

Sunday Assembly Reflection

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REFLECTION: Jim Reynolds introduced his teaching on the Four Immersions or baptisms by acknowledging that he'll need to also be answering the question—'Who cares?' Why would we care about baptism of water, or spirit, of suffering, or of judgment?

In John 1:33-34, the Israelites were excited about the water baptism by John because he was announcing a coming king for whom they've been waiting several hundred years. The most precious thing to the ancient Israelites was the presence of God, and after He left the temple in 600BC they were left with dead religion. But the presence of God finally returned in the person of Jesus. His presence was astoundingly good news then, but how do we experience His presence now?

In Matthew 3:11, John says that he baptizes with water, but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire, and it is the Holy Spirit who connects us to God's presence. Without the Holy Spirit we feel like orphans and cannot know the love of God that surpasses knowledge. It is because His love surpasses human knowledge that it takes the Holy Spirit to help us get this relationship. Otherwise, we are like the Israelites going through dead religious motions, without His presence in us. We are not really living. That should make us care.

When Jim spoke of the baptism of fire or judgment, he said that means that if something in our lives doesn't belong in God's future, it doesn't belong in our present. And it is the Holy Spirit who helps us get rid of these things. For me, the things that don't belong and are hurting me are my legitimate but misdirected longings. I spend a lot of energy striving after what I think will satisfy me such as a companion, as though the presence of another human is the answer to my longing. I know that isn't true; I've tasted His presence and it is the only thing that satisfies, but everything around me tempts me to think otherwise. As Jim closed with, I need to pray, "Holy Spirit dunk me all the time."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *Please pick one of the questions below to answer in your small groups; more if you have time. Be sure to pray for each other at the end.*

- Jim stated that the fruit of the spirit must always be ahead of the gifts of the spirit or we can actually harm people. Talk about a time you've seen a gift shared without the fruit, or if you've not seen it, what it might look like.
- How do you approach God in your prayers? Formally? Childlike? What is the Holy Spirit's role in your prayer life?
- What occupies your private thoughts that doesn't belong in God's future? Worry? Secrets? Self-pity? Criticalness or control? Other? How is it keeping you from experiencing His love and presence?

Sunday Assembly Reflection is written by Lake Highlands Church members for Lifegroups and individuals to receive more from the spoken Sunday Assembly message through reflection and quick discussion. It is published on the first three Monday's of the month. If you are interested in knowing more about a Lifegroup or have a question about the reflection, please contact Donjalea Crane, donjalea@lakehighlandschurch.org or contact one of our Lifegroup leaders by going to lakehighlandschurch.org/Lifegroup-listings.

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