

Jesus I Know, but Who Are You?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 October 2021

Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 0 0] before Paul discerned that something was amiss. These disciples whom Paul had thought were Christians were missing something. So he asked them in verse 2, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?

This is Paul's litmus test. In the New Testament, the reception of the Holy Spirit is the decisive mark of the Christian. Romans 8 verse 9 says, Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

1 Corinthians 12 verse 13 says, In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

The Christian is, by definition, someone who has the Spirit of Christ. All Christians have received the Spirit. So when Paul asks those men, Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?

He's really asking them whether or not they are really Christians. Whether or not they really come to believe in Jesus. And their response is revealing. They say, No, we had not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

[1 : 1 3] Matt pitched on his passage last week, and he mentioned that these were not disciples of Jesus, rather they were disciples of John the Baptist. They were baptized with water for repentance, with John's baptism, but they have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire, which is Jesus' baptism.

That's why in verse 5, Paul baptizes them in the name of the Lord Jesus, which shows that they have not been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They were not yet Christians. They were not aware that Jesus had died, risen, and ascended to the heavens, and that he has sent his Holy Spirit to his people to mark the new era of God's salvation.

So when at the time of their baptism, Paul laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes upon them. Genuine repentance from sin, genuine faith in Jesus, and Christian water baptism, they are always accompanied by the reception of the Holy Spirit, by Jesus' baptism with Holy Spirit and fire.

And we should not make a mistake, because there's a big difference between life with the Spirit and life without him. Jesus said to his disciples in John 16, verse 7, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away.

[2 : 3 9] For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. Isn't that amazing? Jesus told us that it's better for Him to leave, so that we might have the Holy Spirit with us.

But sometimes, I think we live like Jesus never fulfilled that promise. We think of holding the Holy Spirit as this wallflower who sits quietly in a corner and stays out of everyone's way.

But the book of Acts paints a radically different picture. In Acts 1-8, which is a thesis of this book, Jesus says, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, to the end of the earth. To have the Holy Spirit is to have power. And our pastor this morning, she knows that clearly.

He says in verses 11-12, And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul. So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the stake.

[3 : 43] And their diseases blessed them, and the evil spirits came out of them. Earlier in Acts, in chapter 5, it says that many signs were done regularly by the apostles.

But what's happening here is not a regular, run-of-the-mill miracle. These are extraordinary miracles. And what's extraordinary about it is not the nature of the miracles themselves, but the manner in which these miracles are being performed.

The sick being healed, and evil spirits being cast out. These are nothing new in the book of Acts. A lame man was healed in chapter 3. Aeneas the paralytic was healed. Dorcas was raised from the dead in chapter 9.

A trickle was made to walk in chapter 14. A demon-possessed slave girl was exorcised in chapter 16. So these miracles in chapter 19 were not extraordinary in and of themselves.

Luke tells us exactly why they were extraordinary. Verse 12, So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them.

[4 : 52] Usually, miracles were mediated directly by God's chosen agents. But in these unusual cases, miracles were mediated indirectly by common everyday objects that had touched God's chosen agents.

This is similar to what happened in Luke chapter 8, when a woman who had discharged her blood for 12 years believed that if she just touched the hem of Jesus' garment, the fringe of his garment, that she was healed.

And with that faith, she touched, reached out to touch the edge of his garment, and she was healed in me. Evidently, God does perform miracles sometimes through things that have touched his spirit of little children.

How many of us, if today we've heard a report of such things happening around us, would dismiss it out of hand as baseless superstition of theologically unmercable?

I think we're too quick to put God in a box of hearts. God is the creator and Lord of heavens and the earth. He is not bound by the ordinary laws of nature. God can do what he pleases.

[6 : 03] And he can heal in any manner he pleases. And evidently, God does heal in this way. At times. Gifts of healing are one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 that God distributes sovereignly among his people.

And 1 Corinthians 14.1 commands us to earnestly desire those gifts. But I also want to caution us about the other extreme.

This account of the miracles that occurred through handkerchiefs and aprons that Paul had touched is not a blueprint for a successful healing ministry. These are extraordinary miracles precisely because God does not usually work in these ways.

Note that Paul doesn't start in a handkerchief ministry. He's not going around collecting handkerchiefs, piling up, touching them all, blessing them, and then saying, hey, ship them out to as many people as you can.

He doesn't do that. He definitely doesn't see this as an opportunity for lucrative business and starts selling such handkerchiefs which some people do.

[7 : 26] And there's a very simple reason for that. Look at who is the subject of the verb in verse 11. And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.

God was doing the miracles. Paul is not performing these miracles. God is the one doing it. Paul is the medium, the conduit through which God is using his healing power.

This is why Paul cannot start a handkerchief ministry because he cannot guarantee that the handkerchiefs will heal anyone. The source of healing power is God, not Paul.

Paul. You can implore your mailman as much as you want, but he cannot guarantee you that you will get a Christmas present this year.

Why? Because he's just a delivery man. He doesn't send the gifts. A guitar cannot make music by itself because it's only an instrument.

[8 : 35] It needs a musician who knows how to play it. Likewise, Paul cannot heal anyone because he's not the one who heals.

He's simply the instrument. It is God who heals through him. So this is reason to be humble when God does use us at times miraculously to heal sick people or to cast out demons which some of us have experienced.

We are not great. We are not powerful. We merely serve a great and powerful God. So as God is doing extraordinary miracles to Paul, some pretenders want in on the action.

They're called here to seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva. Being sons of a Jewish high priest, these men have an impeccable religious pedigree. They appear to have leveraged their position and standing well to carve out a place for themselves in this exorcism in this group.

And it says in verse 13 that some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who are in evil spirits saying, I adjure you by the Jesus when Paul proclaimed.

[9 : 53] To invoke the name is a technical expression that refers to calling. It's an incantation, incantation that ancient people used to call forth a spirit.

To name a name, to invoke the name. By naming a person or spirit or deity with higher authority, these people believed that they could drive out weaker, lesser spirits.

And this belief that names have magical powers and that secret knowledge of such names of deities and spirits conferred power on that person is found in numerous ancient and pagan texts.

So the seven sons of Sceva try to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus in order to drive out the evil spirits. And theoretically this should have worked.

Right? Because Ephesians 1 20-21 tells us that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named.

[11 : 06] Not only in this state but also in the world to come. The words rule, authority, power, dominion are all words that the ancient people used to refer to magical and magical text angelic powers. Spirits.

Paul is saying that all spiritual forces are subject to Jesus because the Lord Jesus has the name that is above every name. so that theoretically invoking the name of Jesus, the highest name of Jesus should have worked in casting out these evil spirits.

But it doesn't work. And the outcome is terrifying. It says in verses 15-16 but the evil spirit answered them, Jesus I know and Paul I recognize.

But who are you? And the man in whom was the evil spirit left on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The evil spirit freely admits, Jesus I know. Yes, I know Jesus. He has complete authority over me and there is nothing I can do about it.

[12 : 18] I know Jesus. Oh, I also know Paul. He's been wreaking havoc. He's full of the Holy Spirit. He's a servant of the mighty Lord Jesus and there's nothing I can do about him either.

But who are you? Who do you think you are? You're a fraud. You have no authority to cast me out.

You think I care that your daddy is the high priest? You have no spiritual power. You are no high.

And aided by the power of this demon, this man who is possessed by the demon overpowers all seven sons of demon. And they leave with their tails behind their legs, between their legs.

And that's the way you say it right? Totally exposed, embarrassed, abused. Ironical, they came out to drive out the demon. Instead, they're joined out by the demon.

[13 : 33] This begs the question, why didn't their exercise work? it's because they're only pretenders. They're not Christians.

They have not been baptized in the name of Jesus. They don't actually bear the name of Jesus, so they don't carry his authority. They don't have the Holy Spirit.

They don't even know Jesus is baptized. They only know Paul, who seemed to have great spiritual power, and was performing miracles in the name of Jesus.

So look at their incantation. That's why it's secondhand. They don't say, I abjure you by the name of our Lord Jesus. No, they don't say that. They say, I abjure you by Jesus whom Paul proclaims.

What's sad about this. But the Lord Jesus is not someone you can manipulate for your own purposes through some magical incantation.

[14 : 32] The Lord Jesus through those who have believed in him. Those who have pled allegiance to him. Those who have been indwelt by the spirit of Christ.

It's not the formula in Jesus name that matters as much as the reality of being united with Jesus through faith. Do you know Jesus?

Have you been indwelt by the spirit of Jesus? Do you have a personal relationship with him? Or do you merely invoke the name of Jesus when Paul proclaims?

Or Sean proclaims? Or your parents proclaims? Or your spouse proclaims? Or your friend proclaims? Do you have first hand knowledge of Jesus or only a second word?

Knowledge. It's how you tell the difference. Jesus said in Matthew 7 21 to 23 Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.

[15 : 52] Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never leave you away from the illegal doors.

What is Jesus saying? There are many people like the sons of Sceva who try to use Jesus' name for their own purposes, try to use Jesus' name to do miracles, try to use Jesus' name.

However, the true people of God are those who do the will of the Father. True Christians don't use Jesus to advance themselves.

They renounce themselves as following him. Some politicians use the Bible as a prop.

Use the church building as a formula just to get the Christian book. Some people repeatedly bring up their religious upbringing.

[17 : 06] I grew up going to church on the campaign trail. Not because their views are actually informed by scripture, by their faith, wanting to earn people's trust and win their books.

They use the name of Jesus for self advancement. They don't proclaim Jesus. They're essentially just name dropping to boost their own credentials, when in reality they have no relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Some people use Jesus like a charm or a talisman. They wear a cross necklace or put a crucifix on the wall, put a statuette of a Christian saint, a Catholic saint in the garden, get their infants baptized in the church even though they don't go to church the rest of their life.

And their lives are utterly inconsistent with the word of God. They think that by doing so they'll bring blessing and good fortune upon us. Some people think of faith and Jesus in the same way they think of life insurance.

They think all they need to do is pay their dues on time, give a little bit of money to the church here and there, attend worship occasionally, once in a while, maybe on Easter and Christmas, and they think they'll be covered when they die.

[18 : 23] Their religion is entirely think that they're masters of their own faith. Jesus is not their Lord because they don't do his will. Let us not think that Jesus exists to meet our needs and make us feel better about ourselves.

Jesus does not exist for our self-advancement or self-fulfillment. The church is not ultimately about us. It's about God.

We are worshiping people. Do you ask God to promote your own agenda in life or do you submit to Him?

Jesus? Do you cherry pick and use the word of God to justify your views and behaviors or do you let the word of God search you and challenge you?

If someone were to draw a picture of your hopes and dreams would Jesus be that picture? Only those who have surrendered to the worship of Christ enjoy the power and privileges of being in Christ.

[19 : 55] Jesus is not content with you just knowing about Him. He wants you to know Him. He loves you and invites you into a relationship with Him.

He wants to dwell within you by His Spirit. He wants to be closer. So then how should we respond to Jesus?

That brings us to my last point in the believer's repentance. He says in verse 17 And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus both Jews and blacks and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

The news of what happened to the Jewish exorcist quickly made its rounds throughout Ephesus and as a result fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled.

Hey, remember those sons of Sceva that fleeced us last time and took thousands from us? They were just exposed the other day. It turns out they're charlatans pretenders but guess what?

[21 : 08] That Jesus that Paul proclaims he had really weight authority power. So Jesus' name is lifted up and many people respond by putting their faith in Jesus.

He says in verses 18-20 Also many of those who were now believers came confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.

And they counted the value of them and found they came to 50,000 pieces of silver. So the word continued to increase and prevail mightily. Spirits and magic were part of everyday life in the ancient world.

So it's not surprising that many of the newcomers to Christianity were practicing the magic arts as well. But after coming to faith in Jesus they came confessing and divulging these practices.

They voluntarily nobody this is not the inquisition nobody saying bring all your books we're going to burn them. No they voluntarily bring the books that they had paid hefty sums for and burned them.

[22 : 25] these books cost a lot of money because they contained these secret incantations that they believed conferred power on the people who knew them. It says total value of the earned books came to 50,000 pieces of silver.

A piece of silver is a reference to the Greek drachma which is a common laborer's entire day's worth of wage. One silver. 50,000 silver.

If you divide that by 365 that's the equivalent of 137 laborer's annual wage with no days off.

If we say that an average worker today in the U.S. earns \$15 per hour \$120 per day 50,000 drachmas will equal approximately \$6 million.

Those are some expensive books. People's life investments. Why did people do that?

[23 : 28] Why did people buy it? Because they thought if I just had this spell if I just had this incantation I can make sure me and my family were healthy were wealthy we have a successful life.

People had put their hopes and dreams into these things but very gladly they come now and burn them. They not only renounce them for themselves they don't want anyone else to use these futile books.

Scripture uniformly condemns all forms of divination witchcraft and interpretation of omens because these are all attempts to seek guidance and spiritual help and power apart from God.

They are human attempts to know and control the future to be self sufficient to cut God out of the picture.

They are an affront to God's sovereignty. They are a rejection of God's gracious and loving initiative to speak to us to relate to us to guide us to save us to save us.

[24 : 45] If you have dabbled in the occult and nowadays this is more and more common Ouija boards power cards or scopes witchcraft if you have visited mediums and psychics you must repent and never return to your faith.

If you have Buddhist Muslim Hindu Native American or other religious amulets or talismans in your room in your house if you have idols you must rid yourself of these things turn from those vain things to the living God and this passage is also relevant for those of us who haven't had anything to do with such things people in the ancient world bought these books and magical incantations as a way of securing their health and wealth and prosperity as a way of controlling their lives and their future in what ways do you try to control your own life to control your own future what are the things that you bank on what do you rely on for your security and sense of well-being do you do you rely on money 1

Timothy 6 17 commands us not to set our hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy you try to control your life and your future by being a workaholic you try to control your life by worrying excessively you think that you can have control of things by worrying I'm not saying don't save your money or invest your money or don't work hard I'm not saying don't make plans but we must not rely on these things do these things apart from our dependence on God we must be careful that nothing displaces God as our source of hope and trust after all that's what it means to follow

Jesus to continually trust ourselves more and more that's why verse 18 calls the new Christians believers that's what we're called Christians are not called the true exorcists or the true miracle workers in contrast to Jewish exorcists Christians are not defined primarily by what they do they're defined by what they believe by the name they proclaim and what exactly do they believe in verse 20 so the word of the Lord continue to increase and prevail minorly and the result of all this the result of God working extraordinary miracles is not an unhealthy fascination in pursuit of only those supernatural occurrences the result the consequences the prevailing of God's mighty word increasing faith in the good news the saving news of Jesus Christ people in the world try all kinds of religions philosophies and practices and methods to get in touch with God or to get to know

God but God has already revealed the one definitive way by which we are to come to know him and that is Jesus Hebrews 1 1-2 says long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things Jesus is the word of God in human flesh he is the only son of God Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God himself that's why Jesus said in John 14 verse 9 whoever has seen me has seen the father don't listen to the peppers of half truths and lies who have only a distorted glimpse of the spiritual reality don't be misled by the carnivores look to

[29 : 33] Jesus listen to Jesus Jesus said in John 14 6 what a wonderful promise I am the way I am the truth I am the life no one comes to the father except through me what Jesus taught what Jesus did is reserved for us according to the scriptures so that we might get to no end we don't need any magic house because we have a holy world don't think that there is an alternate route to God there is no other way that God is a way for our salvation I plead to you we have not put your faith in Jesus we were all once sinners who turned to our own way we have all rebelled against

God our creator we have not lived in accordance with his will to do his will we have lived for ourselves and that is rebellion that is treason that is sin against the holy and righteous God and what we deserve was cut off from God's presence God's righteousness his justice demanded our condemnation but because God loves us because God wanted to save a people for himself he sent his only son Jesus to die on the cross for our sin Jesus the innocent one the faithful one dies the death of guilty ones like you and you and then he raised him from the dead to give us new life eternal life resurrection life have you turned away from your sins and turned to

Jesus is your life characterized by the self promoting powerless pretense of the exorcist or by the Christ exulting genuine repentance of the Lord and if you have repented if you seek to obey God and follow him be encouraged be assured because that does not happen without the spirit no one apart from the spirit desires the things of God no one apart from the spirit repents of their sin we all have varying levels of fullness of the spirit but every Christian knows

Jesus every Christian has the spirit and pray that every single one of you believes in let's pray God we thank you for resurrection life eternal heavenly inheritance secured for us by our Lord Jesus help us never to lose sight of it never lose a sense of wonder and mercy in grace in Jesus name you pray amen■ about God to ask of you