

## The Power of the Holy Spirit

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Vic mentioned college students, wave at me if you're student at one of our local colleges or universities. Just lift your hand up high right now, let me see where you are all over this room. Look at that. That's awesome. We are really excited about you being here, and maybe this is the first time for you to be in this room and we look forward to welcoming you here. I hope that you'll make college Bible study a part of your experience. That meets at 9am in the basement here under the chapel in front of me and then come on in here for worship at the 10:30 hour. I hope you'll bring friends with you. Don't worry about the space. We'll work on that and figure that out just keep bringing people with you, this room is built to respond. People who've been here for a few weeks have heard me say that. These steps across the front, it could be a lot narrower if it was just meant to get up and on the stage, but they're wide. They're there in times of response for you to come and pray, for you to respond to the leadership of the spirit. This morning I'll be down front after the message, during a time of response, and invite you to come and let's pray together and talk about what the spirit of God is saying to your heart. We want you to be free to worship the Lord in this room today. I want you to keep coming back and I want you to feel like that this is a home for you while you're away from home. And it's not a place just to sit and watch, we want you to participate. Participate in worship, find a place to serve, get connected to a group of people, meet some people older than you that will wind up being friends for the rest of your life. A lot of families in our church go to weddings of college students because they met the students when they were here, and they have just stayed friends for life. I want to encourage you to really just engage and dive in to church, family and let the local church be a part of your college experience while you're here in this city and in this area.

My wife and I, we have five children, and we've had the experience with four of them so far of taken them to college and dropping them off. And the experience has been the same in every instance. I've never wanted to leave. And I've always thought to myself, in my mind when I've got in the car to drive away that I don't think I'm finished. I think there's something else probably I needed to say or something else I want to remind them of. Some way I want to try to coach them or protect them or parent them. I think in my mind sometimes, I wish I could be a fly on the wall or a bug in the ear or a passenger in the car seat beside them. And of course they would never go for that. They're ready to be independent and on their own, but I think to myself, I've been through it. It's a rough world. It's a rough and tumble world and there's a lot of things coming that I think to myself, I could help you. I could do something. I could be something, I could stand in the way of something that might come your way. And as I think about that as an earthly father, it doesn't take long for my mind to go to my heavenly father. I think if that's just in a small way, what I think about my children, how much our heavenly father must think about his children. And I have good news for you today, our heavenly father is not a fly on the wall of your life. Our heavenly father is not a bug in your ear every day. And our heavenly father is not your copilot or your passenger in the seat beside you. As a child of God, your heavenly father is with you and is in you. He is your helper and you are not alone.

Whether you're a middle schooler or high schooler, college student, middle age, or senior adult. I hope by the time we leave here this morning that it would lock into your heart that there is not a day, there's not an event, there's not a challenge, there's not a temptation, there's not a battle that you face that you face alone if Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. Amen. Some of you know that to be true. You've experienced it. The presence of God in our life according to his word, happens because of the Holy spirit living in us. And so for a few minutes I want to talk to you about the place and the role of the Holy Spirit in our life as God's children.

There's no greater gift that you can receive than the gift of eternal life. When you trust Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin and you believe that he died for you to pay for all your sin. When you turn and repent of whatever you've been trusting in and you come to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the gift he gives to you is eternal life. Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life."

I was a college student when I came to know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I had a foundation of the church. I had a lot of head knowledge, had a lot of verses memorized. I had a lot of experiences in the Christian world, but my life changed when I was a junior in college and I received eternal life. I didn't know everything at that time there is to know about eternal life. I know that when I prayed one afternoon in my lamp light apartment in Auburn, Alabama, that I said words very close to this, "God, I know all the stuff." That's profound, isn't it? "God, I know all this stuff. I know that you died for me. I know that you rose again and I know that I've been playing a game, and today I turned my life over to you and I want to live for you and I want you to do with me whatever you want to do with me. I'm yours. I surrender it all. Here I am. Take me." I didn't roll around in the floor that day. I didn't see stars. I didn't speak in an unknown tongue. I think what I did, to the best of my memory is that I walked into the kitchen and I fixed a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and then I left and I went to the student activities building and I played basketball the rest of the afternoon like I did most days. But from that day forward, my life changed. My heart changed, my desires changed, my hope changed, my dreams, and my goals, all that changed.

I want that so much for you. I want you to know the joy of salvation in Jesus. I did not know at that time that I received eternal life that at the same time the spirit of God came to live in me. And I believe, though I did not know what to call it, that on that same afternoon that I was baptized in the spirit. Today, I don't know what you think or believe or what you've experienced with the Holy Spirit, and I want us to read some verses of scripture. It may be laborious to you, it may seem like we're reading a lot of scripture, but I want us today to make sure that our understanding of the truth of the Holy Spirit is not defined by our experience but defined by the truth of God so that the truth of God can define our experience with the Holy Spirit. I want to speak to you and about three facets of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the spirit, the filling of the spirit, and then walking in the spirit.

I call your attention to Luke's gospel. Luke chapter 11, would you look there with me? Open your Bibles to Luke chapter 11, and the disciples have asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. And it should catch our attention that in Jesus's words of teaching them how to pray, that he ends this passage by talking about asking for the Holy Spirit. He makes this connection between

prayer and the Holy Spirit and what we ask for. It's almost like he raises our greatest gift would be the Holy spirit living inside of us, ruling and reigning and filling us and controlling us and the fruit of the spirit being born in our life.

Luke chapter 11, this is Luke's account of what we call the Lord's prayer. It's a model prayer and then Jesus goes into some teaching that shows some motivation for prayer. Verse one, One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

<sup>2</sup> He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,<sup>[a]</sup>  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup> Forgive us our sins,  
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.<sup>[c]</sup>

And lead us not into temptation.<sup>[d]</sup>"

<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; <sup>6</sup> a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' <sup>7</sup> And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' <sup>8</sup> I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity<sup>[e]</sup> he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

<sup>9</sup> "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for<sup>[f]</sup> a fish, will give him a snake instead? <sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

I want to offer you a prayer today. A prayer that might become your morning prayer, your evening prayer, your midday prayer. It's not a formula and certainly you could change the nuances of the words, but a prayer that goes something like this in relationship to everyday life and the Holy spirit. And it would be this,

"Father, believing you have baptized me in this spirit, fill me today with your spirit that I might walk in step with the spirit and produce the fruit of the spirit."

So let's break that prayer apart, and I want to begin first of all by speaking of the baptism of the spirit. I want to give you some verses of scripture. I have things that I believe and, and, and convicted about regarding the baptism of the spirit, but let's let the word speak. And as these passages speak about the spirit of God and the baptism of the spirit and the indwelling of the spirit, I want you to see that they work together to show us a picture of what happens at the point of salvation. Of what we have and who we receive when we receive Jesus Christ as Lord

and savior. So let's work through some of these passages. Romans chapter eight, let's look together there. If you have a Bible that has headings at each section, maybe like mine, you will see that at Romans eight it has a heading over it that says, "Life in the Spirit." And what does Romans say? What does Paul write about life in the spirit. Verse one,

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life has set you<sup>[b]</sup> free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin,<sup>[c]</sup> he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup> For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. <sup>10</sup> But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus<sup>[d]</sup> from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Listen to that last phrase, "who dwells in you." You are not alone. There is not a moment. There's not a day. There's not an event, there's not a temptation. There's not a time in your life as a child of God where the spirit of God does not dwell in you. Galatians chapter three, keep turning. Galatians chapter three. First to second Corinthians, then Galatians chapter three, and he speaking about the role of law and how we can't keep every law and if you could keep every single law you'd be perfect but he says you can't do that, so what does it require? It requires someone who can, and that's Jesus. And he says in Galatians three verse 10,

<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>12</sup> But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit<sup>[e]</sup> through faith.

We are baptized in the Spirit. The spirit comes to dwell in us by faith. When we have our faith in Jesus Christ, the spirit of God comes to live in us. Ephesians chapter one, we continue to see the impact and the effects of the spirit, being baptized in the spirit, immersed in the spirit. Look at Ephesians one, he lists in this chapter blessing after blessing, gift after gift, riches after riches that have been poured out on to us in our salvation. But look just in verse 13 and 14, after a long list of these blessings, he adds to it. He keeps going. In Ephesians one verse 13 he says, "In him, you also," beyond what he's just said, "In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his

glory." Now, how do I let the truth define my experience? I'll look at it and he says that you heard the word of truth. In my life, you heard my story just a moment ago, many times over and over and over again, I heard the word of truth and I don't know what age I was when I first heard the word of truth, but when I came to that day in my college apartment as a junior there, I had already heard the word of truth. I had heard the gospel of my salvation, the good news of my salvation, and then he says, "and believed in him." And it was that moment, having heard the gospel many times over, I came to that moment and when I said, "Father, I believe all the stuff." In my mind, in my heart, I was seeing all that I had heard, and I believed in him. And he says, what happens when you believe in him? The reason I know what happened to me at that time when I believed in him is because of what God's word says, and God's word says, "And believed in him, you were sealed with the promised Holy spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory."

Now look back in First Corinthians chapter 12. First Corinthians chapter 12, it's a passage that deals with spiritual gifts and Paul is making the case that when we come to know Jesus as Lord and savior through the spirit that comes to live in us, we are also given spiritual gifts to serve for the building up of the body, the advance of the kingdom. He's laying out these lessons about spiritual gifts, but we learned something here about the baptism of the spirit and what happens when that happens. Look in verse 12, First Corinthians 12:12, "For just as the body is one and has many members." That's a phrase that speaks to the physical body, just as a physical body has many members, fingers, hands, feet, toes, ears, nose. "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For 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."

So this morning when we talk about the role in place and work of the Holy spirit, I want to begin from this starting point that when we receive the gift of eternal life, we simultaneously receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He comes to dwell in us, lives in us, and he does some things. He unites us to Christ as these verse speak about. He unites us to the body of believers. I'm united to you and you're united to me through the work of the spirit. I'm united with Christ and Christ is united with me through the work of the spirit. One of the two word phrases that we take for granted reading through the new Testament, Paul uses over and over again, it's the phrase, "In Christ." And you see him again and again writing to others and he speaks about being in Christ, and in Christ, and because we're in Christ. Well, that happens, we're in Christ because of the spirit of God being in us. We're united with Christ. We're not only united, we're equipped for the mission. We can't do this work of seeing people saved. We can't do this work of church life in our flesh. If the church is going to be built up, if it's going to be strengthened, if it's going to be spiritually healthy, if the body is going to function the way it's meant to function, we need to be equipped for the mission. And that comes through the work of the spirit of God. This is not flesh work. This is spirit work. First Corinthians 12 speaks about how we've been equipped through the spiritual gifts to build up the church, the body of Christ.

But let me take just a moment here to speak about what he says in Ephesians. In Ephesians he speaks about being sealed with the spirit. It's such a powerful verse. If you ever struggle with assurance or doubt in your salvation, this is a verse you need to tuck away, hide away in your

heart, to go to again and again and again because it's just laid out there. You heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. You believed in him. Well, what happened? By the power of heaven, the work of heaven, you were sealed with the promised Holy spirit. The word sealed there, it was a word that was used to describe things that were both verified and guaranteed. Something would be marked with a seal when it was verified that the contents in it were right and accurate. Some of you are old enough to remember years ago when there was a security scare with the drug, Tylenol. You remember that? And some people died because people were tainting bottles of Tylenol. Did you know before that time there was not that foil seal on bottles of medicine. And coming out of that, bottles of medicine were sealed with foil so that when you look at it, you would know if the contents were safe and secure. And it's a picture for us in even in this as we look at this, "You were sealed with the promised Holy spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance." When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, you receive the gift of eternal life. You're baptized in the spirit, you are united with Christ, you're equipped for the mission and you are sealed for the day of redemption. It is verified, it is guaranteed. He says the Holy spirit is like a deposit of our inheritance that is to come. It is a word that describes something that is as good as full payment. The baptism of the spirit, well where do we go from there? We go to the filling of the spirit.

Look in Ephesians chapter five. Ephesians chapter five verse 18. In Ephesians five verse 18 he says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the spirit, addressing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving always and for everything to God the father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We saw in first Corinthians as being baptized into the body by the spirit, here we see a command to be filled with the spirit. Think about that. It's an imperative command. Paul says, be filled with the spirit. What does it mean to be filled? If the spirit of God already lives in me, what does it mean to be filled with the spirit? Is there more of the spirit? No, there's no 'more' of the spirit but there is more control of the spirit. And to be filled with the spirit means that we are controlled by the spirit, and maybe you can understand that by thinking about other ways that we use the word filled. If we say, "That man is filled with joy", "Those new parents are filled with joy." "That bride is filled with joy." We're saying that that they're the way they talk, the way they look, the way they walk into the room, the way you experience them when you're around them, the only thing that you can use to describe their countenance, their reaction, their presence is one of joy. They are filled with joy. They are controlled by joy. Joy is overflowing out of them. You flip that around and we say, look at that man. He is filled with anger. Look at that woman, she is filled with anger. What are we saying? We're saying our experience with them, their words, their reactions, their tone, their manner is that anger is just controlling their decisions. It's controlling their actions. They do things they never thought they would do because they're so angry. It's the same word here to be filled with the spirit, to be filled with the spirit.

There are ways that the spirit overflows out of us and works in us and things that the spirit produces in us. That's why when he says, be filled with the spirit, here's some overflow. Addressing one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart. There's a song there. There's a joy there. There's the fruit of the spirit there. He contrast being filled with the spirit with being drunk with wine. To be drunk with wine, we'd understand that to mean that our faculties are changed. Something else is

affecting the decisions we make. Something else is affecting the way we walk or the way we think, or the way we drive or the way we operate. He says, look, don't be drunk. Don't be effected in the way that wine would affect you. Be filled with the spirit. So how are we filled with the spirit? How does the spirit control us? By submitting to the spirit. When Carlos is in control, when the flesh is in control, I'm on the throne. I'm calling the shots. That's what I want. It's what about me. When I submit to the spirit who lives in me, the spirit takes his rightful place on the throne, and it's death to Carlos and as the spirit of God that controls, that lives. It's not a onetime experience. This command to be filled with the spirit is in the Greek language, the tense and mood is in a way that it means to keep being filled with the spirit. Day by day, moment by moment by moment, just that regular submission, calling out to the spirit of God that he would be in control.

I stand in front of you here and I have this red sweater on. This red sweater was hanging in a closet and it can't do anything. It just hangs there. But when I put this sweater on my body and I put the arms in the sleeves, I put the neck and the collar and I'd stand here. The sweater all of the sudden has life. It moves. If the sweater goes up, it goes up because I left my hand. If it goes down it because I lower my hand. If this zipper goes up, it's because I raised the zippers or because I let the zipper down. This sweater is filled with Carlos. Don't think about that too long. The spirit of God dwells in you. Is he filling you? Is he calling the shots? Is he directing your life?

Third, we have the baptism of the spirit and the filling of the spirit, which is what allows us then to walk in the spirit. Look in Galatians, back a few pages here in your Bible, Galatians chapter five. The heading there above verse 16 says, Keep in Step With the Spirit. Galatians five verse 16, "But I say walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." You want to overcome sin, you want to overcome temptation? He says, walk by the spirit. We could say today you're baptized with the spirit dwells within you, be filled with the spirit. Let him control you, submit to him, and therefore you'll be able to walk by the spirit. You'll be able to not gratify the desires of the flesh.

"Walk by the spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh, for the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like these. I warn you as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. Against such things there is no law and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the spirit, let us keep in step with the spirit."

So today I'm inviting you day by day by day, maybe many times throughout the day, "Father, believing that I have been baptized in the spirit, fill me with your spirit. That I may walk in the spirit in order that I may produce the fruit of the spirit." So think about it, are you producing the fruit of the flesh or are you producing the fruit of the spirit? God help us. I want to ask you to bow your heads with me and I want to ask a couple of guys to come, and they're going to

lead us in a closing song today that sings the truth of what I am talking about. Reminds us of who we have in us. And we can walk out of here knowing that we are not alone. Maybe today you would have known Jesus for years, but maybe for the first time you recognize that living within you is the spirit of God who will fill you, and lead you, that you can walk in step with so that you can bear the fruit of the spirit in instead of bearing the fruit of the flesh. I invite you to respond today. Maybe come and pray, maybe begin praying this prayer. Maybe it's something you want to pray about that's totally different than this message. Maybe you need to be saved. Maybe you need to receive eternal life. I'll be here at the front and you could come find me here and we could talk about that and pray together. Let's bow your heads. Listen to these guys sing and lets worship. The Lord, let's be obedient to him as the spirit of God leads right now. You come, the spirit leads.