

The Holy Spirit

Week 9: The Gift of the Holy Spirit: The Indwelling -- Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 8:9-11

Stand once more in the crowd at Pentecost, but this time listen as one of the convicted. Peter has just proven from Scripture and from a morning of miracles that the man your nation crucified is Lord and Christ. The words go in like a blade: "they were cut to the heart," and three thousand voices ask the only question that matters: "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter's answer comes in two halves, and most of us know the first by heart: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." But do not stop reading there, because the sentence is not finished: "and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." Forgiveness, and a gift. Pardon, and a presence. God does not merely wipe the record clean and send you off to do better. He moves in.

Paul says it in a way that should make us catch our breath: "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?" A temple. In the old covenant, God's presence dwelt in a tent in the wilderness and then in a house of cedar and gold in Jerusalem, and no Israelite would have dared treat those courts casually. Now, says Paul, the baptized believer's own body is that sacred address. "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." The cross is the price; the indwelling Spirit is the proof of purchase; and an ordinary Christian walking into work on a Monday morning carries a holier residence than Solomon ever built.

Romans 8 raises the stakes higher still. "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." The indwelling is not a merit badge for advanced Christians; it is the family mark of every child of God. And it comes with a promise that reaches all the way past the grave: "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." The Spirit in you is God's down payment on your resurrection (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14), His pledge that the body now aging in the mirror will one day be raised like the Lord's own.

Now, faithful brethren have long discussed the precise mode of this indwelling, and Scripture has not answered every question we might ask. But let us not allow the questions we cannot answer to rob us of the statements we can read. Scripture says the Spirit is given to those who obey (Acts 5:32), that He is "in you," that your body is His temple, that He strengthens, sanctifies, and intercedes. And Scripture is equally clear about what the indwelling is not: it is not a source of miraculous powers, not a private revelator whispering new truth, not a feeling to be chased, and never a voice that contradicts or bypasses the word He inspired. The Spirit who dwells in the Christian is the same Spirit who wrote the Book, and He does not argue with

Himself. This week, we open the deed to the Christian's greatest possession this side of heaven: God, in His people, for keeps.

Group Discussion: Many Christians can explain forgiveness but go quiet when asked about "the gift of the Holy Spirit" promised in Acts 2:38. Why do you think the indwelling of the Spirit is so seldom discussed, and what might churches be missing when they leave this promise unopened?

Personal Reflection: Paul's argument is blunt: your body is a temple, you are not your own, you were bought with a price. If you walked through one ordinary day genuinely believing your body was God's dwelling place, what is the first habit, thought pattern, or use of your body that would have to change?

Read Acts 2:38–39; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Romans 8:9–11

Study Questions

1. In Acts 2:38–39, Peter joins two results to repentance and baptism: "the forgiveness of your sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit," and he stretches the promise to "all who are far off." What is "the gift of the Holy Spirit" here, who receives it, and at what point? How do Acts 5:32 and Galatians 4:6 confirm this?
2. Peter's promise means that if you have been baptized into Christ, God did not merely forgive you and leave; He took up residence. Do you actually live with the settled awareness that God dwells in you, or does your Christianity feel more like visiting God on Sundays? What difference would the first make this week?
3. Paul asks the Corinthians, "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). Tracing the Bible's temple story, the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34), Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10–11), the church as God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), and now the individual Christian's body, what is God teaching us about His desire to dwell with His people?
4. Paul wrote "your body is a temple" specifically to confront sexual sin (1 Corinthians 6:12–20), but the principle reaches every use of the body. Consider honestly what you do with your eyes, your appetite, your rest, your strength, and your tongue. Where is the temple being treated like an ordinary building, and what would consecration look like there?

5. Romans 8:9 declares, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him." What does this verse teach about who has the Spirit, and how does it dismantle both the idea that the indwelling is for elite Christians and the idea that a person can belong to Christ while refusing His terms of obedience (Acts 5:32)?
6. "You are not your own, for you were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20). Ownership settles arguments: the question is never "what do I want?" but "what does the Owner want?" In what decision you are facing right now, large or small, have you been reasoning like an owner instead of like a temple? What would change if the purchase price had the final word?
7. Faithful brethren have differed over the precise mode of the Spirit's indwelling, whether He dwells personally or through the word He inspired, while agreeing on what Scripture states. What do passages like Acts 2:38, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Romans 8:11, and Ephesians 3:16 plainly affirm, what does Scripture leave unexplained, and why is it wise to affirm all that is written without binding a theory the text does not state?
8. However the indwelling is understood, Scripture is clear that the Spirit never works against or apart from His own word: the Spirit-filled life of Ephesians 5:18–19 looks exactly like the word-filled life of Colossians 3:16. When you want to know God's will, where do you actually turn first, impressions, circumstances, feelings, or the word? What practice would put the Spirit's book back at the center of your guidance?
9. Romans 8:10–11 promises that the indwelling Spirit is God's pledge to "give life to your mortal bodies," and Ephesians 1:13–14 calls Him the "guarantee of our inheritance." What do these passages teach about the connection between the Spirit's presence now and the resurrection to come, and how should this hope reshape the way a Christian faces aging, illness, and death?
10. Look back across this week's passages, the promise at Pentecost, the temple in Corinth, the family mark in Romans 8. God's answer to your sin was not only pardon but presence. Name

one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth, and one concrete way you will honor the Spirit's residence in you this week.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Acts 5:32, the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him; Galatians 4:6, the Spirit of His Son sent into our hearts, crying Abba, Father; Ephesians 1:13–14, sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, the guarantee of our inheritance; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22, anointed, sealed, and given the Spirit as a down payment; Ezekiel 36:26–27, the promised new heart and the Spirit within, foretold by the prophets