

The Holy Spirit Part 4

Acts 1:1-11

What is it to be like Jesus? To be like Jesus is to do what he did, and he did the Father's will. **John 14:31a**, "but I do as the Father has commanded me". To be like Jesus is to speak what he spoke, the truth of God. **John 7:16b**, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me." To be like Jesus is to accept what you cannot know because it's not your business to know all things. **Matt 24:36**, "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." To be like Jesus is to point others to him because that's the mission. **2 Cor 5:19** "For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation." To be like Jesus is to rely on the same power he relied on, the Holy Spirit; for without the Holy Spirit there is no hope of being like Jesus. And this leads us to our first observation from on text.

Jesus was who he was and did what he did by the power of the Holy Spirit working in and through him. V2b, 4-5 "Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen...⁴ While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: ⁵ John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."" As his disciples Jesus makes it clear we need this same power in order to be and do what he has called us to. The tendency is for us is to think we can do the work of the Lord in our own strength by our own power sources. I am thoroughly convinced that the primary opportunity for

mainline Protestantism in America is to stop operating in its own power; to stop depending on its resources, its storied history, it's very capable and accomplished membership, though dwindling. And this opportunity extends to everyone of its congregations, including us.

Listen to me. We use what we have in service to our Lord, but what we bring in service to our Lord is not the source of our power. The PCUSA has no shortage of financial resources. Many of its congregations have significant endowments and/or assets but lack the people and energy to do effective ministry for Jesus. Why? Power, Holy Spirit power. Jesus was who he was and did what he did by the power of the Holy Spirit, and his disciples need that same power.

Luke 1:34-35 “³⁴Then Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen since I haven’t had sexual relations with a man?” ³⁵The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God’s Son.” **CEB**

Matt 3:16 “¹⁶When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him.” **CEB** (ESV- coming to rest on him, NLT- settling on him, NKJV- alighting upon him)

John 14:16-17 “¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.” **NLT**

So, what is this power, specifically? V6-8 “⁶As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?” ⁷Jesus replied, “It isn’t for you to know the

times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority.⁸ Rather, 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.” Let me say this first. This power is not the result of more information. We don’t need more information. We may need more teaching but not more information. This power is not the result of having our most pressing questions answered. As we see here every question will not be answered. Some things are none of our business. So, what is this power? **This power is all that’s necessary to carry out the mission.** Power to preach, power to teach, power to work miracles if it be God’s will, power to endure, power to persevere, power to love, power to forgive, power to deny self, power to carry our cross, power to obey, power to live holy lives. And so we don’t miss this in the text, this power is a shared power made available to us all and given to us in community. “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”. The power of the Holy Spirit is most evident and effective in the gathered community. You see this time and time again in the New Testament. This is why it is extremely important that every disciple of Jesus has a tangible community of faith that he/she belongs. I believe, scripturally, that the reception of the Holy Spirit, through faith in Jesus, is a communal affair.

Acts 2:1-4 “When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place.² Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting.³ They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them.⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.” **CEB**

Acts 8:14-17 “¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. ¹⁵As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.” **NLT**

Acts 19:1-7 “While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul took a route through the interior and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples.² He asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you came to believe?” They replied, “We’ve not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³Then he said, “What baptism did you receive, then?” They answered, “John’s baptism.” ⁴Paul explained, “John baptized with a baptism by which people showed they were changing their hearts and lives. It was a baptism that told people about the one who was coming after him. This is the one in whom they were to believe. This one is Jesus.” ⁵After they listened to Paul, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in other languages and prophesying. ⁷Altogether, there were about twelve people.” **CEB**

Finally, why are we given this power or why do we need this power?

We need it to actually speak the truth of Jesus. V9-11 “⁹After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. ¹¹They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

I can understand why they were stuck there looking up. Can’t you

imagine seeing such a thing? Can't you imagine how they felt seeing the one they loved fade into the distance? I can only imagine all of the emotions they may have been feeling. But this was not the time to get stuck in their feelings. The time for work was nearing, and they needed to be in the place Jesus had instructed for their equipping, for their receiving of the promise, the Holy Spirit. The one who would empower them to be Jesus witnesses. Those who would actually speak the truth of Jesus, unabashedly! Which is the mission we have all been called to. Listen! I'm amazed at the comfort level professing disciples have when it comes to speaking on anything other than Jesus. We speak quite regularly regarding our passion for the climate crisis, on our political views, our favorite shows, our favorite civic organizations, our favorite teams and brands, etc. Which by the way, none of these things can bring about eternal life. But many of us speak very little regarding the One we claim to follow. The One who died for us. The One raised from the dead for us. The One who has made us new creations. We are even hesitant to post about him on our social media pages. What does that say about us?

Luke 9:26 "If anyone is ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in his glory and in the glory of the Father and the holy angels." **NLT**

How could those who have received Jesus Spirit, ever be ashamed of him? How could they possibly remain quiet? Especially in a time such as this. In the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**