

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Just before ascending to Heaven, Jesus sent His disciples to Jerusalem and told them to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower them. *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8)

Ten days later, the disciples, Mary, Jesus’ brothers, and the women who traveled with them were gathered in prayer. (read Acts 1:12-14). There were 120 followers present when suddenly, a violent wind filled the house, and tongues of fire came to rest on *each* of them. It was the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised that came to empower them. Each of them began to speak in other languages, enabled by the Holy Spirit. Peter addressed the multilingual crowd, and each person heard the words spoken in their native language. (read Acts 2:1-6).

Because it is not as tangible, The Holy Spirit is more difficult to grasp. We can identify with the Heavenly Father, the creator of the universe. We can also understand that Jesus came to earth to live among us, and to die for our sins. But it is a little more difficult to grasp the concept of an invisible Holy Spirit. Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to his disciples. *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.* (John 14:16-17). So, what does this advocate – the Holy Spirit -- do?



- The Holy Spirit is **God’s presence** in the lives of believers. (*Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?* (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- The Holy Spirit provides **wise counsel** to Christ’s followers. (read Psalm 32:8)
- Jesus knew that his disciples would need power to carry out their mission to be witnesses to the entire world. (Read Acts 1:8).
- The Holy Spirit gives **spiritual gifts** to believers, such as wisdom, knowledge, and power. (read 1 Cor. 12)
- The Holy Spirit helps us **align with God’s** will by interceding for us during difficult times and when we are weak. (read Romans 8:26-27).
- The Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers to **renew, sanctify, and make us holy**. (read Romans 8:10-11).
- The Holy Spirit is a source of **comfort and assistance** to believers. (Read John 14:16).
- The Holy Spirit **teaches and guides** us to understand and live out the teachings of Jesus Christ (*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you* (Psalm 32:8). (Read also John 16:13).
- The Holy Spirit **empowers believers for Christian living**, equipping them with gifts for service and enabling them to live according to God’s will.

My own take on this is that the Holy Spirit is the voice inside us that guides our actions and motivates us. Some may think it is their “conscience” but, for people of faith, it is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also empowers us to carry out the Great Commission. For us, the disciples' speaking in tongues symbolizes breaking down language and other barriers as we share the Good News. Remember that Jesus said: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* (Matthew 28:18-20). The Holy Spirit gives us the authority, tools, heart, and a green light to witness for Him. We can do that because He is with us always.