

CP— 1/28/24

Acts 19:1–7: The 12 Almost

Sermon Outline

***Not everything in the Bible is prescriptive; some things are just descriptive.**

This passage is a proof text many use to support the doctrine of the “second blessing” or the second work of grace, also known as the “baptism of the Spirit.”

This belief means a person becomes a Christian by faith then later on receives the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands and praying for the gift.

This message is not an effort to bash others’ beliefs but to clarify for us to be able to see error and to know truth.

Paul’s question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” indicates to us that receiving the Holy Spirit cannot be separated from believing in the Lord Jesus.

1. Knowledge about Jesus is not the same as trusting in Jesus. (19:1–4)

- “disciple” = learner
- These 12 men were disciples of John the Baptist.
 - John was the last and the first.
 - He was the last OT prophet, and he lived and died before Jesus inaugurated the new covenant.
 - He was the first and only prophet to actually see the promised Messiah and declare Jesus as the One sent from God.
 - He was a forerunner to the Messiah to prepare the way.
 - John’s baptism was one of repentance (submission).
 - John’s baptism was one of promise (there is one coming).
 - He had many people following him and trusting what he taught.
 - John emphatically declared Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” (John 1:29, 36)
 - Many of John’s disciples left him and started following Jesus.
 - Some received John’s message secondhand, and it wasn’t full/complete.
 - Even John had doubts while in jail. (Matthew 11:2-3)
- To declare these 12 men in Acts 19 to be Christians just because the word “disciples” is used would be an error.
 - Look at the questions and their answers
 - “We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”
 - **Not everyone who claims to be a disciple is one. (John 6:66; James 2:19; Matt 7:21–23)**

- These were, no doubt, religious and God-fearing men, but they had yet to trust in Jesus as the Christ.
- *"In a word, they were still living in the Old Testament which culminated with John the Baptist. They understood neither that the new age had been ushered in by Jesus, nor that those who believe in him and are baptized into him receive the distinctive blessing of the new age, the indwelling Spirit."* — John Stott, *The Bible Speaks Today*
- It is possible to believe in things about Christ, but not believe in Christ.
- Have you taken hold of Christ? Have you trusted in Him?
- Notice what Paul does not do:
 - He does not explain to them ways to receive the Spirit.
 - He does not tell them just pray for the Spirit or even explain baptism.
- Paul points them to Jesus!
 - John's message was to lead people to trust in Jesus.
 - He is the one you have been waiting for and looking for!
 - This is all to point you to Jesus.

2. All who trust in Jesus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (19:5–6)

- "on hearing this"
- "Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus"
 - John's baptism pictured repentance.
 - Christian baptism pictures regeneration.
 - John's baptism looked forward to the promise of the Spirit.
 - Christian baptism declares the present and precious receiving of the Spirit.
 - Baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus is a public declaration of these men's trust in Jesus.
- "when Paul laid hands on them" (**not the norm, but for special purpose)
 - Apostolic authority and approval/acceptance
- "They received the Spirit"
 - This is not the "second blessing."
 - The norm of the Christian experience is that a cluster of four things: repentance, faith in Jesus, the gift of the Spirit, and water baptism.
- Verses about when believers receive the Holy Spirit:
 - **Ephesians 1:13-14— *"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."***
 - **Romans 8:9— *"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him."***
 - To not believe this truth is to call God a liar!

3. The Word prepares us to trust in Jesus (19:5)

- On hearing Paul's word, they believed and were baptized.
- John's message and teachings lead them to trust in Jesus.
- God used the word of His messenger.
- It did not return void even years after John had preached and lived.
- God still uses His word as the active agent in saving lost souls!
- ****Hebrews 10:9-17****
- This is why we preach the good news of Jesus so that by hearing it men can be saved.
- It may not happen for a while, but God's Word does not return void! Keep preaching it!
- Preach what you know, and trust God to bring the growth.

4. All who trust in Jesus are incorporated into His Church. (6-7)

- "when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying"
 - "Came upon" — empowering them
- This experience is a mini-pentecost.
- They had no knowledge of Pentecost, so God have them their own to confirm they had received the Holy Spirit.
- Acts 1:8
- Acts 2 – Pentecost with Jews
- Acts 8 – Samaritans
- Acts 10 – Gentiles
- Acts 19 – Ephesians
- What's the point?
 1. Apostolic authority, approval, acceptance (Laying on of hands)
 2. Personal confirmation that the Spirit had been given
 3. Collective assurance that these people are included in the Church

Conclusion:

- When a person trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior, he or she is sealed and empowered by the Holy Spirit and becomes a member of Christ's Church.
- To know about Jesus is not the same as trusting in Jesus.
- God uses His Word to save people, so we must preach it.

Small Group Discussion

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and Bible passage Sunday? What stood out to you?
2. What does it mean that not all things written in the Bible are prescriptive but rather descriptive? What is the danger of trying to make every experience recorded in Acts normative for the Church today?
3. What is the difference between knowing things about Jesus and trusting in Jesus? How has trusting Jesus changed your life? Give testimony of His goodness and grace in your life. Encourage everyone to share their testimony with the group.
4. How does a person receive the gift of the Holy Spirit? When does a person receive the Holy Spirit? What evidences are there that a person has received the Holy Spirit?
5. What is baptism? Why are we baptized? Do you need to obey the Lord's command to be baptized?