



The Holy Spirit

Unit 10: Living in Hope

LAST WEEK

Paul continues his letter explaining that, despite his equality with God, Jesus chose the path of humble humanity, for which God exalted him above everything in heaven and earth (Philippians 2:1-13).

THIS WEEK

The Holy Spirit fell on the disciples on Pentecost and allowed them to preach the good news to people of all nations and languages. Paul called upon the Philippians to rejoice that God had redeemed them (Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 4:4-7).

Story Summary

God gave the disciples the Holy Spirit during the festival of Pentecost with the gift to preach the good news in many languages. Peter defended their preaching from accusations that they were drunk and appealed to the prophecy of Joel about the Spirit being poured out on believers. Later, Paul called upon the Philippians to rejoice in God's love even when they were anxious or troubled, receiving God's peace instead of fear.

Practice: Prayer

Paul encourages the Philippians to pray to God about their anxieties, rejoicing and giving thanks despite their fears. As a family, create a prayer jar. Write down any anxieties or prayer requests that you have. As you put them in the jar, say a prayer of thanksgiving to God and ask for God's peace. At the end of the week, read through the prayers. How has God addressed your requests?

The Point

Proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ is cause for thanksgiving and rejoicing!

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

What Is Shavuot?

Shavuot (pronounced shah-voo-OAT) means "weeks" and is a "week of weeks" (7 x 7) after Passover. It is the 50th day after Passover, so in Greek it was called "fiftieth" (Pentecost). This was originally a festival which celebrated the harvest of wheat, and one of three pilgrimage festivals when the Jewish people were commanded to travel to the temple to give the first fruits of their harvest to God. Later, the festival was connected to the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai. This is why so many people were in Jerusalem at that time.

NEXT WEEK

With today's reading, the main Narrative Lectionary comes to an end. Over the next few months, make your own Bible reading plan. Read a book of the Bible, follow a plan your congregation has, or search the Internet for additional ideas.

Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✦ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✦ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✦ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✦ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday —

Read Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 4:4-7

The Spirit was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost.

- When have you felt the outpouring of God's Spirit on you?
- What does the Philippians text promise that God will provide when we bring our worries to God?

Monday — Read Philippians 4:8-9

Paul encourages believers to focus on what is good.

- Using the list in verse 8, what good things can you focus on in the coming week?
- What practices do you think Paul is referring to in verse 9?

Tuesday — Read Acts 3:1-10

Peter and John heal a man who could not walk.

- If you do not have the money to give to someone in need, what can you do instead?
- What have you experienced that has filled you with wonder and amazement?

Wednesday — Read Acts 4:32-37

The whole group of believers share what they have.

- What would life be like if believers today followed the example of these first believers?
- Do you think this is reasonable or possible in our world today? Why or why not?

Thursday — Read Acts 5:12-16

As word about their ministry spread, many people came to the apostles to be healed of illness or unclean spirits.

- What do you think kept people from daring to join the apostles in their healing ministry?
- Who might you lift up to God in prayer for healing?

Friday — Read Revelation 21:1-6

John received a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, where God will live with humanity and there will be no more death or pain.

- What emotions do you have in response to this passage?
- Why do you think God would choose to dwell with mortals?

Saturday — Read Revelation 22:1-7

The abundant and healing tree of life is watered by the river that flows from the throne of God.

- What do you think it means for the leaves of the tree of life being "for the healing of the nations"?
- What other stories in the Bible make reference to seeing God's face or use images of light?