

Bay City Wesleyan Church
July 28, 2019

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Sunday Morning 07-28-2019

SUMMER TEACHING SERIES (June 2-August 13)

Learning to be Witnesses: Embracing Your Fears with Faith

Why do you get out of bed each day? What's your purpose? Why do you think God put you in this place and time? How much peace, love, joy, and hope do you want to experience? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you embrace your fears with faith as you learn to be one of Jesus's witnesses.

<http://bible.com/events/661862>

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Learning to be Witnesses: Embracing Your Fears with Faith

<https://imageproxy-cdn.youversionapi.com/320x320/https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/mushroom-event-images-prod/5722009-1558222827628.jpg>

Summer Series

Learning to be Witnesses: Embracing Your Fears with Faith

How much peace, love, joy, and hope do you want to experience? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you embrace your fears with faith as you learn to be one of Jesus's witnesses.

Acts 1:8 NET

8</small> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth."

<https://bible.com/bible/107/act.1.8.net>

The men and women in the early church learned to be witnesses AFTER Holy Spirit came.

Let's review what we've learned this far.

You can't help but be a witness when you're filled with Holy Spirit.

From death to life, you are created, redeemed, and empowered to be holy, healed, and hope-filled people.

Information about Jesus must lead to a life-transforming relationship with Jesus.

We need to state our dependence on Holy Spirit for a boldness that can change minds and lives.

Jesus calls us to discern and to defer to the Spirit's guidance, in place of our efforts to "make things happen." Anything can happen in a congregation that responds to Holy Spirit in obedience.

We will go to wherever and to whomever the Spirit sends us.

We need an experience of Jesus's awesome majesty that dwarfs our drive to run our lives. We need an encounter with Jesus's overwhelming love that drowns our desire to focus on our perks, preferences, and privileges. We need an understanding of Jesus's breathtaking holiness that moves us to stop managing our images and start conforming to his image.

DENIAL: Didn't Even Notice I Always Lie (to myself)
Citation: Sara Schram on Facebook

When Holy Spirit does what only he can do, people draw close to Jesus.

John Wimber on "Doing the Stuff"

Here's a short video about "the stuff" Holy Spirit can do in and through us.

<https://youtu.be/U7wLM77curg>

Acts 19:1-20 NIV

1</small> While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples 2</small> and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3</small> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. 4</small> Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." 5</small> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6</small> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. 7</small> There were about twelve men in all. 8</small> Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9</small> But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10</small> This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. 11</small> God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12</small> so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. 13</small> Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14</small> Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15</small> One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" 16</small>

Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. 17</small> When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. 18</small> Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they had done. 19</small> A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. 20</small> In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.
<https://bible.com/bible/111/act.19.1-20.NIV>

How can a handful of Christ-followers transform an entire region?
As I read and thought about this bit of history from Acts, I realized this is the wrong question. And a wrong question always gives the wrong answer.

THE RIGHT QUESTION: how does Holy Spirit intend to transform this region?

How does Holy Spirit intend to work through our congregation to tell 200,000 people in the Great Lakes Bay Region about Jesus?

Sermon in a Sentence:

Holy Spirit is the critical mass of prevailing power.

I see four indications of the Critical MASS needed to experience Holy Spirit's prevailing power in a region. Here they are in no order.

Miraculous Transformations

Amazing Confessions

Spirit's Animation

Superior Celebration of JESUS

Holy Spirit is the critical mass of prevailing power.

Holy Spirit's transforming power in individuals transforms whole regions.

Too big and too small are not a matter of numbers, they're a matter of attitude.

Any church that thinks they're succeeding in the mission merely because they're attracting more people is too big.

Any church that thinks they can't accomplish the mission until they attract more people is too small.

It's never about the size of the church.

It's about the size of the mission.

This is so true and hits me hard!

Citation: Chris Austin on Facebook

Others may have more (money, church attendance, talent), but you have enough. You have the same Holy Spirit.

Citation: Titus Romdenh, missionary in Cambodia, quoted by Matthew Hines on Facebook

"The Holy Spirit is not rare like gold, but abundant like oxygen."

Citation: Christy Lipscomb (quoted on Facebook by Matthew Hines)

We look for quantity and quality, but Holy Spirit provides the critical mass. Holy Spirit is the critical mass of prevailing power.

PRAYER CARD:

Come Holy Spirit,
we need you.
Come Holy Spirit, fill us.
Come Holy Spirit,
flow through us.
Come Holy Spirit,
show us who to notice.
Come Holy Spirit,
encourage us.
Come Holy Spirit,
empower us.
Come Holy Spirit,
tell us what to say.
Come Holy Spirit,
we need you.