



LifeGroup Study

2024-02-18

OPEN

Power to Witness

Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome back to our study, Open to the Spirit. Over the six weeks of our series we have been exploring who the Holy Spirit is, how He is at work in our lives and how we can follow his lead. For this final week, our topic is “Power to Witness”. When we are open to the Spirit we are empowered to witness. This was the opening message in Acts and it was the Apostle Paul’s life mission. Do I love Jesus enough to want to point others to him? What does it mean to have power to be a witness for Jesus? These are some of the key questions we’ll look at in today’s study.

ICEBREAKER: I’ve Got the Power!

Back in the early 1990s I worked in sales at a Chevrolet car dealership. I well remember the day our dealership received a beautiful sports car, a brand new candy apple red corvette. It was a special edition corvette called a ZR-1. This limited production car had an amazing (at the time) 375 horsepower, but, and this was so cool, if you had a special key, you could access even more power, boosting your total horsepower to 405! When this car arrived at our dealership, I took it out for a test drive. Although I was a little freaked that I would put any scratch or mark on this perfect car, it was worth it because – I had the power! 😊 How about you? What experience have you had where you thought – I’ve got the power! **Share your story with the group!**

STUDY:

1. God's Spirit gives you POWER to witness for Jesus.

READ: Acts 1:8.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." NIV

- At the beginning of this verse, we read, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you ...". **What does it mean that we have received God's power?**

LEADER NOTE: If you are a follower of Jesus, you have received his power, through his Spirit in you, to be an effective witness for him. This should give us confidence. We don't have to rely on our own strength or ability. In fact, if we try and witness in our own strength, we'll fail! We have God's Spirit living in us, ready to speak through us when we step out in faith.

- God has given us his power so we can witness for him. **Do you see yourself as a witness for Jesus? Why or why not?**

LEADER NOTE: A witness is someone who gives a first-hand account of something they have seen, heard or experienced. To be a witness for Jesus is to tell others about Jesus, who he is and what he has done in your life. Some of your group members may fully own the idea that we are empowered by the Spirit to witness for Jesus. For others this may be a new idea. They may say, "I've never thought about this before" or "I think that's someone else's job!" The purpose of these initial questions is to gauge your group members' response to the mandate we have been given to witness for him.

2. Being BOLD for Jesus.

READ: Acts 4:23-31. The Believers' Prayer

Note particularly verses 29 and 31.

²⁹ Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great *boldness*. NIV

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*. NIV

- In their prayer, the believers ask God to help them speak for Him with great boldness. **Why did they ask for boldness?**

LEADER NOTE: The believers in the early church asked for boldness in light of the persecution they were experiencing. Peter and John had been arrested and jailed for witnessing about Jesus. (Acts 4:3)

They were questioned and threatened by the Sanhedrin (religious leaders) to stop witnessing about Jesus, “or else”. The believers knew that in their own strength they could not stand against these threats. They needed God’s supernatural power to continue to witness boldly for Jesus, even in times of persecution.

- The result of the believers’ prayer is that they were filled with the Spirit and spoke boldly for Jesus. (Acts 4:31) **Do you believe we have this same ability today? Why or why not?**

LEADER NOTE: Jesus promised his Spirit would empower all of his followers to be witnesses for him. (John 14:15) Like these early followers of Jesus, we also have the ability, through God’s Spirit, to speak boldly for him. Jesus told us that the Spirit would remind us of Jesus’ teachings (John 14:26) and help us to speak his truth (John 16:12). These truths give us confidence that we don’t witness on our own. God has given us his Spirit to empower us to be a bold witness for him.

3. Being PREPARED to witness.

READ: 1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, NIV

- **What does this verse tell us about being prepared to witness for Jesus?**

LEADER NOTE: In this verse we see that we are to always be *prepared* to be a witness for him. We should be ready for the Spirit’s prompting to speak a word for him. We should be prepared to give an *answer*. This means we should think about how we might respond to someone who says to us, “What’s different about you?” or “What do you believe?”. Our witness for Jesus should be done with *gentleness* and *respect*. Our heart attitude is key. The Spirit can help us witness for Jesus in a way that loves and honours the person we are sharing with.

4. WITNESSING for Jesus.

There are two powerful ways we can witness for Jesus. One is through sharing the gospel – God’s Story. The other is through sharing our testimony – My Story.

God’s Story

READ: 1 Corinthians 15:1-5

- **According to these verses, what is the heart of the Gospel?**

LEADER NOTE: The heart of the Gospel is this – Jesus died, was buried and rose again. There is a lot packed into those three truths. Jesus died to pay the price for our sin (see Romans 5:6-8). He was buried. He was laid in a tomb, confirming to many witnesses that he indeed had given his life. He rose again, showing that he has defeated sin and the grave for anyone who believes in him. (see Romans 10:9)

A key part of our telling God's story is the declaration, "Jesus is Lord".

READ: Romans 10:9-10

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

The simplest version of the gospel we can share is the declaration, "Jesus is Lord".

- **What does this declaration mean?**

LEADER NOTE: To declare, "Jesus is Lord", is to agree with what we read in the Bible about God's redemption plan for the world. "Jesus is Lord." He is currently ruling and reigning at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. "Jesus is Lord." He is Lord of my life!

- **Why is it good news to declare Jesus is Lord?**

LEADER NOTE: This declaration is good news about who Jesus is – his character. It is also good news about what he's done to save us. The statement, "Jesus is Lord", is a declaration of what he's currently doing to build his kingdom here on earth, and what he will do in the future when he returns to fully usher in the kingdom here on earth.

- **How would you explain to someone else what it's like to follow Jesus as your Lord?**

LEADER NOTE: To follow Jesus as my Lord means I am his image bearer. I am being formed into the image of Jesus, to share his love and show his glory. To follow Jesus as my Lord means he is my Life Leader. Through the power of his Spirit at work in my life, he leads me to follow Jesus, love God and love people.

My Story

God can use your story (your testimony) to have a powerful impact in the lives of others.

READ: 1 Timothy 1:12-17. The Apostle Paul's Testimony

- **What stands out to you about Paul's testimony?**

- **How was Paul's faith story a clear witness for Jesus?**

LEADER NOTE: The Apostle Paul's faith story is a powerful example of how God can use our story as a witness for Jesus. In his story, Paul shares about his life before Jesus. He is clear in his story about his need for God's grace. Paul also shares about his decision to follow Jesus when he says, "The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly." Finally, Paul shares about how God is at work in his life as God fills Paul with his mercy, grace and love. Paul's story is a clear witness for Jesus. In his story, Paul names Jesus as his Sin Forgiver and Life Leader.

Here is a helpful way to think through the main components of your story of how Jesus has changed your life.

Think of your story in 3 parts.

- i. **BEFORE.** My life before Jesus. What was your life like before you became a follower of Jesus? What key events or themes from your life could you share to indicate what your life was like before becoming a follower of Jesus?
- ii. **THEN.** My decision to follow Jesus. When did you decide to follow Jesus as your Sin Forgiver and Life Leader? What circumstances or new understanding did God bring into your life that opened the way for you to turn from your old life and place your faith and trust in Jesus?
- iii. **NOW.** How has God changed your life since you've become a follower of Jesus? How has he been growing your faith and making you more like his Son?

Consider writing out your story and sharing it with someone in your LifeGroup. Then, as God provides opportunities, share your story with friends who are not yet followers of Jesus.

- **How might God use your story to be a witness for Jesus?**

5. INVOLVE and INVITE

At Creekside, we have a statement that we encourage everyone in our church family to live out. It is INVOLVE AND INVITE. Our desire is that Creeksiders would be involved in the lives of people who are not yet followers of Jesus. As the Lord provides opportunities, Creeksiders should look for opportunities to connect with neighbours, co-workers, sports or hobby friends, and family members, people who are not yet followers of Jesus. Like Jesus, we can be involved in the lives of people through caring for them, getting to know them and showing them God's love. Then, as the Lord provides opportunities, we can invite people to Creekside, knowing that God's Spirit is at work. This is the power of invitation.

- What stories do you have of INVOLVE and INVITE? Perhaps you have invited someone to Creekside, or maybe someone invited you to Creekside. **Share your story with the group!**

LEADER NOTE: At Creekside, we are convinced that one of the most impactful ways God works in the lives of people who are not yet following Jesus is through Christ followers who are involved in their lives and invite them to check out who Jesus is. Creekside has "high invite" series throughout the year (Creekside at the Movies in September, Christmas Eve services in December, Easter Sunday services in the spring). These times are especially designed for Creeksiders to invite friends to join them at church. Outside of Sunday, Creekside offers many other programs that you can invite to. Alpha, for example, is a strategic ministry to invite your seeking friends to come discover more about Jesus.

6. **What is a key takeaway for you from this study about being empowered to witness?**

PRAYER:

For your prayer time, pray for people you know who are not yet followers of Jesus. Ask God for boldness to witness and for opportunities to invite your friends to take a step toward Jesus.