Well, let me tell you, although the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament, He would come and go.

He never permanently resided in a believer in the Old Testament, on a continual basis. promise.

That was the promise of the New Covenant that would come in the future.

[27 : 55] And I put some verses there, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel. I'm actually going to read some of those. Like I'll read the one in Numbers, in chapter 11.

And then, I mean, if you want to write those down, you can, the verses that I put up there. In Numbers chapter 11, verse 24, there were 70 men, 70 elders that came with Moses.

They were stationed around the tents of meeting. The Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him. And he took of the spirits who was upon him, Moses, and placed upon him, placed the Holy Spirit upon them.

And it came about when the Holy Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they didn't do it again. Verse 26, but two men had remained in the camp. The name of one was Eldad, the name of the other was Medad.

And the Spirit rested upon them. Now, they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent. And they prophesied in the camp. So a young man ran and told Moses and said, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.

[29 : 04] Then Joshua, the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses, from his youth, answered and said, Moses, my Lord, restrain them. So these brought him up.

Notice what Moses says. Moses said to him, are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets.

That the Lord would put a Spirit upon them. Upon all of them. Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders. So even here, Moses is actually speaking a prediction that, oh, it would be awesome if the Spirit of God keep apart all of God's people.

Yeah, there would be. So that's in Numbers. I'll skip Deuteronomy, I'll go to Jeremiah. Jeremiah 31. It's very clear here. 31, 31, Behold, days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, the old covenant.

[30 : 22] This is a new covenant. My covenant was for they broke, although it was a husband. But this is a covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days. I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it and I will be their God and they shall be my people.

How is the Holy Spirit described? How is he has delineated? Because God will put his spirit inside them so much so that it will be writing his law upon their hearts.

That's how. They shall not teach again each man his neighbor and each man his brother. No, I know the Lord. They shall all know me. The least of the greatest declares the Lord for I will forgive

their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.

Another glaring text, Ezekiel. Ezekiel 36 verse 27 I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean.

I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. That's the aspect of regeneration, renewal of the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 33] But also look and I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will be careful to observe my ordinances. So that's where we get this driven, this aspect of our New Year's resolution being driven by the Holy Spirit in all our endeavors.

The Holy Spirit dwells inside of us as Christians, as believers. So we must be driven, we must be empowered by the Holy Spirit in anything that we're going to be doing this New Year. Because He dwells inside of us.

And of course, Joel, which by the way is quoted in the book of Acts chapter 2, Joel 2, in the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. I will pour out my spirit in those days. I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire, smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness, to moon, to blood. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. The new covenant. Part of the new covenant.

[32 : 47] Jesus inaugurated that, which we're going to celebrate that in just a few moments. The new covenant which was made in His blood, forgiveness of sins, right? This new covenant. And the promise to come in the new covenant is the spirit who comes and dwells inside of us.

Here, another, I have something else up here for you. God was present with His people in the tabernacle later in the temple. But now, we are God's temple, whereby He dwells inside His people collectively by means of His spirit.

This is not the temple. We should not call this the sanctuary. We probably should even call it the worship center. We should call it the building.

Or the meeting place. Or something like that. This is the temple. This, you, people, we are the temple.

The spirit dwells inside of us. Ephesians. I put verses up there. Ephesians, of course, Ephesians. Well, that's kind of interesting. He's in Ephesus. Is there like a little catch-22 year thing?

[34 : 00] I don't know. Ephesians, chapter 2. Through the Lord Jesus Christ, we have both our access in one spirit to the Father.

You are no longer strangers and aliens. You are fellow citizens with the saints. You are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

In whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the spirit.

God dwells in us. He's not talking about a building, physical building. Because there were no physical church buildings in the first century. You met in homes.

with like maybe 30 people. The spirit of God dwells in us. It's in us. He is in us. What else do I have?

[35 : 00] Oh, 1 Corinthians. That's kind of ironic. 1 Corinthians 3, we read together 3, 1 through 9, in verse 16, Paul says, Do you not know that you are the temple of God?

The spirit of God dwells in you. If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. The temple of God is holy and that is what you are.

God is using us. He dwells inside his people and he uses us. He will use you as you are focusing upon the gospel.

As you are being driven by the spirit in all your endeavors. And you are a person with humility and teachable spirit. That's how he uses us. Because we are the temple of God.

Oh, I have John 14, 16 to 17 where Jesus says, the spirit of God, he will be with you and he will be in you.

[36 : 02] So, I wanted to take time to help us understand this. As believers, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of us.

So we are empowered. It's there. It's all there. We just have to live it out. It's all there for you. Live it out. Go back to Acts chapter 19 starting in verse 6.

And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Why does this happen? This is a confirming sign.

Remember, we've seen this before. Specifically, the same sign given to them in Acts chapter 2, with the 120. And then also, Acts chapter 10 with Cornelius and the Gentiles.

By the way, this is the last mention of tongues in the whole book of Acts. So why this sign? Because it confirmed the Spirit had truly come.

[37:09] It showed how the faith of John's disciples was completed. And it underscored Paul's authority. Paul had the same authority as Peter and John. That's huge.

Paul wasn't some lightweight dude. He's doing something over there in Ephesus. Who knows? I mean, is that guy legit or what? He is legit.

How do you know that? He laid his hands upon these 12 guys and the Holy Spirit came upon them. And the confirming sign was speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Now, is this what always happens to people who receive the Holy Spirit? No. Not at all. This is what it does. It confirmed this. It confirmed that God was truly working and there's only going to be one church.

Remember, the only place where this happened where they actually laid their hands upon them and the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke in tongues. The only place when it happened where they actually laid their hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them, not speaking in tongues, but the Holy Spirit came upon them, was in Samaria.

[38:14] Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritan Christians to show that they were part of the church. There wasn't going to be a Jewish church and a Samaritan church. There wasn't going to be a Jewish church, a Samaritan church, and then a church in Ephesus with that dude, creepy guy, like his name's Paul.

No. It's not going to be like that. There's one church, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. That's it. That's why this happened. So this, understand, this was a transition period from old to new. So a tangible, confirming sign of the Spirit's coming, tongues prophecy, it was needed.

But this sign was not normative and is not for today. Unfortunately, charismatic continuationist brothers and sisters, and charismatic brothers and sisters, they think that that's what has to happen. Every time the Spirit comes upon you, you have to speak into the prophesy. No, no, no, that's not what's going on here. It's to confirm that there's only one church. So if they're not having some Jewish church over here, some Samaritan church, and then some church started by Paul, and some started by this dude.

[39:28] No, there's only one church, and it had the same confirming sign, because there's only one Spirit. prophets. And, in verse 7, there were 12 men, there's no significance, are these like the 12 apostles?

No, no, it's telling me that, no. But, given the fact, if these guys had families, they'd have quite a sizable number of people. So what do we pull out from this passage today?

Today, it's important to get the gospel right, and for us to focus on the gospel. It's vital for us to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in all our endeavors for this new year.

What does God want us to do as a church? As His people, as this church, Cottonwood Bible Church, what does He want us to do? He wants us to be a church that's going to focus on the gospel.

All situations that come into your life this new year. It's going to challenge you, it's going to challenge us, it's going to challenge me. Are we focused on the gospel? Second, it's going to challenge you, the things that happen this year.

[40:41] Are you relying upon the power of the Spirit at work in your life? Or are you going to do it on your own? Try to accomplish it. Something else, it's critical for us to be a group of people who are humble and teachable.

Ready to graciously correct each other privately, as well as ready to hear correction from each other with humility. That's hard. When you start getting involved in people's lives, you start seeing like creepy stuff, and icky stuff, and yucky stuff, and you don't want to deal with that.

But that's how it works. That's why we're this just a weird group of people from all these different backgrounds and preferences, and we all unify in what?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the gospel. And then we'll show ourselves to be unique, be different, weird, a bunch of weirdos, a holy separate group of people in this community.

May God do this in us this year. Focused on the gospel, driven by the spirit, humble, teachable.

May we be known by that.

[42:09] God, do that in us. Do that in me. Do that in us as your people. We need you to do that.

Even in a few moments we will focus our hearts and our minds upon the gospel.

Forgiveness, compassion, your great love. Take a few moments, if you would, and ponder what we've seen in God's word this morning.

Think about these different marks that we've seen in our passage. And then after a few moments of silence, we'll do our time of giving.

I'll give us some instructions for our Lord's Supper, and then we'll sing a couple songs as we partake of the Lord's Supper. But take a moment, sit, ponder, think about God's word.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[43:18] youtube.com