

When Heaven Invaded Earth

Connect Group Guide - 5.24.26

Opening Prayer

Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you witnessed unity accomplish something that individuals couldn't have done alone. What made the difference?

Key Scripture

- **Acts 2:1-5 (NIV)** *"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a mighty violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now they were staying in Jerusalem, God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven."*

Message Recap

This message draws a powerful connection between Memorial Day and Pentecost, reminding us that freedom always comes at a cost. Just as others sacrificed for our national freedom, Jesus gave His life so we could experience spiritual freedom and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost, ordinary believers were filled with extraordinary power, proving that God works through surrendered people, not just spiritual leaders. We are challenged to pursue unity, humility, and expectancy, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us just as He transformed the early disciples. This is not about religious activity but about living empowered lives that boldly share Jesus, love others well, and carry His presence wherever we go.

Main Points

- Pentecost happened when people were unified
- Pentecost was the sound of heaven arriving
- Pentecost was fire on ordinary people
- Pentecost was about empowerment, not entertainment
- Pentecost reversed what sin divided
- Somebody paid the price for our freedom
- The church was born in fire, not comfort

Discussion Questions

Unity & Preparation

1. **The message emphasized that "God moves when people are unified."**
 - What are some things that divide Christians today?
 - How can we prioritize unity without compromising truth?
 - What does it mean to "lay aside our preferences for a greater cause"?
2. **The 120 believers waited together in the upper room.**
 - What does it look like to wait on God in today's fast-paced world?
 - How can we create spaces for unified prayer and expectation in our lives?

The Holy Spirit's Power

3. **Pastor Mike said, "Maybe we should start by doing what Jesus already did before trying to do greater things."**
 - What are the foundational things Jesus did that we should prioritize? (loving the unlovable, feeding the hungry, etc.)
 - Where do you see yourself falling short in these basics?
4. **"The Holy Spirit is not just emotional excitement. He is the breath of divine life."**
 - How would you describe your current relationship with the Holy Spirit?
 - What "dead things" in your life need God's breath to come alive?

Ordinary People, Extraordinary Power

5. **The fire rested on ordinary people, not just priests and prophets.**
 - How does knowing you carry God's presence change the way you approach daily life?
 - What keeps you from fully embracing that you are a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit?
6. **"People should be changed just by being in your presence because you're carrying God's presence."**
 - Is this true of your life? Why or why not?
 - What changes might need to happen for this to be more evident?

Empowerment & Mission

7. **"The early church didn't change the world because they had political authority. They changed the world because they had spiritual authority."**
 - Where do we tend to look for power instead of relying on the Holy Spirit?
 - What would it look like for your group/church to operate in spiritual authority this week?
8. **Pastor Mike shared about pushing away the doves, comparing it to pushing away the Holy Spirit.**
 - Have you ever "pushed away" the Holy Spirit because He was making things messy or uncomfortable?
 - What invitation might God be extending to you that you've been resisting?

Courage Over Comfort

9. **"Pentecost did not come to create comfortable Christians. It came to create courageous Christians."**
 - In what areas of your life are you choosing comfort over courage?
 - What would courageous Christianity look like in your workplace, family, or community?
10. **The message ended with a call to decision.**
 - What decision is the Holy Spirit calling you to make today?
 - How can this group support you in taking that step?

Key Takeaways

- **Unity precedes power** - God moves when His people come together in humility and expectation
- **The Holy Spirit empowers ordinary people** - You don't need to be special; you need to be surrendered
- **Transformation requires the Holy Spirit** - Without Him, Christianity becomes cold religion
- **The gospel unites what sin divided** - Barriers of race, class, and culture fall at the cross
- **Freedom always costs someone something** - Jesus paid the ultimate price; the disciples sacrificed comfort for courage
- **We carry God's presence** - You are a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE

Option 1: Unity Builder

- Reach out to someone in the church you don't know well and invite them for coffee
- Pray specifically for unity in your church and in the broader body of Christ
- Ask forgiveness from someone you've had division with

Option 2: Holy Spirit Awareness

- Each morning this week, pray: "Holy Spirit, I surrender to You. Have Your way in me today."
- Journal about moments when you sense the Holy Spirit prompting you
- Before making decisions, pause and ask, "What does the Holy Spirit want?"

Option 3: Courageous Obedience

- Identify one thing God has been calling you to do that you've been avoiding
- Share it with one trusted person for accountability
- Take one concrete step toward obedience this week

Option 4: Presence Carrier

- Before entering any space (work, home, store), remind yourself: "I carry God's presence"
- Look for one opportunity each day to let God's love flow through you
- Ask someone: "How can I pray for you?" and actually pray right then

Prayer Requests & Closing

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to different perspectives on Israel; focus on biblical teaching rather than politics
- Encourage participation from everyone, but don't force anyone to share
- If someone wants to give their life to Christ during discussion, be prepared to pray with them
- Keep the discussion focused on personal application, not just theological debate
- Consider inviting someone knowledgeable about Israel or Jewish culture to a future meeting