

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

SESSION THREE NOTES: "NEW LIFE"

"I came so that they may have life and have it in abundance." (John 10:10)

The Father wants everyone to have new life. He sent his son Jesus into the world so that we could be given the source of new life, the Holy Spirit.

- Often the Christianity with which we have come in contact has not been spiritually alive, but God is continually renewing his Church by a fresh outpouring of his Spirit. Pope Francis has frequently commented that everyone should be "baptized in the Holy Spirit."
- Jesus is Lord; if we accept his lordship, we can experience a new freedom and a new life.
- In him all our sins can be forgiven (no matter what we have done), and every barrier between us and the Father can be taken away.
- After Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit to bring us new life. (Acts 1:1-5)

When the Holy Spirit comes to a person, they become a changed person. (Acts 2 or Acts 19:1-7) They are given the power to know God and to live a new life:

- Experiencing in a new way God as your Father who loves you and cares for you; who speaks in your heart, teaching and guiding you.
- Knowing in your heart that Jesus is your personal Lord and Saviour; putting him at the centre of your life so that his principles shape your life.
- Praying in a new way, more centered on God than yourself; more often prayer of praise and thanksgiving; discovering you can pray in tongues; the gift of tongues is a means of spiritual growth and of praising God; it allows the Holy Spirit to pray within you when you cannot pray adequately.
- Discovering that the Bible, the liturgy and the sacraments come to life. Noticing that the fruit of the Spirit develop within you (love, joy, peace, etc. Galatians 5).
- Understanding that you can receive the gifts of the Spirit to serve God (prophecy, healing, discernment of spirits, inspirations to speak etc. (I Corinthians 12).

There is no need for anyone to be the kind of Christian who is not in vital contact with God or who does not experience the power of the Holy Spirit in their life. Everyone, even beginners in the Christian life, can be baptized in the Spirit.

- For most of us, this is not our first reception of the Holy Spirit, but a release of his power that is already within us through baptism and confirmation.
- Different people see different changes happen to them: many may consciously experience the Holy Spirit in them for the first time. Others who have already consciously experienced something of the Spirit's presence in their lives can receive a fuller experience, may become aware of new effects, new changes which the Spirit brings about in them. Everyone can experience a new presence and working of the Spirit.
- Those of us who have been Christians before will see that our years of Christian living have provided us with many resources that will be brought to life by the new presence of the Spirit in us.

Baptism in the Spirit is only the beginning of a new life.

- With the help of committed Christians as our brothers and sisters, we can grow to spiritual maturity; we can develop a daily dialogue and friendship with Christ; experience a new peace and joy, see ourselves being healed, becoming loving people, develop better relationships.

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DAILY SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION WEEK THREE – “NEW LIFE”

Fri 11th June

“By His stripes we are healed and made whole” Isaiah 53/5

This verse comes immediately before yesterday’s scripture and speaks prophetically about the stripes laid on the back of Jesus as He is scourged for our sake as part of His passion and death. The emphasis is not on how terrible it will be for Him, but what we will gain from it – healing and wholeness and not just spiritually but physically as well. How much of our culture yearns after “wholeness” and “wellness” and never thinks to look in the very place where it is guaranteed us.

Sat 12th June

“Behold I make all things new” Revelation 21:5

The words of Jesus in John’s Revelation where He says that there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain as He renews the whole creation. This is our future, but it begins here and now with us if we let it; then, like ripples on a pond, spreads to our families, to where we live and work and on and on...renewing and healing and restoring.

Sun 13th June

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out My Spirit on all people” Acts 2:17

Here Peter quotes the prophet Joel to explain to the astonished crowds the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all the apostles and others gathered in Jerusalem, that we read about yesterday. They had waited in the Upper Room for nine days in prayer, in obedience to Jesus words, until they received the gift promised by the Father of His Spirit. These weeks of the Life in the Spirit course are our praying and waiting on the same promise, have you a sense of anticipation yet?

Mon 14th June

“and I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh” Ezekiel 36:26

Here God promises a renewed heart and spirit and in the next verse explains that it comes through the gift of His Spirit, so that we will be moved by Him to keep His laws and decrees, our hearts softened to those around us. So how are we to receive this great gift of the Spirit??

Tues 15th June

“Whoever believes in Me, as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. By this He meant the Spirit whom those who believed in Him were later to receive...” John 7:38-39

Here Jesus promises us this gift of the Holy Spirit, the rivers of living (flowing) water welling up inside of us to renew and refresh us – if we believe in Him. Note - it is possible to believe in Him without receiving this flowing of the Spirit from within ourselves, so we need to ask for it.

Weds 16th June

“If you then...know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:13

Jesus reassures us that, when we ask something good of our Father in Heaven, He will not refuse us, especially if that thing is the Holy Spirit - any more than we would refuse our children if they wanted something good from us. This is of course not just a statement but a promise of Jesus that we can “stand upon,” because He was not just honest but is Truth Itself.

Thurs 17th June

“...’Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’” Acts 19:2

Paul, asking a group of 12 believers in Ephesus about their experience of the Holy Spirit, is surprised to discover they have had a baptism of repentance, which is a good start, but hadn’t realized that there was more to be had, so he tells them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Often today we can even hear about Jesus but not realize there is still more to be had for the asking - are you hungry for more?