

Small Group Study Guide

Pentecost Sunday |

Romans 5:5; Romans 15:3

From Sunday May 31, 2020

Appetizer:

Question: Have you ever had an experience where the label on something you bought didn't describe the contents well? Share those experiences with the group.

Comfortable or uncomfortable labels?

Pentecost Sunday reminds us, at the very least, that we are affiliated with a church (Emmanuel) that is labelled as being Pentecostal. "Pentecostal" means a lot of things to a lot of people—some good, and some not so good.

Question: What labels are you most comfortable with when it comes to both every day labels (Father, Mother, Teacher, Lawyer) and Faith labels (Evangelical, Christian, Pentecostal, Protestant, etc).

Have someone read Romans 5:5; 15:3. Romans reminds us briefly that we have this hope in having the Holy Spirit with us. Pentecost Sunday is about remembering that when Jesus left this world, he didn't leave us orphaned; the Holy Spirit would come to give us boldness and power and connection with God. Pentecost was also the feast that celebrated the first fruits of the harvest. This implies that the disciples of Jesus who received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost were the "first fruits" of the mission of the Holy Spirit on earth.

Main Course:

In reflecting on Pentecost, Jeff mentioned that we believe that the Holy Spirit has brought a new Spring, one in which people all over the world can genuinely experience God in the here and now.

Question: What ways do we genuinely experience God?

Further, it was suggested that Pentecost is about a partnership between the people of God and the Holy Spirit: There are some things we do, and there are things that the Holy Spirit does.

Question: What kinds of things can we be doing to support the mission of God? And what kinds of things do we simply HAVE to rely on God's Spirit for?

Finally, it was suggested that we are a people that long for a "new Spring" -a new season where the Holy Spirit reignites us again.

Question: What do you think a "New Spring" would look like? What would you HOPE that it looks like?

Dessert:

At the World Pentecostal Summit in Calgary in 2019, church leaders encouraged "the global Pentecostal family" to experience the fullness of the Spirit, to live in ways that are "naturally supernatural" and to "model Spirit-filled living and equip believers to experience His power and presence."

Being "Pentecostal" is a label that doesn't fit everyone that has had an encounter with the Holy Spirit. In fact, people are starting to embrace a more encompassing label called, "Spirit-Empowered." Those that fall under this label have typically experienced Holy Spirit encounters, like speaking in tongues, prophecies, etc. However, they may still attend Baptist or Anglican or Mennonite churches.

Perhaps as a group, you would like to experience more of the Holy Spirit, but have never felt comfortable praying for more of his presence in your life. Whether you are having a Zoom call meeting or meeting face to face, take some time to pray for the Holy Spirit to fill afresh each person in the group.

Avoid the temptation to have just one person lead out and pray to conclude the meeting. Rather, invite the group to take a moment in silence, each one praying for the Holy Spirit to speak to them. And then, encourage people to just pray out together prayers of thanksgiving and praise—it doesn't have to be one by one, but everyone just lifting their voices together in prayer. In some cases, someone might want to begin to just sing their prayer, in whatever tune comes to mind. Make sure everyone knows that no one is being judged on how they pray, but rather you are having a prayerful worship time together. Anticipate that the Spirit will move in your group during this time. And have no expectations: there is no failure in worshipping God together in community.