

Jan. 20: 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Message: Disciples Make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide

Text: Zechariah 4:6 "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

Scripture: Romans 8:12-17

Memory Verse: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him won't perish but will have eternal life." John 3:16

Blurb: It's a bit odd, really: disciples follow Jesus, but we are led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads disciples from within, as their power and guide, and from without, through directing the steps of each day. Disciples, really, need to get "in step" with the Holy Spirit as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus. This Sunday we'll try to unpack what that looks like, and how you, too, can be a disciple of Jesus who makes the Holy Spirit your guide!

Opening Song: *Send Me Out* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Memory Verse:

"God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him won't perish but will have eternal life." -John 3:16

Worship Music Set:

Glory to Glory

Holy Spirit Truth Divine

Noah takes kids into lobby -

More Like Jesus

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Come, Follow Me* -Sanctify

Grow Moment: Grow Groups -Video

Love Moment: *Nicene Creed, UMH#880*

Explain the 3rd paragraph, the Holy Spirit:

"...And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

Prayers: -Andrew

Kid's Moment - Noah Bonsell

Message: Disciples Make . . . The Holy Spirit Their Guide!

Bumper Video

PP#1: Disciples Make . . . The Holy Spirit Their Guide!

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” Zechariah 4:6

Disciples of Jesus make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide. Zechariah 4:6 “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.”

PP#2: *Image for:* Too much Jesus?

Disciples can have too much Jesus. Yes, you heard me. Disciples can have too much Jesus. It's a problem that many Christians struggle with, actually. Too much Jesus.

Our message series is about making disciples of Jesus. Jesus *calls us* all to be His disciples. The first week we learned that discipleship is not just about a self-contained relationship between Jesus and me. It's a relationship that splashes out onto all those I'm around. Disciples of Jesus make more disciples of Jesus, who in turn make more disciples. So, Jesus-followers can't be inward focused. We have a calling to fish for people. If we are not fishing for people, then we are not the disciples that Jesus wants.

And last week, we learned that people who choose Jesus, make Him #1. That means making choices and sacrifices in our lives so we have more and more of Jesus. We deny ourselves and our selfish desires, we die to our selves, and we take up our crosses to follow Jesus.

And because we make Him our #1, we can slip into having too much of Him. When we focus so totally on Jesus, we actually cannot be His disciple.

Okay, I had better explain myself before the elders of the church come up here and drag me off stage for heresy.

PP#3: *Image of a man with one arm around Jesus and the other curled showing big muscles.*

Actually, I think you know what I'm talking about. We choose Jesus. We turn our lives over to Him, we repent of our sin and put our trust in Him as our personal Lord and Savior. We commit to be His disciples, and we commit to live for Him. That means putting to death our selfishness, denying our wrongful cravings, treating others the way God's love dictates, being always forgiving, always gracious, always truth-filled, always turning the other cheek, never letting our anger get out of hand, and always stopping to help the person in need. And so, we set out, trying to live rightly, doing the right thing, pressing forward into the new way of life. But we are nervous. We begin to think that to be a Christian, to be a disciple, we must have to be exceptionally strong spiritually, and impressive, and amazing. If we want to be buds with Jesus and walk in His shoes, we had better be extra fit and spiritually buff!

PP#4: *Image of a buff man pushing a boulder up an incline, looking like it's hard work.*

So, although we begin with good intentions, we begin to feel overwhelmed by the sheer commitment this requires. We push hard and push hard. We falter, ask Jesus for forgiveness, and set out again, and again. We work hard at it, try and try. But Jesus' standards are perfection, holiness. Day in and day out, living rightly, doing the right thing, making the right choices. Never letting up. Perfect love.

PP#5: *Image of a strong man totally exhausted and collapsed on the ground.*

It's so exhausting! We just can't keep it up. And so, being a disciple of Jesus becomes a frustration, a sense of failure, so defeating. We want to follow Jesus, but we feel like we let Him down, again and again. We become almost too embarrassed to talk to Him, and we begin to fear that He is so disappointed in us.

Disciples...if you know what this is like, if you feel like this: then you are suffering from too much Jesus! You see, you have become so singularly focused on Jesus that you haven't had room for the Holy Spirit who Jesus is trying to give you.

We can frame Christian discipleship as "just me and Jesus," that's what it's all about.

But that's not what Jesus says following Him means. It's not what Jesus says discipleship is. And, quite bluntly, you can't do it. When all you try to do is follow Jesus, you end up having to rely on your own strength, your own abilities, to do it.

But when Jesus calls you as His disciple, He also pours the Holy Spirit into you, so that God's very presence is in you. And it is this presence of God within you that makes you able to live the way of Jesus, able to follow in His footsteps, able to live the life of love He calls you to.

If you are so focused on Jesus that you don't open your life to the Holy Spirit, then discipleship will become a defeating impossibility.

A very real danger as a disciple is choosing Jesus but not making room for the Holy Spirit.

Indicators of this struggle may be lack of joy in our lives, a sense of failure before God, a lack of victory over the struggles in our lives, a sense of resignation or futility about making progress towards holiness, being trapped in ungodly behaviors, and a sense that God seems far away or a lukewarm love for Jesus.

You see, although we are disciples of Jesus, our connection to Him is by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's presence within us. He is God living inside us, each of us. We are created by God, and He is our heavenly Father. Jesus is our Savior, and we follow Him as His disciple. But it is the Holy Spirit who is God within us, working in and through us all that God desires—His strength, His wisdom, His view of the world, the discernment of truth, gifts of peace and joy and love and every good blessing. It is only when we fully open our lives to the Holy Spirit that we can follow Jesus and are able to live Jesus' way.

PP#6: John 7:37-39 (CEB)

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, "All who are thirsty should come to me! 38 All who believe in me should drink! As the scriptures said concerning me, Rivers of living water will flow out from within him."

39 Jesus said this concerning the Spirit. Those who believed in Him would soon receive the Spirit, but they hadn't experienced the Spirit yet since Jesus hadn't yet been glorified.

One day when Jesus was preaching and teaching, He explained that following Him, and the new life that He brings, is the work of the Holy Spirit. John 7, starting with verse 37: “On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, ‘All who are thirsty should come to me! 38 All who believe in me should drink! As the scriptures said concerning me, rivers of living water will flow out from within him.’”

This is a way to describe salvation, choosing Jesus, being a disciple. Notice the change in us. We who are thirsty should come to Jesus to drink. Not only will our thirst be quenched, not only will we be satisfied, but we will experience a transformation. Rather than being thirsty and needing to *receive* the water of life—a consumer—we will become a spring, a river, and Jesus’ living water will well up and *flow out of us*—a source of His water! What a powerful image for being a disciple!

But look at the very next verse. Lest we get confused that all we need is Jesus—just me and Jesus—it says in verse 39, “Jesus said this *concerning the Spirit*. Those who believed in Him would soon receive the Spirit, but they hadn’t experienced the Spirit yet since Jesus hadn’t yet been glorified.”

You see, up until Jesus—all through the Old Testament, God’s Spirit was active and present, yes, but always in a limited way. God’s Spirit came upon certain people at certain times and for certain purposes. Most people did not have the Holy Spirit. But then Jesus comes to die on the cross for our salvation. And in John 16:5, Jesus says, “But I must go back to the one who sent me. ... but I will send the Companion [the Holy Spirit] to you.” (John 16:5-7)

PP#7: *Image for Pentecost, showing how all the disciples received the Holy Spirit in and on them*

And at an event we call Pentecost, God poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus: filling them, changing them, changing the reality of God’s people. From then on, God’s people were filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit lives within each and every disciple of Jesus. Remember John the Baptist? We listened to him over Christmas. He said that Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Those who are baptized in Jesus are baptized by the Holy Spirit!

This is the most incredible miracle we will ever experience! We have the very presence of God living inside of us! This changes everything! We can live, not by our own strength, but by the Holy Spirit within us. Disciples of Jesus have the Holy Spirit.

Turn to our Scripture passage for today: Romans 8. Now, the whole chapter is about the Holy Spirit. Actually, there are all kinds of passages all over the Bible about the Holy Spirit. If we find ourselves only hearing about Jesus in the Bible, then we are having that problem again...too much Jesus. Jesus, Himself, talks incessantly about the Holy Spirit! John chapters 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, get what I’m saying?

PP#8: Romans 8:12-17 (CEB)

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn’t an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. 13 If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. 14 All who are led by God’s Spirit are God’s sons and daughters.

So does Paul. The Holy Spirit is everywhere. All of Romans 8, but we’ll pick it up in verse 12. “So then, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation, but it isn’t an obligation to ourselves to live our lives on the basis of selfishness. [That’s our lives before Jesus.] If you live on the basis of selfishness, you are going to die. But [as disciples of Jesus, you live by the Spirit. And,] if by the Spirit you put to death the actions of the body, you will live. All who are led by God’s Spirit are

God's sons and daughters." See? When you follow Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit within you that empowers you to put to death the selfish behaviors you struggle with. It's not your own strength! You can't, especially over time. But we're not on our own! We have the Holy Spirit. And that makes us God's beloved children! "All who are led by God's Spirit are God's children." Disciples Make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide!"

PP#9: Romans 8:12-17 (CEB)

15 You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as His children. With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father."
 16 The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children. 17 But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God's heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with Him so that we can also be glorified with Him."

Verse 15, "You didn't receive a spirit of slavery to lead you back again into fear, but you received a Spirit that shows you are adopted as His children. [Your identity changes. And your confirmation of that comes from God's very Spirit within you.] With this Spirit, we cry, "Abba, Father" [to God]. The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children. But if we are children, we are also heirs. We are God's heirs and fellow heirs with Christ, if we really suffer with Him so that we can also be glorified with Him."

PP#10: Disciples Make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide

1. The Holy Spirit restores you to God

"The same Spirit agrees with our spirit, that we are God's children." -Romans 8:16

We aren't made God's precious children by anything we do, or anything about us. It's God's Spirit within us that restores God's image in us, restores us to God, and makes us co-heirs with Jesus of all that Jesus has won: identity as God's child, restored relationship with God, forgiveness from all sin, life abundant, and life eternal. The Holy Spirit restores us to God and empowers us to live for Jesus.

PP#11: Disciples Make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide

1. The Holy Spirit restores you to God

2. The Holy Spirit empowers you to live for God

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.'" Zechariah 4:6

In the Old Testament, God's people were in slavery in Babylon. And God's Spirit came to Zerubbabel, a leader of the Israelites. God told Zerubbabel that he was to do an impossible task, to lead the first wave of Israelites back to the Promised Land. Zerubbabel knew he could not do this in his own abilities and strength. So God tells Zechariah to tell him, in Zechariah 4:6, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by [your] might nor by [their] power, but by *my* Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.'" See what the Holy Spirit does? He becomes your strength, your ability to follow Jesus as His disciple.

Church, be careful of having too much of Jesus, where you do not have the Holy Spirit! It is only with the gift of the Holy Spirit that you can be a disciple. Only the Holy Spirit working within you can give you the victory over all your sin, selfishness, and temptations. Only the Holy Spirit working within you can empower you do the things that Jesus calls you to do, to live the way of God.

PP#12: Disciples Make ... The Holy Spirit Their Guide

1. The Holy Spirit restores you to God
2. The Holy Spirit empowers you to live for God
3. The Holy Spirit guides you in making disciples

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” -Acts 1:8

Remember how Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and make more disciples? We called that the Great Commission. Disciples of Jesus make disciples. But here, again, we are in danger of not seeing the Holy Spirit! We say, “Yes, Jesus!” and off we go to try...in our own strength, and our own plans. But notice, in Acts 1, that before Jesus leaves, before He gives this Great Commission, He turns to His followers and promises that this will all happen only when they receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” So, when Jesus give the Great Commission, He is not expecting them to go out and do it on their own abilities. The Holy Spirit will be their guide!

So, disciples, make the Holy Spirit *your* guide! Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will teach us all that we need to know. The Holy Spirit will guide our thoughts and hearts. The Holy Spirit will show us the very heart of God. We follow Jesus, not by seeing clearly every footstep that Jesus wants us to take, but by the inner leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit.

This week, I’m going to challenge us to make room for the Holy Spirit in our walk of discipleship. Yes, be followers of Jesus, and make Him #1. But you can only do that if you allow the Holy Spirit to restore you to God, to empower you to live for Jesus, and to guide your steps each day. So, to do that, I want to challenge you to pray for this whole week, each and every time you pray, to pray to the Holy Spirit. Now, normally we pray to God the Father, as Jesus taught, or perhaps to God, or Lord, or even to Jesus. But this week, pray at least once a day, and each time, pray to the Holy Spirit. Are you willing to try to do this? Write this down on your note sheet, or you will forget!

We need to take our singular focus on Jesus, and train it to see the Holy Spirit that God the Father gives into us when we follow Jesus. We walk following Jesus, but only by the power and guiding of the Holy Spirit!

Let’s pray. “Holy Spirit, take over in our lives. We are so tired of trying to do it all by our own power. We are so weary. Lift us up. Renew us. Enliven us! Restore our relationship with God, make us God’s children. Empower us to live as Jesus calls us, your way of life, which we cannot do in our own power. Guide us, each step of the way. Teach us your Truth. Show us the way of life. Place our feet in the steps of Jesus. Create in us a river of living water that flows out of us and refreshes all your people around us. Help us to make disciples. Amen!”

Closing Song: *We Are the Free*

Memory Verse:

“God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him won’t perish but will have eternal life.” -John 3:16

Announcements: -Pastor David

Benediction: -Pastor David