

# the ESSENTIALS

why truth matters

## OPENING UP



Have you ever experienced an unbelievable magic show? Do you know any magic tricks?

## TEXT

### I Believe in the Holy Spirit | Acts 8:9-24

<sup>9</sup> But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup> They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” <sup>11</sup> And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup> who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup> for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup> Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” <sup>24</sup> And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

**Big Idea:** The Holy Spirit comes as the gift of God, who changes hearts.

**Key Question:** How do I know I have the Holy Spirit

**Apostles' Creed Statement:** “I believe in the Holy Spirit”

1. Confrontation: Spectacle vs. Spirit (vv. 9-13)
2. Confusion: Gained vs. Given (vv. 14-19)
3. Correction: Religiosity vs. Repentance (vv. 20-24)

## DISCUSSION



- This week's message highlighted the line in the Apostles' Creed about the Holy Spirit. What previous knowledge do you have about the Holy Spirit? What has your experience been with the Holy Spirit?
- The signs and wonders that Philip performed by the power of the Holy Spirit amazed Simon and played a significant role in his decision to follow Christianity (vv.9-13). What initially drew you to Christianity? Can you relate to being impressed by something attractive Christianity seemed to offer you? Happiness? Prosperity? Friendship? If so, share what that was with the group. Have your motives changed? How did your heart change from wanting the "spectacle" to wanting the "spirit?"
- The Holy Spirit is the gift of God, being sent by the Father and the Son to equip and empower the believer to become like Christ. What are some ways you attempt to earn or gain God's grace and the power of the Spirit in your life? What dangers exist trying to earn from God instead of accepting the free gift He offers?
- When it's evident that Simon's heart is not in the right place, Peter rebukes him strongly (vv. 20-24), but instead of repenting, Simon asks Peter to pray for him. Why do you think Peter's rebuke was so strong? Why was it important that we pray on our own? What does true repentance look like?
- Read Galatians 5:19-24. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and have him residing within you because of your faith in Jesus? How do you think you can know the Holy Spirit is within you according to this passage?

## LIFE CHALLENGE



Jesus' invitation is to repent and believe the good news of his work on our behalf through the cross and resurrection. Everyone who believes in him receives the gift of the Spirit who transforms and changes our hearts and lives. Do you have the Holy Spirit? If not, pray and repent, accepting Jesus' free gift of salvation.

If so, how have you seen the work of the Spirit transform your heart and life? Practice clearly and succinctly communicating the ways the Holy Spirit has changed you. You may even consider writing them down. Pray about the opportunity to share these changes with someone who has not yet experienced the Holy Spirit. Help them understand how Jesus' free gift of the Holy Spirit has transformed your life.

## CLOSING PRAYER



Jesus, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Spirit, help us to acknowledge you as God! Help us to desire your presence, your intercession, and your work in our life. Change us to be more like Jesus. May the change in our lives be the evidence of the Power of God!