

# God's Command for a Holy, and Spirit Filled Life

by Al Whittinghill

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit, highlighting the need for confession, renouncing sin, surrendering to God, obeying His commands, and believing in His promises. The speaker urges the congregation to seek a deeper relationship with God through the indwelling of the Spirit, leading to a transformed life that reflects Christ to others.*

**Scripture:** Acts 5:32, Luke 11:13, Romans 6:13, Hebrews 10:22, James 4:8, Psalm 27:8, Hebrews 12:1

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Transformation through Surrender"

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## Description

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## Transcript

About the Comforter, the Comforter that He, when He gets to the Father, will send. And He says, He says, this Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, the world cannot receive because it can't see Him. And neither knows Him, but you know Him, for He's dwelled with you and He will be in you.

He's saying what you have seen and known of the Spirit in the life, my life, Jesus, as I've walked, when I get to the Father, I'm going to send you the very life of the Spirit and it's not going to be like being with me anymore, it's going to, I am going to be in you, the Spirit of the living God. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things. And He will bring to remembrance whatsoever I've said to you.

And when the Comforter is come, I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, He will testify of me. All these are His words, He said to His own in John 14, 15, and 16, and listen to this one, verse 13 and 16, He says, when He has come, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak of His own initiative, but rather what He will speak, what He hears, and He will show you things to come.

He will glorify me, He will receive what's mine, and give it to you. That's His promise. What a great song tonight, to say that the Spirit of God, speaking to our heart, when He speaks, He does not stutter.

He makes it known that He's saying to you, and tonight, the Lord changed what I was going to share on tonight. I had a hard afternoon, because I was saying, Lord, is this the way you want to go? And then, when you sang that song tonight, it was a beautiful confirmation to me. Well, let's pray together, and then we'll read Scripture together.

Father, we thank you now, we bow before you, and we bless you, we bless you for sending your Spirit back from the throne. I will send, the Father and I will send, and we will come to you, and I will be in you. The Lord from heaven, the Spirit of God, will seal our spirits, and you will teach us everything that we need to know to love you and honor you.

So tonight, we ask you to do just that, and make it so that we are people that are truly alive and on fire, and obedient to the Spirit of God. We thank you in Jesus' name, amen. As you were talking about your children, I just thought I should say that my wife and I are getting ready to celebrate 44 years, and we've got five children, and 20 grandchildren, and 20 of them were together in our house on Christmas day.

One of my sons is a pastor, church planter in Vermont, and one of my sons-in-law and my daughter are church people in Chattanooga, and we've got pastors everywhere, and Paul is the drummer for Passion. You might have met Paul, I don't know, at the Dome, were you there, I don't know. But we've got a daughter in Florida, and she's got seven.

We've just got a lot of kids. And talk about a sanctifying influence now, when you have 20 grandkids all under 20 years old in one room, and everybody's trying to open presents together, and it is a deeply humbling experience, I'll tell you. Well I wanted to share that, you know, we talk about the gospel with hushed tones, and we should, it's awesome, but the gospel of our salvation is much, much more than the forgiveness of sins.

The forgiveness of sins, you see, here's what it is, it's the restoration of the life of God into the soul of man and his spirit, based upon the forgiveness of sins. To walk around and always say, my sins are forgiven, and not allow the other, him to do this, to restore his life and his character and his power, is so contradictory. When I receive eternal life, it's not a thing I receive, it's a person.

He is life, and to have him, you have life, and when you don't have him, you don't have life. So the moment that I dare to become a true believer, based upon, based upon his precious blood, the moment, that moment when I receive my sins forgiven, I give myself away to him. I become a suit of clothes, you might say, for him to live in, and I'm no longer my own property.

I've been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus. You know all this, but you see, the only person that has the real right to live in me now is him, and anything else is kind of usurping that, and we have to learn that, it doesn't take place instantly, you see, God's grace, and I become a vessel, but it doesn't happen right away. There's a process by the Spirit where he teaches, and he leads us, and this is where all of us who are Christians are, and some are listening more than others.

If you look around at the church in America, I believe this, the greatest need in the world is a Spirit-filled church. The greatest need in America is the Spirit-filled church. The greatest need in my family is a Spirit-filled dad and mom.

The greatest need in your community are churches that are filled with the Spirit of God. But you see, it's not automatic. We have the privilege of continuing in a yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. I want to just ask you what you think of when you hear that word, holiness.

What does that mean to you? When you hear the word holiness, do you think about someone who carries around a big black Bible and always is saying something like, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, or they can jump when they sing, or does that make a person holy? Is it a kind of a religious, churchy lifestyle? Is it someone that's always saying praise words, or maybe they're, on the other hand, you might think they're a dropout from daily life. That makes a person holy, or maybe a little weird, or someone who only reads their Bible and hardly ever gets out anywhere. Does that make a person holy? You see, the Scriptures say that holiness is a separated life, yes.

But it's not just separated from things. Look what I don't do, look what I don't do. It has that in that meaning, but it really more so means separated unto.

Separated unto. It's like, in this sense, reserved for the exclusive use of. It's like my shoe is reserved for the exclusive use of my foot, and nobody else puts it on unless it's my grandchildren.

They may do that and walk around, but it's reserved, it's separated unto Him, you see. And our bodies are, when we're joined by the Spirit of God, we are reserved for Him. And this is the reason He left you on the planet.

Why didn't He drown you at baptism? To be with Christ is far better. To die is gain. Do you believe that? Well, He leaves you here with the infinite privilege of being brought into His heart and His passion as a co-laborer, communion, see, communion precedes commission.

A lot of people are busy working, quote, for God, but it's not the work of God. It's what they imagined it would be. We need to learn to surrender and let Him do His work in us.

Real holiness in my life and in yours is the result of only one thing. The Holy One, His presence, given freedom in my life and yours. All the call of Scripture is to holiness.

You say, I just want to know God's will for my life. Well, the Scriptures in Thessalonians say, this is the will of God, even your sanctification, your holiness. And He says, you're called unto holiness.

In Hebrews He says, without holiness, no man will see God. He says, if that's not happening, if it's not the process that's going on, then I don't really know Him in the sense He wants me to know Him. The ecclesia, the church, means called out ones, but it also means called into an assembly, called together in the presence of God.

The very first work that God ever does is to convict of unholiness. He brings conviction of sin. He brings the Word to turn to me with all your heart.

And if you haven't had that, then if you don't know sin, you'll never appreciate the cross in the way that it was meant to be apprehended. It takes a revelation of sin and the cross, being forgiven, for me to appreciate what He really wants. How important is holiness? It is the critical need in the church in America.

And in the last two years, probably, maybe three years, it's death blow after death blow to the testimonies of many ministries and many churches and many groups, because the world has seen that holiness is an option. And then we come and we try to carry on ministry, and they think they can sidestep as well. You see, it's a clever thing.

It's spiritual warfare of the enemy, and he is trying to absolutely take away our heart and our message. One of the characteristics of the last days, it says, man will be unthankful and unholy. So that's why you don't hear that many messages on holiness, but the Spirit of God is speaking to us about holiness.

And in saying we have the privilege of this yes to God, you see, you can grieve the Holy Spirit. The Bible says grieve not the Holy Spirit by whom you've been sealed unto the day of redemption. It says you can resist the Holy Spirit.

He can whisper to you, and you can say no. You can quench the Holy Spirit inwardly. He's speaking to us, and we quench, we pour water.

He says stand up and share my word with these people here on the bus. And we pour water on it. We quench that burning fire that's there.

We can insult the Holy Spirit, the Bible says. We can disobey the Holy Spirit. We can ignore the Holy Spirit.

We can misrepresent Him. You see, we can insult Him. All those terms are used in the New Testament about what we can do against His gracious, wonderful moving in your heart and your mind.

Well, I want to read in Ephesians 5 with you, if you'll turn there. That's the scripture we're going to be pulling from this evening, Ephesians chapter 5. And we're going to cover what some have said is probably one of the most important commands in the New Testament. This last portion of Ephesians talks about the walk and the love and the power of God when He's in the people.

The first half of it talk about the heavenly riches of the church. But then comes the earthly responsibilities of how we're to walk out who we are in those last chapters of Ephesians. And so I want to read beginning in verse, I told the gentleman in the back a little later, but I want to start in verse 8, if we can, Ephesians 5, 8. You were sometimes darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.

Walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit, or the light, is in all goodness and in righteousness and in truth. And you prove what is acceptable to the Lord. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

How do you do that? Well, you do it by your life shining, your light shining. It's a shame to even speak of those things which are done by those that walk in darkness in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are revealed by the light, and whatsoever makes something revealed is light.

That's what the church is to be, a light in darkness and salt and to reveal the truth. Now we get to the verses. Wherefore, God says, awake you who are asleep.

Now this is really being awakened here. This is what it means to be awoke. Awake, those of you who are asleep, and it's speaking to believers.

And rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See that you walk wisely or circumspectly, not like a fool, but as a wise person, redeeming the time, paying the price to let your time, your days, be Christ filled. Be, because the days are evil.

Wherefore, don't be unwise, but it says, become understanding what the will of the Lord is. This is His will we're talking about. And here's the verse.

And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. And then it gives some characteristics. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

There'll be a symphony of the Word of God on the inside. You'll find it easier to write songs, all of us, when His song is being sung. And you sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord.

And you give thanks always for all things to God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And you submit to one another, your church body. And you're in the fear of God.

Then it talks about relationships. It talks about wives' submission to husbands. Then it talks about how that husbands are to give their lives and lay down their life for their wife.

Then it talks about children to parents. Then it talks about masters and slaves. Then it talks about the Christian and the devil.

Because the way you'll tell if you're spirit-filled and it's coming out will be in your relationships. It'll come out. With your grandchildren, with your employer, it'll come out.

God lets that be reality to us. Now, this command, verse 14, to be being filled with the Spirit of God, is given, we could understand if it was to Cardinal Corinth. But this is to the most spiritual church probably that Paul spent time at.

Back in verse 1 of chapter 1, he says that he's writing to the faithful in Christ Jesus, to saints. He's writing to a church that's had a massive experience with God. Like your church had an awesome experience with God.

But God would still come and say, look, my command to you is to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God, to saints, to holy ones in Christ Jesus. And this word, when it says, be filled, this is an important, this is a, the verb tense there, it is a plural. It means all of you, there's no exception.

Everybody hearing this, everybody reading this, you're to be being filled with the Holy Spirit of God. And it's also passive voice, because that means you don't do this, it's not something that God says, I want you to fill yourself, this is something that's done to you. So it's all inclusive, and it's something, it is something that is, what is happening? I guess the Lord wants us to hear that.

He wants it to happen to you, and to me, as a continual thing, it's a command, and it's for all of us, and it's to be done now, it's a present tense, and it's continuous. All those together, a plural, all of you, let this happen to you, it's continuous, it's like a river that God has designed it to happen, and so God is saying that to us. Now what's he saying? He's saying be filled with the personality of God.

And the scriptures say God is light, the scriptures say God is truth, God is love, God is a consuming fire, so it means that your life is being filled continually with love and light and truth and fire, not of this world, and a man can't receive this unless the Holy Spirit makes this real to him, and you can't even hear what I'm saying tonight and have it make sense unless God was saying to you, let this be my will for you, I want you to understand what the will of the Lord is, how to prove and walk in the whole heart and mind of God. Well I'm going to tell you something, the world is amused, and probably offended, by the denominations, our grasp, or lack of it, of truth. They see things happening, and they just chuckle, they ride by a church that's lit up, and they say, they're meeting again, their pastor was just in the paper, he's an adulterer, and they dismiss it all, because we don't take this verse seriously on every level, it is so serious, it's so serious,

see God designed the real Christian life to be impossible, you can't live the Christian life, I can't live the Christian life, it's possible only one way, it's Christ himself in you, it's that mystery we talked about, where you allow him to be God, you're not trying to help him out, you're trying to belong to him and consecrate yourself moment by moment, and life is a dressing room for eternity, you see it's by my spirit sayeth the Lord, so let me ask you honestly, are you obeying this verse, are you and I, we've each got to do it, it makes sense when you have a verse that's this clear, to ask yourself, am I being obedient to this verse, there's no middle ground here, doesn't mean we'll all be mightily perfect in the Spirit's will, but it does mean that our hearts will be toward him with my whole heart, I've sought thee Lord, and I want to know you, I want to know you, you see, we have an opportunity to lie to ourselves, and maybe not live in the fullness of all of that, so God wants us to be different in these days, now we're not speaking about being born of his Spirit here, we're talking about being filled with his Spirit, he who's joined to the Lord is one Spirit, and out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water, like the Scriptures say, and that's what he wants to happen, I'm not asking you tonight, do you have the Holy Spirit, I'm asking you if the Holy Spirit has you, that's the question, whether or not he has my heart, and my ear, and my passion, and my desire, the question is, does he possess you, and the other question is, do you really want him to, because when the Spirit of God owns his church, and makes her what he wants her to be, and died for her to become, and lives for her to become, as he prays for her, and longs for her, and fellowships and communes with her, when that happens, do you want that? It will make the church a bullseye, not a blessing.

She will become a target, as I said this morning, I've been in a lot of countries, I've had the privilege of preaching in over 65 countries, and I can tell you, some of them like behind the iron curtain before it came down, I got to see first hand, and be part of it up close, how these Christians under incredible persecution, were so joyous, and it absolutely devastated me, and it showed me how shallow I was living in the church that I had been in, that I didn't really understand the fellowship of his sufferings, and to arm myself with the same mind, and what it really meant to take up the cross, those are things of Christ, and it took the Holy Spirit leading me into that, to lead you into that, and we're still headed into it. It's coming to our country, you know this. Harder days will come, there is no way that God will ignore what's going on, no matter who we elect, you could put the Apostle Paul in the White House, and this country would still come under the judgment of God, for the way it's treating things that he hates, and the way he's there embracing the things that he condemns, and he's warned after war, and after war, national disasters, earthquakes, you name it, how could you warn people anymore, but we go right on just dismissing it.

I wasn't going to talk on this, and I said I wasn't going to talk on the issues of the hour, I was going to talk about the majesty of eternity, but I'm telling you, as it says in Jeremiah, there's a rumor from the Lord in the land, and people know it, their hearts are fluttering, because they know that not only nationally, but internationally, there is such an immense fuse that's been lit, and things are happening that you have no idea in the news, and they're being hidden from the public, but when it happens, it'll happen quickly. That's not to make fear, but it is to provoke you and me to choose now, and don't wait, he foresees the evil coming, and he prepares his heart for it. This is a wise man who hears what the Lord is saying when we do this, so every true believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but would you agree with this? Not every true believer is being filled with the Spirit, would you say that's true? Look around, it is so obvious, if you're not filled, if I'm not filled, being filled with the Spirit, there'll be no power in your life, not really, and the world will be offended, and they'll put you off and push you away, and this is why so many people have a hard time living the Christian life, because they're trying to do what only the Spirit of God in them can do.

They can't love their enemies, only God can enable you to do that as he fills you. You have no power in living if you're not filled, you have no power over sin, it's like trying to throw away a boomerang, you throw it away and it keeps coming back, but the Holy Spirit will break this power, he breaks, he convicts of sin, he gives righteousness, only he is the overcomer, and then you'll try to also serve him and it won't work. In service, it'll be like miserable futility, it'll be trying and always halfway there, and it'll be inside, quiet desperation, and not over just bad things, but of not having what God really wants in our life.

So, here's the thing tonight, God longs to fill us with his Holy Spirit, he commands us to be in the place where we can be filled with his Holy Spirit, and he is more ready to fill me with his Holy Spirit than I am. He's having to let me learn hard lessons sometimes to say, what you need is me, it's not an it you need, it's not just deliverance or money, it's me you need, and I need to surrender, and I'm learning this more and more. He is yearning and he died so he could fill me with the Holy Spirit.

He is on the throne today praying for us to his church to put on the garments of beautiful praise and to walk before the Lord in the beauty of holiness, and that's possible only by him. So, if I'm not filled with the Holy Spirit, the fault is entirely mine. Whether you're a baby Christian or whether you're a seasoned saint, he wants us to be being filled with the Holy Spirit, and if blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the one sin in the scripture that's so serious that God says it, then to ignore him is probably one of the greatest errors and mistakes the church could ever make.

And you don't put God on your treadmill or my treadmill or in my box, we let him be God. You saw some amazing things happening here three years ago. I heard your pastor, who's been a friend of mine for almost two decades, I heard him say that his life was changed in those meetings.

I heard him say he saw things. It's the power of God that changes us when we see this and we want to enter into it. And this is what every one of us needs in here, and even if we resist it, we know it's true.

We know that it's true. So, you see, God wants us to be filled, but there are conditions to be filled with the Holy Spirit. There are biblical conditions that God will not lay aside to let me enjoy the power of his inward presence.

I want to give them to you. I'll list them right now. These are the simple words.

Confess, renounce, surrender, obey, and believe. Those five simple words. I'm going to talk about each one for a moment.

You see, confession. This is when I come and I call things in my life. It's like what you heard this morning when confess sin.

Homologeo. It means to say the same word. It's not just your anger.

It could be wrath. You've got to call things in your life. If the Spirit shows you the same word he uses, you can't sidestep them or treat them lightly.

I've got to confess. You see, the Spirit of God and sin cannot live in the same heart and have freedom. You just can't do it.

It's got to be one or the other. God will not pour his Spirit on flesh. He just won't do it.

Now, I want to just bring Josh. Can you come up here for a second? We had baptism this morning. I figured I'd do something tonight.

Stand right there for a second. I have here something very obvious. I want you to put your arm on my ... Now, I want you to shake me.

Shake it. Shake it. Let's shake some more.

What happened when you shook my arm? It spilled over. It spilled over. Why did it spill over? There's not a lid on it.

There's not a lid on it. Okay, you shook it. But why did water come out when you shook me? Because it was moving.

Because it was moving. But why did water come out when you shook it? There's water in there. That's it.

Thank you. Thank you. There's water.

You take the rolling stones here. I'm sorry. No.

That's good. Nobody ever gets that. No.

No. I mean, I've done that with kids and everything and they always say, because you shook it, because the velocity of the water was greater than the cup, all these things. The reason water comes out is because water's in it.

But we have to ask ourselves, what came out of me the last time I was shaken? Whatever is in it. No matter what label we wear, no matter what we say with our lips, if our hearts are far, it will come out and it will be there like that. So, God wants us, number one, to confess, to confess.

You see, it says in the Scriptures, if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. And that word regard has even a sexual connotation in the Hebrew to it. It means like to fondle or to flirt with.

If I flirt with and mess with evil in my heart, it doesn't have to come out here. God shuts down my prayer life. It says, this is the confidence that we have in Him.

If we ask anything according to His will, if our hearts don't condemn us, we know then He hears us. And if we know He hears us, then we know we have those petitions that we've asked of Him. But if our heart condemns us, if we're full of unforgiveness, then don't let that man think he'll expect anything from the Lord.

But you see, we go right on coming to prayer meeting, we go right on going through the motions, and we fit right in. We know a lot of people, all of us, and there are many very, very busy people and religious people in denominations even, but then we find out later that it wasn't agreeing with the inside and the outside. Have you seen this lately? And it's very distressing and it hurts the church's reputation as being a holy church indeed.

So it is the Christian that's told to confess sin, the lost man's to confess the Lord. He doesn't understand this yet. He comes to the Lord and he repents of his sin.

He comes, he does confess, but the Christian is the one that the Scriptures are saying, confess your sins and pray for one another that you might be healed. If we walk in the light as He's in the light, then the Lord, His blood will keep on cleansing us and we have fellowship because we're walking in the conviction and the confession of sin. So the greatest hindrance to the Spirit-filled life is sin and self, and we've got to confess these things.

This is base one. You can't go any further than that until you really deal with it. Now, I wrote this down and I want to just read this because in case you haven't noticed, the devil is very busy in our day.

We are told not to be ignorant of his devices. We're not to be ignorant of his craftiness and his strategies. We're to be beware.

If he can't stop a person from coming to Christ, what he wants to do is paralyze his testimony and put him at a permanent standstill where he's just a statistic, where he's just a number. So it's his goal, the devil's, to have some sort of foothold, the Scriptures talk about that, giving place or giving a foothold, giving a place, a stronghold of some inward unsundered area that we keep for a logical reason to us, but it's insanity scripturally, if you really look at it. We hold on to it and he wants to destroy my fellowship or my testimony.

He wants to defile my mind, my secret journeys on the internet or on the TV where nobody knows that you think it won't hurt anybody, but your whole family suffers. People can tell there's something wrong here. He wants to divide your heart.

He wants to have you have a contradictory life or he wants to paralyze your faith or misdirect your focus and your priority and your energy. He wants to rob you, the devil does, of your fellowship with the Lord and ruin your fellowship between husband and wife because of unspoken, undealt with things. That's what the devil's trying to do.

He wants me to be a dwarf in my inner man. I may be well known on TV or whatever else I think makes success for the believer, but I can be a dwarf inwardly. God's eyes are looking at the heart.

He's searching. He's looking for a person whose heart is right toward him that he can be showing himself strong. The devil wants to distort what it means to be a Christian, especially in our day and make us just one more group of people that's doing right in their own eyes like it was in the time of judges.

So scriptures are full of examples of the bones of people who died in the wilderness, of all the kings, 38 kings, only 8 of them were really good and only 4 of those finished well in the scriptures. Think of that. But you don't have to be like that nor do I because we have such greater light than the people who didn't see the resurrection and understand it and they didn't have a high priest on the throne whose name is Jesus praying for them, not like we do, that he prays for us from his victory, not just for ours, it's glorious what he wants for us.

So confess and you've got to be specific. You come before the Lord and you say, Lord, I'm confessing specifically. This is what I've done and let the weight of it move you and see conviction is his part.

Confession is my part. He convicts me of sin, that's faithfulness, but that doesn't mean, boy you sure got to me today preacher, not really until you deal with the Lord and confession and making things right with people. You see, confess, confess, be specific and he says confess your sin.

Is there gossip? Is there jealousy? Are there forbidden things? Doubtful things? Unclean activity? Compromise? It says in Psalm 90 verse 8, you've put our secret sins in the light of your face. It says that. There's nothing hidden.

It won't be openly revealed. You've got to see it in the big picture. So the first thing you see is to confess.

It's like the woman that kept coming to the preacher and she was exaggerating everything and the preacher says, lady that's a lie. And she says, well pastor, I wouldn't want to call it lying. Well you've got to call it what God calls it.

You'll never be free from it. You've got to see the seriousness of it. No more making excuses.

He died to free me from the thing that I excused, that glance, forbidden glance, that attitude, that quick answer of the tongue. I'm just saying, wouldn't it be great if you were free and if I were freed from that? We can be. We can live above that.

We can live in the light. We can make manifest. And see, we're just not willing to be rejected by those around us because we're different.

Oh, you're a phobic person or you're this or that and they think we're against this and against that. No, no, because we've got the humility that comes with being filled with the Spirit to let us suffer patiently, whatever it takes to show who He really is. Confess.

Confess, you see. If the Holy Spirit points something out to you or me, it's going to remain the issue. It won't go away by increasing your offering.

It won't go away by getting more busy. Next time you get in your finest moment before God, He's not trying to condemn you. He's going back to say, I want you to deal with that.

It won't go away because if the Spirit of God points it out, it's important. It may not feel like it's important to you. But the first thing then is confess.

But the second part of this thing is renounce. Renounce is when Proverbs 28, 13 says, whoever covers his sin, makes an excuse and covers it over, he will not prosper. That's a promise from God as real as John 3, 16.

Whoever covers his sin will not prosper. But whosoever confesses and forsakes his sin shall obtain mercy. It's the inward forsaking.

It's the hidden behavior of the heart that has to deal in the presence of holiness with what we're talking about. You see, sin confessed must be renounced. You've got to close the doors that you had open in your life.

And unless I forsake what I confess, I end up mocking God. Lord, I did it again. I'm back at the altar again.

And Lord, Lord, and we can really trick ourselves, but confess and renounce. And it may be hard, but Jesus compared it to like plucking out your eye, remember? Or cutting off something. You've got to go to that extent to let God extract this from your heart and he will do what you cannot do.

Are there things in your life that you feel like you have to make an apology for? Do you change the way you talk when your pastor's around or a deacon or a person you respect spiritually? Do you talk differently with your golf or bass buddies or whatever you go do to get with the guys or whatever you do? You say, this may involve something from the past, like making it right. Money you owe, but you have to make it right. You have to deal.

If you really want to live in what we're talking about. Revival is one thing, but maintaining and walking in the character of God is another. Why do revivals fade out? Because we forget this kind of truth right here.

I don't know what's making that noise, but thank you all for not jumping too much when it happens. I don't understand it. Do you want God enough to give up what you know to be wrong? Do you? Are you willing for that? You say, I can't.

Well, that just proves you're really lost then. I'm not willing. Now we're getting somewhere.

You see, because he has given you the ability, if you will, it may be hard, but you see, you need to be willing. And so we say, fill my cup, Lord, fill my cup. I lift it up, Lord.

And we hold it up and he says, I died so I could fill your cup with the Spirit. I want to fill you, like the scriptures say, with rivers of living water. But you see, if I pour living water into that cup, do you see that sewage in the bottom of that cup down there? Wash you and be clean because you've got to be clean to bear the vessels of the Lord.

Deal with these things and then I'll fill you to overflowing. And all that are around you can drink. But he won't serve something through you if you have poison in your life.

He just won't do it. I know you don't like what I'm saying. I can see on some of your faces like, you know, I don't like it either, but I like it after, after we deal with it.

So are you willing? Are you willing? You've got to close the doors that have been opened maybe for a while. It may be hard. But confess, renounce, and the third is surrender.

Surrender. That's what Romans 6, 13, when it says this. Listen to what Romans 6, 13 says.

Do not be yielding your members as instruments or weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves to God just like those that are alive back from the dead. And your members of your body as literally weapons of righteousness unto God. He will use your life like a weapon.

That's what it's saying there. Surrender. Available.

Yielded. This is active surrender, not passive where you're walking down a street kind of afraid. No, this is not that kind of thing.

This is when you're actively, consciously seeking Him and seeking to surrender. See, just because you enjoy singing songs and can enter into corporate worship to a degree, and just because you have tears and say, I want to, that is not surrender. It's not.

We may call it surrender, but here's where surrender takes place. When the struggle between God's will and your will ceases. And you say, nevertheless, thy will be done.

The moment we take ourselves off the altar, the moment we drop our cross, we become a backslider in heart. This is how we are. We don't want to face how we really are apart from Him.

But this is how we are. Surrender. Intelligent consecration.

I had a story given to me by an evangelist in Texas who, he did a revival for a church and they gave him a horse for his daughter as part of the love offering. And so he took that back to his house. This is a wild horse.

You couldn't sit on him. And he said, well, this is for my daughter, but can you, this guy was known for breaking horses. Can you break this horse for my daughter to ride? And he says, oh, I will break him.

He'll be rain sensitive. He'll be beautiful. You leave him with me for a week and he'll be broken.

So he leaves the horse and this guy goes about and he breaks that horse on. And the evangelist comes by to get the horse and he says, now, is this safe for my daughter? She can get on it. Let me try it out.

He walked over to the horse and started to get on. And the man said, oh no, no, no. Don't get on the horse from that side.

If you get on the horse from that side, he'll tear your head off. You mean to say to me, this horse is only half broken. I guess that's what you'd call it.

He says, well, how much to break the other side, take him back and break the other side because I can't risk my precious daughter to a half broken horse. And that's what it is with us. You see, we think all these things about how we've been this or that.

And if somebody comes at me from the right side, oh, praise the Lord, brother. But if you come at me from the wrong side, right? Half broken. And can God trust that? Well, it's not that He doesn't trust us.

He doesn't trust us for anything. But He wants to let His life flow through us. That He knows about that half, that hidden hardness and that secret semi-surrender.

I'll serve you here, but don't ever ask me to serve you there. I'll preach the gospel to this race, but never this race and this deep anger that's down there that we hide. And the Lord says, you're half broken.

And I can't trust the precious things to you. He wants to trust us with the precious things. So it's, this is where the surrender is.

We open the doors that we had shut. See, renouncing is shutting the doors that we had opened. But now we're opening the door and surrender to the things that we kept out and at a distance.

So then you come to the fourth thing, that's obedience or obey. This is not a legal thing we're talking about, like keeping the rules per se. This is what it says in Acts 5:32, that it says, God has given the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.

He who's been faithful in the thing that didn't have anything at stake, really, and God was training you to say yes to Him. And you learn to say, yes, you obey me. You hear His word and it shows you love Him and it brings you into a new place.

Then He puts you into a place where lives are at stake on your obedience, because He's found you faithful and you've been able to walk in that. If you're totally, truly surrendered, then you will obey. You will, because love will have you do it.

Sentimental feelings don't mean that you've obeyed God. Singing with tears even doesn't mean you've obeyed God. I wish it did, because I mean, I was crying during their song, you know, but it doesn't mean I'm obeying God.

The resident inside must be the president in every area. The real president. Make the Christian great again.

I don't want you to see a hat like that again. Make the Christian great again, with your Jesus as who He is. And this is really saying yes to Him with an intention to obey, where you have an intention to obey.

Lord, I want to obey you. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. I want to obey you.

It's a surrendered will, you see, so you're giving up your rights. Well, Al, if I choose to act on all you've said, then I'll be different. I won't fit in.

Precisely. That's what He wants. He wants you to be a spiritual standout, but a humble one that's full of the cross that breaks you as you go.

And when you look at, you can, you can ride. This happened to me coming in here, driving in here. I drove by all those, there were trailers that had been on fire.

They were still there, burned out. And there were all these, I mean, it was just such suffering. I could see driving in, that came in the back way, ways, this thing took me on.

And I went, I got, if it hadn't been for that, I'd still be out there. But I'm telling you, my heart went out to the people that are all around you here, who have it pretty tough, some of them. But see, He will give you a heart to feel that, and me a heart to feel that.

The promises to you and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call. He says in, in the book of Acts, in Acts 2, Peter says, look, this promise of the spirit of God, the power of God, coming to live and reside in you. This is the last thing, you got to believe.

Once you have these four conditions, confess, renounce, surrender, and your heart is set on obedience, and you know it's only He that can do it, but you've made that inner decision, and your heart is fixed like His heart was fixed. He set His face to go to Jerusalem. It must be, as the Scriptures say, I must go as it has been determined.

Then you come, and you simply come before the Lord. I love this verse in Luke 11. It's right in the same context as in prayer, but when He says, He says to Him, I say to you, ask, it will be given to you.

And I say to you, seek, it means the present tense, keep on seeking, and you will find. And it will knock, and it will be open for everyone that asks, receives. And he that seeks finds, and to him that knocks, it shall be open.

And then if a son, if one of you has a son that asks of you, that's a father, can I have bread? And you put a nice rock for him for breakfast? Have this flintstone here, son, it'll do you good. Or if you ask for a fish, will

you lift up this little thing, and there's a scorpion in there, would you do that to your son? How that's really funny, you don't know. If he asks for an egg, will he give him a scorpion, a serpent? If you being evil, you don't have the heart of God, but if you understand what we just said, if you know how to give good gifts to your children, listen to what the Bible, you can read right over this without knowing it.

How much more, much more, shall your heavenly Father, this is your heavenly Father, give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? Have you ever asked Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit? Have you ever asked Him, having these conditions before you, Lord, I want to be filled with your Holy Spirit? Just like I received the promise of life from the hand of a dying Christ on the cross, now I come to the throne of the universe where you're sitting there, and I take the gift of the Spirit of God that you said would be all those who are in your family who trust you, that have this living water flowing out. You said you'd give this, and I'm asking you in the name of Jesus, the Lamb of God. Unbelief can rob you of victory.

That's the whole book of Hebrews, warning us to not lay behind when God's opened the door into the throne room. He says, come up seven times, come into the throne room and live in there. Don't let unbelief cause you to stay in your own man-made wilderness there, but enter in to the joy of your Lord.

There is not a need in my life that the Spirit filling wouldn't settle. It may not solve it, but it'll settle it. It'll settle it forever.

Now you see, and I want you to know, I'm not up here just glibly saying these things, because in these last three years, if you're like my friends and me and the others I know, God has raked your life with the holy finger of the Word of God. He has showed you things in your heart and mind. There were attitudes and that you'd be in situations and seen suffering, and He is sifting and shaking and refining things in the believer's life.

He's getting His church ready for glorious things. He's going to own His church, but some people will just be watching and wondering why it's not theirs. You see, you come to the Lord and you say, Lord, these conditions, as best I see in my heart, I'm being honest before you.

They're there, and I'm willing to go and do anything fresh, but will you fill me with the Holy Spirit of God and let it be a continual fountain? Fill me with the Spirit of God, you see, and you come by faith. I'm not getting this because I deserve this, Lord. I'm getting this because you deserve it.

He's worthy of you being a true saint so that you can hear, enter into the joy of the Lord, to this great place prepared for you, and I've been busy while you're there preparing you and enlarging your heart for this place. You know, there are plenty of people, if you send them to heaven right now, they'd think it was hell because their hearts are so far from God and they hate Him, but God is enlarging my heart and yours with crazy stuff sometime, but He wants you to be able to appreciate who He is. The question is, will you let Him? That's the question tonight.

You receive this gift from Him the same way you were receiving salvation by faith, and they're not necessarily any time increments. It's entering into a place with God. He told His own.

He wants you to learn to live in that. So, what would the churches be like in our nation if God had His way? What would this church be like if Jesus had His complete way? And why isn't it happening? Well, it's because somewhere along the way we pull back. You know, one of the finest stories I heard, I heard in Australia, a person who said he witnessed this, but there was a man who had a son who was in child, they

prayed his wife and he to have children, and they couldn't have it look like, but one day she discovered she was pregnant, and as they were so excited they, in childbirth, this particular woman, she died on the table.

They're having that child, and this little boy was born, and this dad looked up and he said, Lord, I'm gonna be your man. I'm gonna be the father to this boy. I'm gonna teach him your ways.

I'm gonna show him who you are. I'm gonna let you change me and make me a father after your own heart. Well, time went by, and he did that.

He poured into this boy and was with him in all kinds of things, and it was a beautiful thing to behold. But when the boy turned to be eight years old, the doctor said something's not right, and they discovered this boy had leukemia, and as he lost weight and got worse, and it was obvious that he needed serious help, the father was faithful all through that, and he took his child to the doctor, and nothing seemed to help, and it got worse and worse, and the day did come where they were in the hospital, and this eight-year-old boy with leukemia was dying before his father, his eyes, he's watching him, and he was crying. I'd be crying too, and the boy looked up, and he saw his dad, he says, Dad, you're crying.

Does that mean that I'm getting ready to die? He said, Son, I've always been honest with you, and yes, you're gonna, you're gonna die soon. You're gonna, and he said, Well, I've trusted Jesus, and it's all true, right, and I've trusted him, and you've seen him in my life, and I'm his, right, Dad? He said, That's right, son. He said, Does that mean then that when I die, like it says, I'm really gonna go to heaven? And the dad looked at him and said, That's right, son, you're on your way to heaven.

And the boy looked up at his dad, and he says, Well, Dad, don't cry, because if I'm going to be with Jesus, if he's like you, I want to go. I want to go. Friends, what would the church be like if God really had his way? What would it be like? Without the Holy Spirit filling us, we cannot please God.

We cannot walk by faith. We cannot be a true light. We can't really tell the truth about Jesus or know the truth.

See, there's a great need in our day, it's no doubt about it, for the churches to be filled with people after COVID, but more important than the churches being filled with people are the people that are in our churches being filled with God, and that is what the Lord wants to do. He wants to change me from a water pot into a well that lets living waters come out, artesian waters from a fountain that we sang about tonight that never runs dry. So what it'll do, it'll change your life from overload to overflow.

Well, it's time tonight for the offering, not of money or promises, not of things you commit to do, because that's still you looking, but consecration. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of your love.

Take my silver and my gold, take everything, Lord, my thoughts, my dreams, all that I am, Lord, I want to belong to you, you see, and I want to really be yours in a wonderful way. So, you see, everybody is holy by their own standards. Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord tests the spirits.

And so the Lord says tonight, where are you? Like he says to the first man, Adam, where are you? And God knew where Adam was, but he wanted Adam to face it and deal with it. And he finally got him to the place where he did, and God covered him with a robe of righteousness from a coat of skin. It's the word cover, or kaphar, atone.

He covered him. We may talk about that tomorrow night. But my question is, would you say that your life is a holy life? It's not taking credit.

It's giving him all the glory and credit. If it's a holy life, it's only because of him. The real worth of your life and mine is how much of Jesus those around me can see and experience of him.

Al, if I were holy, I wouldn't be like everybody else. Well, that's why he wants you to be holy. He wants you to be a testimony.

They will testify of me. Well, I can't hold very much, Al. I can't hold very much.

Well, if you took a thimble, or let's just take a 55-gallon drum, and then a water tower, and you put them both under Niagara Falls, which one's overflowing the most? It doesn't matter how much they hold, because if the barrel's under the falls, and if the water tower's, once they're full and overflowing, the inflow is the size of the outflow. And that's why he says that you can be filled, in your pastor's study, there's a thing that you might be filled with all the fullness of God, to know the love of Christ that passes knowledge, passes human ability, the length, the breadth, the depth, the height, and to know that love of Christ, you see. Well, I just said this tonight, the Christian is more to be blamed for not being filled with the Holy Spirit, than a lost man is still to be blamed for yet being lost, because we have all this that we know.

You know what he wants, and how he has left this, you can get the theologians in a quandary, they won't know, but how does he give me the privilege of saying yes to him? How does he say to Abraham, God who knows everything, he says, Abraham, don't touch the land, now I know that you fear God. God came to see it, God in some great mystery, wants a response from you and from me. And when he says something, there's no need to wait, if it's God.

So tonight, I want to say, it's not by power, it's not by might, but it's by the Spirit of God, and he wants you, wherever you are in your life, if you're lost and you're here, he wants you to enter into this, and enter into the Spirit filled life, no longer I, but Christ. And if you're a Christian, you've been here 50 years, he wants it to be a new day for me and for you. I mean, I've been saved since 1972, April the 2nd, I always thought it was April the 1st for years, and I said, I became a fool for Christ on April, and I looked at him, Sunday was the 2nd, and I said, oh, doggone, that's terrible, I can't say I became a fool for Christ on April Fool's Day.

Then they changed it to Earth Day, I can't stand it, you know, it's just crazy. But see, what God wants is, no matter how long you've been a Christian, he wants to do a new thing. And you're gonna need it, and I'm gonna need it, and the world's gonna want to see it in the days ahead.

Once he breaks you, and you're his like we're talking about, once he's filled you, he'll break you, so that that precious treasure in earthen vessels can be shared and given. After I read this poem, you ought to write a song to this, it may be a song, it's one of the best poems I've ever heard, but it's about the filling of the Spirit, it's about the indwelling of the Spirit in our lives. I'm gonna open up the altar, confess, renounce, close the doors, surrender, obey, open the doors that you've had shut, and dare to believe God, not by works of righteousness which I've done, not the work of my hands, listen to this poem, not only in the words you say, not only in your deeds confessed, but in the most unconscious way is Christ the Lord through you confessed, expressed.

Was it a beatific smile, that holy light upon your brow, was it? Oh no, I felt his presence when you left just now, for me it wasn't the truth you taught. To you so clear and to me so dim, but when you come to me

each time, you bring in you a sense of him, and from your eyes he beckons to me, and from your lips his love is shed, till I lose sight of merely you, and see the Lord Jesus Christ instead. That's the testimony, that's the witness that the filling of the Holy Spirit will bring.

It's the most important need in your family, it's the most important need in your life, and in my life, and in the church's life, and in the nation's churches, for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and it starts with the one who hears. So let's bow for prayer. Father, we believe the world is not as skeptical as it really looks like, they're skeptical at what they've seen, that we have profaned your name in many cases, we have not been true to your word, we have a lot of confession we could do, we're sorry where we have brought things, but you can fix it, it's instant for you, nothing's too hard for you, we come and we confess our unworthiness, and all that, and we want Lord for you to change us, and tonight I know you've, I've seen it in eyeballs of people out there, I've seen fear in eyeballs at certain points in this message, fear of dealing with things that they've wrestled with a long time, but tonight, oh let your grace draw them to your throne's footstool, and may mercy, mercy preserve them as they confess, and they renounce, and they surrender their hearts afresh, all of it to you, and dare to promise and yearn to be, have an obedient spirit from you as we yield to you, and believe you, believe you, and walk in the truth of all your word says, help us to be a people that, you look at it, you're not ashamed to call us brothers, as it says in Hebrews, because we're out of the same womb, that the cross birthed us from, they're pastors here tonight Lord, and as a fellow minister to them, I say to them, we all Lord, all of us, we need to be filled with the spirit of God, our messages need to be, if the Holy Spirit commits to say what he hears in the throne room to us, lead us, and teach us the righteousness, may our hearts commit to that too, to hear what you're saying to the churches, and to say it, and so Lord, may we do this tonight, to bow before you, and discover rivers of mercy and grace, that we've never discovered yet, don't let us hold back, and be like those you want us not to be like, those who lag back in unbelief, and turn aside, and become just a statistic.

I pray tonight for this altar to be filled with hearts that say, when you said to them seek my face, that their heart says to you, Lord thy face will I seek, you've never broken a promise yet Lord, not one, not one, to any person in all these years, and you never will, so may the people here be encouraged tonight, to dare to come and confess their great need, and the sin that yet, on our heels nipping us like dogs, help us to confess the sin, and to renounce it, and to surrender to you, and to obey, and to dare to believe you, and ask you, ask you, ask you for this great gift of continual filling, and to walk in the power of choice. So, as I step down, the altar in the name of Jesus at the front, is open, as God does to whoever to come, and your pastor will be here, but you come and do business with God, and if you need help, you ask for it, there'll be plenty here to help you, it's not like three years ago maybe, but this is different, this is different, you've seen it tonight, don't lag back, in Jesus name, you come, you come even now.

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