

Di121 Effective Communication

Lesson Di121-2 Power and Authority for Communicating

Do you feel inadequate for the task before you? Are you afraid people will not listen to you as you speak about living the Christian life? Perhaps you fear persecution or are just a timid person. Have you said to yourself, “I do not know if I am able to share my faith with others or not”? Jesus would tell you today not to be afraid. He wants to give you what you need, just as he gave to his first disciples.

It was the evening of the day Jesus had risen from the dead. The disciples had gathered together in a house and had locked the doors. They were afraid of the Jewish leaders, concerned for their own lives. Perhaps they discussed the words of Mary Magdalene. She claimed to have seen and spoken with the risen Lord. Perhaps they were considering whether they should believe her amazing words?

While they were in that state of fear and doubt, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you!” What a shock! How did he get in when they knew the doors were locked? After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. This convinced them that he really had risen from the dead. They were overjoyed! It really was Jesus!

Now Jesus had come for a second purpose, so he said again, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:19-21). Jesus was sent into the world as a human being to reveal God’s salvation plan for all people. He was telling them they would become his witnesses. Just as he had witnessed about the Father, so now they would be witnesses about Jesus.

They would not do this in their own strength; he was giving them a special helper. Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” The breath of God had given Adam, the first man on earth, physical life. Now Jesus was giving them spiritual life. They were born of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit would give them all they needed to complete his work on earth.

Then Jesus added, “If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” He was promising them power and authority over sin. Those who believed their witness and testimony would be forgiven and saved. Those who rejected them would not find forgiveness.

The disciple Thomas was not with them when Jesus appeared that night. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” When he heard this great news, he doubted, just as the others had when they had heard Mary. He said, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Again the doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he spoke directly to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:24-29)

What does this story teach? Feeling inadequate or afraid can turn out to be a good thing. When we realize we have no strength, we learn to depend on the Holy Spirit. It is always a good thing to say, “Help me Lord,” in every situation. He has promised to send the Spirit to help us in our weaknesses. Then we can say with the apostle Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). Paul realized he could not do the work of the gospel except with God’s power.

Only after Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was he enabled to preach the gospel effectively. On that day about 3,000 people believed in Jesus as Messiah. Not long before, Peter had denied that he even knew Jesus. The difference for him was the power, authority, and anointing he received from the Spirit of God. When he was filled with the Spirit, he could effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers.

This story is **important** because it shows how Jesus encouraged his disciples. He gave them his peace, new birth in the Spirit, and the baptism of the Spirit so they would have power to be his witnesses.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that being baptized in the Holy Spirit gives believers the power and authority to be effective witnesses.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. What did Jesus say to the fearful disciples when they were hiding behind a locked door?
[Pause]
A. If you answered that Jesus said, “Peace be with you!” you are correct.
2. What commission did Jesus give his disciples when he came to them? [Pause]
A. If you answered that Jesus said, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you,” you answered correctly.
3. How were the disciples empowered for effective witness? [Pause]
A. If you said, “The Father poured out the Holy Spirit upon them on the Day of Pentecost,” you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen as many times as necessary to learn the story. Think of someone or a group of people that the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to reach with the message of salvation. Then pray and believe that the Spirit will guide you and give you the right words to say. Believe that they will listen to you and understand what you are saying. Pray that they will accept and believe.

Memorize Philippians chapter 4, verse 13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Share this verse and its truth with someone. Then tell them about a time when you were fearful and Jesus gave you his peace.

Also memorize John chapter 20, verse 21: As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”