

The Holy Spirit Helps Us Share the Message About the Cross



SABBATH—JULY 25

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: John 15:26, 27; Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 7:55; Acts 4:4, 31; 2 Peter 1:21; Acts 16:11–15, 23–34.

MEMORY VERSE: “After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were bold when they spoke God’s word [message]” (Acts 4:31, NlrV).



The Holy Spirit will help Jesus’ followers to share the message about the Cross. Then Jesus’ followers will preach with power. Their message will change lives.

JESUS TELLS HIS FOLLOWERS to “ ‘Go everywhere in the world [on the earth]. Tell the Good News to everyone’ ” (Mark 16:15, ERV). Jesus’ followers must think that this job is impossible! How can they do it? They are only a small group. They have very little money. Most of them do not have an education. They are only ordinary people. But they have a God who is more than ordinary. He can give them the power to do the impossible!

Jesus says, “ ‘But you will receive [get] power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end [part] of the earth to the other [part]’ ” (Acts 1:8, NlrV). The Holy Spirit will help them to share the message about the Cross. Then Jesus’ followers will preach with power. Their message will change lives. Paul tells us that the Good News was “told to everyone on earth” (Colossians 1:23, ERV). In this week’s lesson, we will look at the work that the Holy Spirit does to make us powerful witnesses for Jesus.

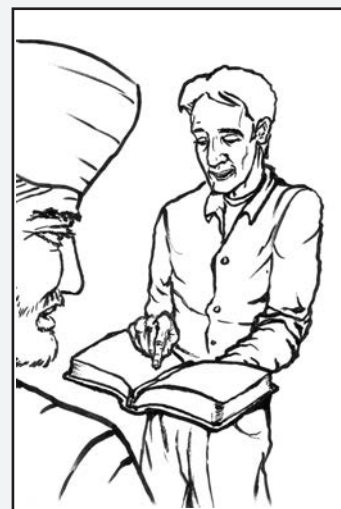
JESUS' PROMISE: THE HOLY SPIRIT (John 15:26, 27)

Jesus followers are worried. What will happen to them after Jesus leaves them? How will they do the work He gave them to do? So, Jesus makes His followers a promise. He will send them the Holy Spirit after He goes back to heaven. This promise helps Jesus' followers to stop worrying. Jesus tells them, " 'But I tell you the truth. It is better for you that I go away. When I go away I will send the Helper to you. If I do not go away, then the Helper will not come' " (John 16:7, ICB). The Greek word for "Helper" is "**parakletos.**" "**Parakletos**" means "one who comes near to your side" to help you. That is exactly what the Holy Spirit does! One of His most important jobs is to come to our side. He gives us power. He guides us in our work to tell people about Jesus. When we share Jesus with people, we are not alone. The Holy Spirit stays at our side. He leads us to people who are honest in heart. They are looking for the truth. The Holy Spirit makes their hearts ready before we ever meet them. The Holy Spirit helps us say the right words. He brings the truth to people's minds and convinces them that it is right. The Holy Spirit also gives people strength to accept what He tells them.

Read John 15:26, 27 and John 16:8. What do these verses tell us about the work that the Holy Spirit does to help us share Jesus with people?

The Holy Spirit tells us about Jesus. His plan is to lead as many people to Jesus as possible. The Holy Spirit's work is to give Jesus glory. The Holy Spirit tells all believers that it is their job to tell people about Jesus. The Holy Spirit opens our eyes. He helps us see all the good in the people around us. The Holy Spirit's work is unseen. He works on people's hearts in ways we cannot see. He helps people to accept the Good News about Jesus.

The book of John makes the Holy Spirit's work clear: The Holy Spirit will show people on earth " 'the truth about sin' " (John 16:8, NLV). The Holy Spirit moves on people's hearts. He shows them how far from God they really are. He tells them to turn away from sin. But the Holy Spirit's job is not just to show us how bad we are. He also shows us how good, kind, and loving Jesus is. Then the Holy Spirit works hard to make us look just the same as Jesus.



The Holy Spirit leads us to people who are honest in heart. They are looking for the truth. The Holy Spirit makes their hearts ready before we meet them.

A CHURCH FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT'S POWER (Acts 2:41, 42)

The book of Acts often is named “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” That is because Acts shows us the stories of believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit. These people give their lives to God. The Spirit helps them change the lives of other people for the better. Acts is an exciting book. It shows us the church sharing the Good News. We also see how fast the church grows. The New Testament church depends fully on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does miracles and wonderful things in the church. The church is an example of what the Holy Spirit can do in the lives of men and women who fully serve Jesus.

Read Acts 2:41, 42; Acts 4:4, 31; Acts 5:14, 42; Acts 6:7; and Acts 16:5. What is the most powerful part of these verses? Or what touches your heart the most? Luke wrote the books of Acts. In this list of verses, Luke talks about how fast the church grows. Why do you think Luke tells us about that? What message is Luke trying to share with us?

Why does Luke write the book of Acts? Because Luke wants each reader to know about the work that the Holy Spirit does in the New Testament Church.

Do you also see that Luke tells us how many people are baptized? Luke tells us these numbers because he wants to measure the Holy Spirit’s work in the 1st century. In Acts 2:41, Luke tells us that 3,000 people are baptized in one day and in one place. In Acts 4:4, Luke tells us that 5,000 men are baptized. In Acts 5:14, large crowds of people accept the Lord and are baptized.

Luke tells us stories about other men and women who are baptized too. There is Lydia, a business owner. A Philippian prison guard. A girl who was filled with demons. And an Ethiopian man. In each story, Luke shows us how the Holy Spirit touches people’s hearts. We also see that the big crowds are made of men and women. Each man or woman is a child of God. Jesus died for each one. Yes, we like big numbers. They make us feel that we are a success. But in the end, sharing the truth is more often about our winning one person to Jesus at a time.

The New Testament believers also started many churches. This helped the church grow fast. The new churches helped the whole New Testament church grow in spiritual strength too. This is an important lesson for us.



In the book of Acts, Luke tells us the story about how the Holy Spirit touches the heart of a woman named Lydia.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE MESSAGE ABOUT THE CROSS (Acts 7:55)

We see the work of the Holy Spirit in the whole book of Acts. The Holy Spirit helps believers share Jesus with people in many ways. The Holy Spirit gives them strength. He helps Christians share Jesus in places where people do not accept God. The Holy Spirit leads people to seek Bible truth. The Holy Spirit gets the hearts of people ready to accept Jesus. He helps whole cities get ready to accept the Lord before any Christians ever go to those cities. The Holy Spirit gives Jesus' followers chances to preach that they never thought were possible. The Holy Spirit makes their words and actions strong.

Read Acts 7:55; Acts 8:29; Acts 11:15; Acts 15:28, 29; and Acts 16:6–10. How does the Holy Spirit help Jesus' followers in each experience shown in these verses? What are some of the things the Holy Spirit does to help Jesus' followers?

The Holy Spirit's work during the 1st century is very wonderful! The experiences you read about are only a small example of His work. The Spirit gave Stephen spiritual strength to talk about Jesus. That was during a time when a big crowd wanted to kill Stephen with stones. The Spirit led Philip to a powerful Ethiopian who was searching for the truth. That meeting helped open up all of Africa for the Good News! The Holy Spirit gave Peter a sign to help him know that God also gave non-Jews the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit also brought peace to the church during a time when the church almost broke apart. The Holy Spirit also made it possible for Paul and other Christians to preach the Good News in Europe.

The Holy Spirit was active in the New Testament church and is active in the life of the church today. He wants to make us strong too. He also wants to teach us, guide us, make us one, and send us out to do the most important work on earth. That is, leading men and women to Jesus and His truth. So, remember, the Holy Spirit continues to work today, just as He worked during New Testament times.

What can we do, day by day, to make ourselves more open to the Holy Spirit's power? Also, what choices can we make that will let the Holy Spirit work in us to help other people?



The Spirit led Philip to a powerful Ethiopian who was searching for the truth.

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE BIBLE, AND THE MESSAGE ABOUT JESUS (Acts 4:4, 31)

The New Testament church tells people about Jesus. God's Word, the Bible, is the support for all its preaching. In Acts 4, Peter witnesses to the Jews by preaching. Most of Peter's sermon comes from Old Testament verses. These verses show that Jesus is the Savior. Later on, Peter says, "God has sent his message to the people of Israel" (Acts 10:36, ICB). Then Peter shares with Cornelius the story about Jesus waking up from the dead. Stephen does the same thing as Peter. Before Stephen is killed, he preaches about Israel's history in the Old Testament. Paul talks about Old Testament promises about the Savior. Philip also uses the Old Testament to help an Ethiopian understand the promise about the Savior in Isaiah 53. In each story, Jesus' followers announce God's truth. The Bible is the support for all their preaching.

Read Acts 4:4, 31; Acts 8:4; Acts 13:48, 49; Acts 17:2; Acts 18:24, 25. What do these verses teach us about the connection between the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the message shared by the New Testament church?



The Bible has the power to change lives because the Spirit changes us as we read the Bible.

The same Holy Spirit who led men to write the Bible also uses the Bible to change lives. There is life-giving power in the Bible. Why? Because the Spirit gives the Bible power. The Bible is Jesus' Living Word.

Read 2 Peter 1:21 and Hebrews 4:12. Why is the Bible powerful enough to change lives?

"The same power that made the earth is in the Bible. This Word gives us power; it starts life. Every Bible command is a promise. When we accept God's promise, we must take it into our hearts. Each promise brings God's life into our hearts. The promise changes us. It makes us new."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, page 126, adapted.

The Bible has the power to change lives because the Spirit changes us as we read the Bible. This is the same Spirit who helped men write the Bible. The Spirit also works in people's lives when we share the truth with them. God promises to bless His Word, not our words. The power is in the Bible, not in human ideas.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S LIFE-CHANGING POWER (Acts 16:11–15, 23–34)

The book of Acts shows that God works miracles in human lives with His Spirit. Acts shows how the Good News wins against wrong ways of thinking. The Good News also changes lifelong habits. The Good News teaches all humans about God's mercy, forgiveness, and truth. The Holy Spirit meets people where they are. But He does not leave them there. By the Spirit's power, we are changed.

Read Acts 16:11–15, 23–34; Acts 17:33, 34; and Acts 18:8. These are only a few of the Bible stories about changed lives. What do these stories teach us about God's power to change the lives of different people?

These verses show us people who are very different from each other. Lydia was a business owner. The Philippian prison guard was a middle-class Roman citizen. The Holy Spirit can touch the hearts of people from all social levels. The Spirit's power changes both men and women, rich and poor, educated and not educated.

The last two people on our list are surprising and wonderful. Acts 17:34 tells us about Dionysius the Areopagite. The Areopagites of the city of Athens were part of the legal team of judges who judged court cases. These judges were important members of their city.

The Holy Spirit works in Paul to touch the hearts of very important people. One of them is Crispus (Acts 18:8). Crispus is the leader of the Jewish church. Crispus follows the Old Jewish ways. But the Holy Spirit changes his life and thoughts. These stories show us that the Holy Spirit will do wonderful things in other people's lives when we share with them Jesus and Bible truth. We cannot and must not make guesses about who we think can, or cannot, be saved. Our work is to share Jesus with anyone and everyone that God brings into our lives. The Lord will do the rest.

Jesus' death is for everyone. What does this important truth teach us about why we should not judge if somebody cannot be saved?



The Holy Spirit will do wonderful things in other people's lives when we share with them Jesus and Bible truth.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Gift of the Spirit,” pages 47–56, in *The Acts of the Apostles*; “‘Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,’” pages 667–672, in *The Desire of Ages*.

The Holy Spirit works with God the Father and Jesus the Son to save us. When we tell people about Jesus, we join the Spirit in His work of saving lives. He touches people’s hearts. He gives us chances to share Jesus with people. His Word, the Bible, shows people the truth about Jesus. The Spirit stops us from being slaves to evil thoughts. He helps us win the war against wrong ways of thinking. He makes us free from the evil habits that put us in chains.

When we share Jesus with people, we are working with the Holy Spirit. He is there before us. He makes people’s hearts ready for the Good News. The Spirit is there with us, helping us choose the right thoughts and words. He helps us to do kind acts to help people. He helps us when we share our stories about how Jesus has changed our lives. The Spirit is with us when we give a Bible study too. He is with us when we give someone a book about Bible truth. He is with us when we share Bible truth with people everywhere on earth. The Spirit will continue working on a person’s heart long after we leave him or her. He will do whatever it takes to save this person.



The Holy Spirit makes us free from the evil habits that put us in chains.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Talk about a time when you felt the Holy Spirit working in a powerful way in your life as you shared Jesus with someone.
- 2 Have you ever felt afraid of sharing your faith? How does knowing about the Holy Spirit’s work stop that fear? How does the Spirit’s work encourage you as you share Jesus with people?
- 3 This week we talked about the “work” that the Holy Spirit does to help us share God’s message. What are some of the different ways that the Spirit works with us to tell people about Jesus? How does the Holy Spirit help us to share Jesus and work in the lives of people?
- 4 Why is the Bible so important to our faith and our personal story about what Jesus does for us?

FOUR DREAMS

Abraham Keita had the first dream after he prayed on his prayer mat in Bufa at 3:00 A.M. Bufa is a village in Guinea in West Africa.

Abraham prayed, "I am more than 40 years old. I do not have a wife, children, work, or money. Please help me. I want You to turn me into a special messenger. Then I can give other people special messages from You."

As Abraham prayed, a wind started to blow. He fell asleep on the mat. Then someone touched him and said, "My son, go inside and sleep in your bed."

Soon he was asleep on his bed and had his first dream. In the dream, someone with eyes the same as fire came to him. Abraham was afraid that this person would hurt him. He asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Jesus Christ," the Man announced.

In the morning, Abraham wondered what would happen next.

The next night Abraham had another dream. He saw the Man Jesus again. He walked with Him on a mountain trail.

On the third night, Abraham dreamed that he was looking for work. He saw Jesus sitting at a table. Jesus hired workers. He wrote in a book the names of people who wanted to work for Him.

On the fourth night, Abraham saw Jesus again in a dream. Jesus stood chest-deep in the Atlantic Ocean. Jesus looked at Abraham. Abraham looked back at Jesus.

Then three years pass. Abraham moved to Conakry, Guinea's capital city. There Abraham got a job as a builder. On his way home from work, Abraham met a Global Mission worker on the road. This worker was named Tranquille Fassinadouno. "How are you?" Tranquille asked. "I'm a Christian. Do you want to come to my church?"

"How can I?" Abraham said. "I belong to a different religion. I don't even understand what you are talking about!"

At home, Abraham couldn't stop thinking about his dreams. Then he decided to go to Tranquille's church. The people at the church welcomed Abraham warmly. He liked what he learned there. He came back every Sabbath after that. Soon Abraham gave his heart to Jesus.



"My dreams led me to Jesus," Abraham says. "I walk with Him now, just as I did in one of my dreams."

Today, ABRAHAM KEITA works for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Guinea. Part of the money that you give for the 13th Sabbath Offering will help an Adventist school in Conakry.

"My dreams led me to Jesus," Abraham says. "I walk with Him now, just as I did in one of my dreams. I am on a journey with Jesus."

