

“The Breath”

John 20:19-23

Introduction

To experience the full power of the Holy Spirit, you must connect the risen Christ with the written Word of God. Doing so will make it possible for you to experience the breath of God in your life and a peace that passes all understanding, regardless of your circumstances. Just as the physical respiratory system is in trouble when you can't breathe, your spiritual respiratory system will suffer when you cannot connect with the breath of life.

Many places in the Bible mention the breath of God through the use of the Hebrew word ruach or the Greek word pneuma (Gen 1:2; 2:7; John 3:5-8; 6:63). The presence or absence of the breath of God in your life is directly correlated to your engagement with the Holy Spirit. Job 33:4 tells us that the breath of God is the Spirit of God, “And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” Since the Spirit of God lives inside the believer, each person who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ has ongoing direct access to the breath of life that will help them live abundantly. In John 20:19-23, Jesus told His disciples, “peace be with you” and “receive the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit of God is available to every believer and offers peace, direction, and life.

When Jesus came to tell the disciples about the promise of the Holy Spirit, He found the disciples in the same position many people are in today: they were afraid. We live in a world where many people are afraid and feel like they cannot breathe due to the pressures and challenges they face each day. However, we can be encouraged because all creation exists and is renewed in life because of the Spirit (Ps 104:30). Despite their fear, everyone can benefit from the life of the Spirit and has reason to praise God. When you cultivate a relationship with the risen Christ by actively obeying Him and listening to His word, you are positioned for His breath. Many people who struggle to breathe do their best by living in their own strength instead of focusing on making a dynamic relationship with God a way of life. The power of the Spirit requires more than a Sunday visit (Gal 5:25). If chaos controls you, you will not live in peace because the Holy Spirit's presence and power cultivate peace.

The peace that God gives through the Spirit is a peace that surpasses understanding (Phil 4:7). If we are experiencing fear, we must assess whether we are living apart from the Spirit and forgetting what God says. Even the disciples who had the physical presence of the living Word got scared. This teaches us that we can be close to the presence of God and not experience the full benefits of His presence. When you find yourself in a situation where you are not experiencing God's peace, this is an invitation to go back to the Word of God. The Spirit's power works in concert with the Word. Ezekiel 37:1-14 reminds us that God's Word – combined with the Spirit – can bring even dry bones to life. You are designed to live life abundantly and have the breath of life through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Getting Started

1. Are you currently experiencing more peace or fear? Share your answer and the reason for your answer with your group.
2. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to live abundantly. What do you consider to be the difference between merely existing and living an abundant life?

Let's Get Personal

1. What does it look like for you to engage with the Holy Spirit and experience the breath of life? How do you practically connect with the Spirit of God in your everyday life?
2. Even the disciples struggled with fear when they had access to the physical presence of God. This means that we can be around God and not fully experience God's presence through the life-giving Spirit. When you think

about your connection to the Spirit, would you consider yourself fully engaged with His presence or merely around His presence?

3. The power of the Spirit is activated through God's Word. Are you currently committed to the study of God's Word? How is that helping you experience the Spirit of God? How has that allowed you to experience abundant life?

Take the Next Step

1. Have you ever experienced a season of "dry bones," as mentioned in Ezekiel 37? Share what that season looked like for you. How did the breath of the Spirit bring you to a place of peace and confidence in your relationship with God?
2. Is there an area in your life where you currently need to experience God's peace instead of fear? Spend some time looking up a few of the Scriptures listed below and read them aloud in your group. Then take time in your group to handle your fears and concerns to God through prayer.
3. Want to dig deeper? Take a look at the following passages: John 3:5-8; 6:63; 10:10; 11:21; 16:33; 20:19-23; Genesis 1:2; 2:7; Ephesians 2:1; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30; Revelation 3:20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Galatians 5:25; Philippians 4:7; Mark 4:35-41; Psalm 119; and Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Renew Your Mind

"It is the Spirit who gives life."

John 6:63a
