

SHORT-TERM SMALL GROUPS (FALL 2015)

JESUS SERIES- week four

Background: The story begins with John the Baptist in the Jordan River baptizing Israelites. His baptism is a call for Israel to repent of their sins, and get ready for a fresh move of God- a baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Until this point in time, the Israelite mind would have understood the process of “repentance from sin” as only possible through the Jewish priesthood, applied through animal sacrifice. They would have also visualized the “Holy Spirit” or “God’s Spirit” as dwelling externally within the context of the “Holy of Holies” in the most holy place in the temple, a place that they did not have access. John’s message is a radical shift in their religious understanding and culture.

Facilitator: Read the primary text

MARK 1:1-13

1The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way”— “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’

And so ***John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ***And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”***

At that time *Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John* in the Jordan. *Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.* And a voice came from heaven: *“You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”* *At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan.*

Facilitator: As you prepare to watch the video, keep in mind that this is the point in time when Jesus felt it necessary to be baptized - not because of sin, but so that he could fully identify with us as sinners.

Facilitator: WATCH THE VIDEO

Facilitator: Take feedback from your group. Note: There are several key points in this portion of Scripture to bring out in your discussion:

1. The difference between John the Baptist’s baptism (a baptism of repentance) and Jesus’ baptism (so that Jesus could fully identify with us as sinners).
2. The distinction that was made between John’s baptism of repentance and Jesus’ baptism in the Holy Spirit and with fire.
3. The Father’s announcement from heaven, “This is my son in whom I am well pleased.”
4. The interplay within the trinity as evidenced by Jesus’ statements regarding the sending of the Holy Spirit. At times Jesus said that the Father would send the Holy Spirit and at other times he said that He/Jesus would send the Holy Spirit. Both statements are true and this is an example of the trinity working in complete harmony.
5. The reality that at the point a person accepts Christ, the Holy Spirit comes inside of them and they are empowered to live the Christian life.

Facilitator:

Discussion Questions:

1. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance for sin. When a person accepts Christ, the Bible teaches that they are to be baptized. In fact, Jesus gave this directive:

“Not long before Jesus’ ascension, He said to the apostles, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,

baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matt. 28:18-20.

For Discussion:

- 1) Ask the group if anyone would like to share their experience of water baptism?
- 2) Ask for feedback from Jesus’ statement in Matthew 28:18-20.

2. Read the following passage taken from John 1:29- 34.

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

For Discussion:

- 1) Imagine placing yourself in the audience that day when Jesus shows up at the Jordan River and John announces, “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” What are some of the thoughts that might have been running through your mind at that point?

- 2) Read the following passage from John 1:33:

“The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

In the video Pete states that when a person accepts Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live within them. Pete states that it is at that point that you are given power to live out the Christian life. How has your life changed by your encounter with the One who “baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

3. Read the following passages of Scripture:

*“But **the** Advocate, **the Holy Spirit**, whom **the** Father will **send** in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

John 14:26

*“When **the** Advocate comes, whom I will **send** to you from **the** Father—**the Spirit** of truth who goes out from **the** Father—he will testify about me.*

John 15:26

Pete shared in the video that at times Jesus makes several statements regarding who will send the Holy Spirit. In some instances Jesus says that “He” will send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). At other times Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will be sent from the Father (John 14:26).

In summary, Pete says that both are true statements, and that these are examples of the Trinity working together in absolute unity.

For Discussion:

- 1) How have these two passages of Scripture and the video shaped your views on the “Trinity?”
- 2) Have your views changed as a result of today’s discussion of Jesus as “Baptizer”?
- 3) Are there any questions that you still have regarding today’s discussion that you would like a follow up?