

The Holy Spirit
First Baptist Church Dandridge
Winter 2026

Session Five: The Holy Spirit and The Church

For previous notes: www.fbcdandridge.org/wednesday-bible-study

1. The Birth of the Church

- a. **Pre-Pentecost:** When were the disciples saved? When were they born again and secured in Christ?" It was after Jesus was raised from the dead, when he breathed the Holy Spirit upon them.
- **John 20:19-23** – *"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."*
 - **Holy Spirit:** Unlike any time in the past, this event seems like the turning point for Jesus' disciples. They are fully convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead and he gives them the Holy Spirit. J.I. Packer called this moment an "acted prophecy," meaning that Jesus was giving them a literal preview of what would soon happen to others at Pentecost. Therefore, if we understand the "birth" of the church to be at Pentecost, it's possible to understand the "conception" of the church to be this moment the disciples received the Holy Spirit. Likewise, Jesus followed this event by commissioning them to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20), and such a mission would only be possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Acts 1:5, 8** – *"And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now....But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
- b. **Pentecost**
- **Background:** In Jewish culture, the day of Firstfruits was the Sunday after the Sabbath during Passover (Lev. 23:15-16). On this day a festival took place where worshipers would

offer the first portion of the spring harvest to God in hopes that this sampling would reflect God's blessing in the harvest to come. It's significant that Jesus was raised from the dead on the day of Firstfruits because his resurrected body was a sampling of the glorified bodies his people will receive when he returns (1 Cor. 15:20-23).

Following his resurrection, Jesus continued meeting with his people for forty days before ascending to heaven. The disciples would wait an additional ten days before the Holy Spirit would arrive at Pentecost. These days were spent in the Upper Room and served as a time of spiritual preparation and reflection. Luke records that 120 believers joined there for prayer, fellowship, and decision-making, preparing their hearts for this incredible movement of God (Acts 1:12-28; cf. Joshua 3).

The day of Pentecost took place fifty days after Passover (seven weeks from Firstfruits). In Jewish culture, Pentecost was known as the Feast of Weeks. It was one of three major Jewish festivals and it marked the end of the grain harvest in Israel. Therefore, Pentecost was a harvest festival, one that glorified God for providing a harvest of grain for his people. In addition, the Jews believed that Moses received the Law from God fifty days after leaving Egypt in the exodus. Therefore, Pentecost was also a celebration of the Law. Like other festivals (Passover, Feast of Weeks), Jewish people from all surrounding nations and territories would take a pilgrimage back to Jerusalem to celebrate. Therefore, the city would be filled with Jews from all directions on the map.

- **Acts 2:1–13** – When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."
- **Holy Spirit:** On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit arrived with incredible power. Like a blazing fire that sends flames in all directions, the Holy Spirit rested upon each believer, filling them new spiritual life and equipping them with gifts and boldness to serve. It's no coincidence that the arrival of the Holy Spirit took place on Pentecost:

- (1) It represented a massive harvest of souls, where 3000 were saved and baptized on a single day.
- (2) It reversed God's judgment at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), where God confused the languages of the people and sent them in different directions. At Pentecost, through the gift of tongues, which was the ability to speak in foreign languages previously unknown to the speaker, God graciously brought people back to himself through Christ.
- (3) It celebrated a new giving of the law, not one written on stone but written on the heart (Jer. 31:33; John 3).
- (4) It began a missionary movement. As Jews arrived from various nations surrounding Israel, they would return in all directions and take the gospel with them (Acts 2:9-12).

2. The Ministries of the Church

- a. **Spiritual Gifts:** The Bible describes believers receiving "spiritual gifts" upon conversion (1 Cor. 12:1). These gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to enable believers to serve and bless others.
 - **1 Corinthians 12:4-7** – "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."
 - **Romans 12:4-6** – "For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."
 - **Examples of Gifts:** prophecy, faith, service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, administration, mercy, wisdom, discernment, tongues, miracles.
- b. **Debate:** There is a fierce debate today concerning the "sign gifts," such as miracles, healing, and tongues. These gifts are mentioned in the New Testament lists and were demonstrated by the apostles and others. However, the debate centers on if these gifts are still empowered by the Holy Spirit today. Both sides appeal to 1 Corinthians 13:8-10.

"As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophecy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."

- **Continuationists:** The “perfect” refers to Jesus’ return. Therefore, all spiritual gifts will continue until Christ returns, even the miraculous gifts. This view is held by many in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. It’s not uncommon for these churches to practice speaking in tongues, on-stage healings, predictive prophecy, etc.
 - **Cessationists:** The “perfect” refers to the completion of the Bible, the final canon of Scripture. In this view, the miraculous gifts mentioned in the New Testament were only “sign gifts” given to authenticate the gospel in the first century. However, once Scripture was complete and churches increased, these gifts were no longer needed as evidence of God’s work through the gospel. Scripture alone is sufficient. Therefore, these gifts “ceased” during the first century.
- c. **Tongues:** The gift of tongues (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 14) refers to the ability to speak understandable, ethnic languages that were previously unknown to the speaker. Like at Pentecost, this gift was used to evangelize unbelievers in their own language. Paul warns against “unintelligible” speech (1 Cor. 14:9), and exhorts the church to use these gifts “to instruct others,” primarily those who haven’t been saved (1 Cor. 14:10-33).