

## The Holy Spirit Bible Study 2

Leader opens with prayer.

Note to leaders and groups: the questions below marked with an asterisk \* are very personal questions. It might be better just to remark on them during the study – not answer them – and ask them during the prayer time at the end. Bring them to God in *prayer*, rather than simply to one another in *discussion*.

### Opening:

On a separate sheet of paper, draw a picture (or write a word picture) of how you perceive the Holy Spirit's working in your life and/or in the world around you.

Share your picture with the other members of the group. Why did you choose the particular image of the Holy Spirit that you used in your picture?

### Wrestling with the Word:

The Bible has many *images* or pictures of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's work. Because the Holy Spirit is the most mysterious, shy member of the Trinity, the more images we can use to understand the Holy Spirit, the better. List as many images or metaphors for the Holy Spirit as you can (eg, wind, fire...)

### Images of the Holy Spirit

#### 1. Read **Ephesians 5:18-20, Acts 2:4,13-17, 33**

In these passages, what is the Holy Spirit compared to?

In what ways do you think being controlled by the Holy Spirit is like being 'under the influence' of alcohol?

What effects does alcohol have on people?

What parallels might there be with the work of the Holy Spirit?

In what ways does this image or metaphor fail? (that is, how is being filled with the Spirit *unlike* being 'under the influence' of alcohol?)

\*In what areas of your spiritual life would you like to be less inhibited/more joyful or celebratory?

#### 2. Read **John 4:10-14, John 7:37-39, Joel 2:28-29.**

In these passages, what is the Holy Spirit compared to?

In what ways is the work of the Holy Spirit like water in a person's life?

Jesus doesn't compare the Holy Spirit to a static body of water, like a well, lake, glass, or jug, but to a *spring* of water. Why is this significant? When you hear the phrase *spring of water*, what is the

picture you get in your mind?

What does Jesus mean when he speaks of *living* water?

\*Which areas of your life are arid and in need of the water of the Holy Spirit?

\*How thirsty are you?

3. Read **Genesis 1:1-2, Genesis 2:7, Acts 2:1,2,4, and John 20:22-23.**

In these passages, what is the Holy Spirit compared to?

In the Hebrew language, the word *ruach* means wind, breath, *and* spirit.

These three words are a bit disconnected in the English language. But what connections do you see between these three words? (Think of words that have come into English such as *inspire, expire, inspiration, spirited, etc*).

The Holy Spirit hovers over creation. God breathes human beings to life when he creates them. Jesus breathes his disciples back to life, resurrection life, after his own death and resurrection.

What comfort or power do you find in the truth that the Holy Trinity is involved in your life – creation, redemption, sanctification?

In what ways can you recognise God at work, breathing life into you and your situations at this time?

\*Where in your life would you like the life-giving breath or freshening wind of the Holy Spirit to come and give you new life, fresh inspiration? What things in your life need new creation? Resurrection?

4. Read **Luke 3:15-17, Acts 2:1,3,4.**

In these passages, what image or metaphor is used for the Holy Spirit?

What does fire do in the Luke passage?

What are the results of fire in the Australian bush?

What are the results of the Holy Spirit's fire in people's lives?

(You can read **Luke 3:7-9** to help with this question, and also **Acts 2:14**. At Jesus' trial, Peter had denied three times that he knew Jesus. What is he now doing?)

How does the image or metaphor of fire fail in describing the work of the Holy Spirit (that is, how is the work of the Holy Spirit *not* like fire)?

\*What chaff would the fire of the Holy Spirit burn up in your life? Of what would God call you to repentance? What coldness would the Holy Spirit fan into flame? What difference would that make in your life?

Thinking it over:

Read Ephesians **5:18-20**.

The verb *'be filled with the Holy Spirit'* in this passage is present imperative. It is a command, in a continuous sense. It could be translated as *'keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.'* This filling with the Holy Spirit is not just a once-in-a-lifetime event, but an ongoing, daily happening in the lives of God's people. Because it is a command in God's word, it is something that we as God's children, redeemed by Jesus, given the gift of the Holy Spirit through our baptism, *can participate in*. We *can* 'keep being filled' with the Holy Spirit. How will this happen?

First, God promises to give his *Holy Spirit* through his *Word*. Read **Acts 10:43-48**. When did the people in Cornelius's house receive the Holy Spirit?

Now read **Galatians 3:5, 14** and **Romans 1:16, Romans 12:1-2**.

The primary and most important way that we can obey the command to 'be filled with the Spirit' is by accessing God's promise to give his Holy Spirit through his Word. The transformation that comes through 'the renewing of the mind' comes through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the lives of God's people through the Word of God. In order to 'be filled with the Spirit' we need to be 'filled with God's word.'

\*How often do you read God's word? Would you like to do that more often? How might that happen, practically?

Read **Luke 9:5-13**.

Verse 13 is very strange and ends unexpectedly. Jesus says, **'If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give..... to those who ask him!'** You would expect Jesus to say the Father will give 'good things' to those who ask him! (And in Matthew's version of this parable, that's exactly what Jesus does say. But not in Luke!)

What does Jesus say instead?

What is the greatest 'good thing' the Father gives to his beloved children?

Why is this gift greater than any other gift the Father could give?

\*What, then is one of the ways we can 'keep being filled' with the Holy Spirit? –

Just ask!

Because of this truth, I encourage you and exhort you to finish this study by ASKING GOD to fill you – and keep on filling you – with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

You might like to pray this very simple prayer for yourself or for others in the group.

*'Heavenly Father, your son Jesus promised that you would give the Holy Spirit to all who ask you. Thank you that through our baptism you have given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Please pour out your Holy Spirit on me (OR: on name), now, and each day, that I (OR: name) might keep being filled with the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the Spirit, the best of your gifts. Amen.'*

Then you might like to pray through the questions that are starred above, or one in particular – pray for each other about the answers you are willing to share to the following questions:

1. Be filled with The Holy Spirit – like *wine*

\*In what areas of your spiritual life would you like to be less inhibited or fearful? In what areas would you like to be more joyful or celebratory?

2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – like *living water*

\*Which areas of your spiritual or physical life are arid and in need of the water of the Holy Spirit?  
\*How thirsty are you?

3. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – like *wind/breath/spirit*

\*Where in your life would you like the life-giving breath or freshening wind of the Holy Spirit to come and give you new life, fresh inspiration? What things in your life need new creation?  
Resurrection?

4. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – like *fire*

\*What chaff would the fire of the Holy Spirit burn up in your life? Of what would God call you to repentance? What coldness would the Holy Spirit fan into flame? What difference would that make in your life?

5. Be filled with the Holy Spirit – through *God's word*

\*How often do you read God's word? Would you like to do that more often? How might that happen, practically?

Finish your prayer time with the Lord's prayer.

**Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed be your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.**

**Amen.**