New Life Session 4

Empowered – Part One

Review of Session 3

- Last session we learnt some biblical understanding about us being spiritually **'born again'** and being **'new creations'** and '**brothers and sisters of Jesus'.** Has that felt more significant to us during the last week?
- Has our understanding of our inheritance as a child of God made a difference to us. Have we experienced anything from our 'inheritance list' or tried anything out - doing just what Jesus did?
- Did anyone try repeating truths out loud as often as possible? Have any of the truths made that important 18 inch journey from head to heart? Have our feelings/emotions aligned themselves to the truths in God's word about who ***WE ARE*** as children of God and what we can do and be in Christ.

Session 4 Aims

- To introduce what it means to relate to Holy Spirit and how he relates to us.
- How Holy Spirit enables us to live a life deeply connected to Father God.
- How He enables change in our lives and helps us to be fruitful.
- To begin to think about how Holy Spirit empowers us to be *'Transformed People who Transform the World'* around us.

Introduction

The Bible Project video – *'Why the Holy Spirit Isn't Just a "Force"'*

Did we discover anything new in the video?

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1: 13-14

Jesus, His disciples, Holy Spirit and Us

As the disciples lived life alongside Jesus, they lived alongside all three of the trinity. Jesus constantly pointed them to the Father, he said that when they saw Jesus they saw the Father, He only did what he saw His Father doing. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His Baptism and it **'remained on Him'** (John 1 v 32).

They were exposed to powerful encounters of healing and miracles and the defeat of Satan - not just finally on the cross but in their everyday lives as they took the Gospel (the Good News of Jesus) throughout the region of Galilee (Luke 10:18).

We now reflect that relationship with Holy Spirit, he comes and lives in us and remains in us from the moment we receive Jesus as our Lord and saviour. **We are now just like the early disciples. We live constantly with Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives.**

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament…

Holy Spirit was there at creation, resting on the waters. The waters were a symbol of chaos and darkness, so when the Spirit of God rested on the waters, He brought order and peace, life and vitality. And His nature now, is to bring back order and life into our world, our lives, our families, our minds and to help bring us back into relationship with Father God.

In the Old Testament, Holy Spirit rested on people, at prominent times, for particular purposes. The Spirit came upon judges, warriors, prophets and kings, enabling people to hear the word of God and He brought extraordinary and miraculous powers at specific moments in time. **Skilled craftsmen called Bezalel and Oholiab were anointed by Holy Spirit to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness in such a way that it reflected God's glory.**

We will think more about Holy Spirit in the New Testament and the early church's relationship with Him in Part Two.

TEN THINGS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

He brings Freedom. (2 Cor 3:17)
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

He empowers us, brings boldness and many gifts. (Acts 4: 31)
After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

He confirms our identity as children of God. (Romans 8: 15)
The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'

Only the Holy Spirit knows the things of God and then He reveals them to us. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. (1 Cor 2: 11-12)

He comforts us, teaches us, and helps us to remember what God has said to us. (John 14: 26)
But the Advocate (comforter/helper), 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.

He makes the love of God known to us. (Romans 5: 5)
And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Hope comes from the Holy Spirit's power. (Romans 15: 13)
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit lives within us and considers us His temple. (1 Cor 3: 16) Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your bodies. (1 Cor 6: 19-20)

The Holy Spirit is a gift and God loves us to ask for Him and willingly gives Him to us. (Luke 11: 13)
If you then, though you are evil, 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!"

The Holy Spirit speaks to us. (Acts 13: 2)
As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

Did we know that it is Holy Spirit who takes responsibility for these things? Do we know that we can ask Holy Spirit to help us with anything, particularly when it comes to living a New Life for Jesus.

WORSHIP

PART ONE – EMPOWERED to know the heart of the Father

GOD'S GREATEST SEARCH ENGINE!

Have you ever 'googled' something and not found what you are looking for? That's got to be quite rare! Sometimes it takes a bit of searching. More often it's just there, just what you were looking for - straight away!

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
1 Cor 2: 9-10

Bill Johnson says this about these verses…

GOD'S GREATEST SEARCH ENGINE!

'The Holy Spirit searches for things that have never been heard by human ears or seen by human eyes. He is the greatest search engine in the whole universe. Talk about quick and accurate! He searches the greatest reservoir of information imaginable - the heart of the Father. Psalm 139 v 18 says God's thoughts about each one of us outnumber the sands on every seashore on the planet, and according to Jeremiah 29 v 11 all those thoughts are for your welfare, benefit and blessing. God has been around a long time, and He has had a long time to think about you. He's been living in the experience of knowing you long before you were ever born. He doesn't have a few random thoughts about you here and there. For trillions of years, God has been thinking about you and the Holy Spirit searches that whole archive and brings incredible treasure to you at precisely the right moment - if you're listening' *Bill Johnson (Supernatural Power of the Transformed Mind)*

What do you see?
What do you sense/feel?
What do you hear?
What do you think?

- What does Father God/Jesus want to say to me just at this moment? Or even what is he thinking about me right now.

- Have a two way conversation with Him for a moment. What would you like to say to him? Pause and see if he would like to say something back.

- Is there a mystery/a difficulty that you would like to be resolved but you are not sure what to do next? Ask Holy Spirit if Father God/Jesus would like to reveal anything to you, it might not be to solve the whole thing, just the next step.

- Is there something he would like you to do, with him or for him?
- Is there a gift he would like to give you, something to remind you of how precious you are to him, this moment with him, a promise etc. Hold out hands? You might sense or even see something being given to you.

PART TWO – EMPOWERED for transformation

I think we would all agree that it is not always easy sometimes to become more like Jesus, ***learning to think and live like him***. When someone gives up their old life and accepts Jesus as their Lord, they come just as they are, in a moment, with all that life has thrown at them, mess and baggage sometimes very much attached. We can't come any other way! But as we get to know God's character and his heart of grace for us, we grow to love him and want to please him more and more each day.

Firstly, we have to say our **'Yes'** to Him, but a **Disciple's Life** is one of growth, maturity and an ongoing walk with Jesus through every aspect of our lives. We do not come with it all sorted.

The Holy Spirit's role in our transformation journey is incredibly important to understand and to lean into. If we don't rely on his promptings in our life and his continuous reminder to us of our identity as children of God, we can start to feel that our tendency to sin is rooted in guilt and shame, condemnation and fear. **All things that God never intended for a child of God.**

Remember…Holy Spirit brings us our Freedom, not slavery to fear and sin.

Consider these two scriptures…

When he comes, he will prove **the world** to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: [9] about sin, because people do not believe in me; [10] about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; [11] and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.
John 16: 8-11

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.
And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'
Romans 8:15

The Spirit convicts the world (the unsaved) of their sin, and reminds (convinces) us of who we are.

Julian Adams puts it like this…

"Grace is not about what we can get away with, it's about what we get to enjoy now that we have found the right standing with Father. The Holy Spirit teaches us to say no to sin, because children of God don't behave that way. He doesn't do this by clobbering us every time we mess up. He does it by reminding us we are children of the King and should act according to our royal heritage."

Holy Spirit's Way	**Lies of the Enemy**
Convinces us to conform to our identity	Leads us into condemnation
Activated by the Father's love	Driven by guilt and shame
Confirms who we are	Attacks who we are
This leads to…	**This leads to…**
Pleasing the Father	Need for constant approval
Loving ourselves & others	Self-hatred and poor relationships
Feeling accepted	Feeling rejection
Fullness of life	Unfulfilled life
Empowerment to change	Weakened by failure
Full of faith & trust	Struggles with fears & anxiety
Freedom to go again	Driven by perfection
Experiences security	Feeling vulnerable
Freedom	Need to control
Disciplined & victorious life	Sin/repent cycles

Which way do we choose? Do we lean towards the way of lies about who we are sometimes? What causes this? What would help us to hear from Holy Spirit about how we live our lives free in our identity as children of God?

If we rely on Holy Spirit's guidance and pull to our identity in Christ over our lives, we should actually find ourselves falling into sinful ways less and less. The need to run to confession and repentance on a regular basis becomes less frequent and we naturally start to adopt the ways of Jesus more readily and easily. **It starts to become second nature to us to be 'Christlike'.**

Make this more of a lifestyle thing and give yourselves a spiritual health check every now and then.

The steps of repentance are…

- **Ask for Holy Spirit revelation**
- **Confess**
- **Speak out your willingness to repent - turn around and go the other way. To try again.**
- **Ask for Holy Spirit's help to do this. To protect, empower and strengthen you.**
- **Understand and accept the forgiveness and love the Father has for you.**
- **Thank and praise him.**

Having a 'Flappy Dove'

A well-known church leader found that imagining the Holy Spirit as a dove sitting on our shoulder (just like Jesus), really helped him. He is with us wherever we go and

whatever we do. He described the dove as getting 'flappy', when he strayed away from the life he should be leading in his new identity as a child of God. It helped him to move away and change direction. The dove never left him but it certainly let him know when things were not right!

 **Does the image of having a 'flappy dove' help you understand how the Holy Spirit will never leave us, but he will let us know when we are not living according to our new identity as the children of God?**

PART THREE – EMPOWERED to be fruitful

There are quite a few references in the bible that talk about us bearing fruit or being fruitful.

The fruit of the Spirit is a natural result of Holy Spirit living in us, just as apple trees bear apples, the Spirit of God produces fruit in us that reflect who He is.

Firstly - what is the fruit of the Spirit? We can find these referenced in Galatians 5: 22-23)

Love -	**God is love**
Joy -	**Deep gratitude and joy in all seasons**
Peace -	**Shalom: peace of heart and peace with others**
Patience -	**God's mercy and slowness to anger**
Kindness -	**God's kindness leads to repentance**
Goodness -	**His righteousness and holiness**
Faithfulness -	**Deep trust in God's character**
Gentleness -	**Power under control**
Self-Control -	**Strength to be true to His nature**

- **Naturally Producing Fruit**

'Abide in me…I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing'
John 15: 5

By remaining in the vine (Jesus), we can't help but produce fruit. It's a natural outcome. We bear fruit as we stay connected to Him. We also place ourselves in Gardeners hands. Jesus calls his Father 'The Gardener' in this chapter. He prunes us, cuts out what is dead and not doing us any good but there is a choice to remain in Jesus. To follow him, to stay in relationship with him, to become more like Him. It's not about trying harder but about yielding more.

The fruit of the Spirit is a mark that we are a disciple. We are choosing to follow him and as we do so, our lives begin to naturally reflect who Jesus is.

- **Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit**

We can play our part in producing fruit in our lives too. Some things may come very naturally to us and we may find ourselves thinking and behaving differently just because Holy Spirit is within us. But in some situations we can choose to trust God by following his instruction. For example, the choice to love and forgive our neighbour is also a choice to participate with God's Spirit, which leads to more and more spiritual fruit. Producing fruit is an organic process, good fruit produces more good fruit and so on.

We can also make good choices about how we live for Jesus.

- Renewing our minds (know the truth - God's word)
- Staying in his presence - being hungry for more of him
- Being filled with the Spirit - as we submit to him, he helps us to walk in freedom and fruitfulness
- Knowing and embracing our identity as a child of God
- Knowing and embracing God's word
- Staying in good community and having the support of God's family around you (not becoming isolated)

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams
of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither
– whatever they do prospers.
Psalm 1: 1-3

 **As we are becoming more like Jesus, what are we noticing about ourselves that has changed - what spiritual fruit is becoming more evident in our lives? What would we like to work on and cultivate?**

'Let me ask you something. If someone prays for patience, you think God gives them patience? Or does he give them the opportunity to be patient? If he prayed for courage, does God give him courage, or does he give him opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be closer, do you think God zaps them with warm fuzzy feelings, or does he give them opportunities to love each other?'

Morgan Freeman as 'God' in Evan Almighty

OUR RESPONSE

- Take some quiet moments before we next meet to talk to Holy Spirit. Ask Him the questions we thought about earlier and write down anything you think, feel, see or hear. Enjoy some moments with him.

- Be more aware of the fruit of Holy Spirit, what is becoming more natural to you and what opportunities have you found to be intentional with some of them. (Morgan Freeman style!)

- Think about the **'Flappy Dove'** every now and then. Did that help?