

Growing in Grace #4 - the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the essential role of the Holy Spirit in experiencing and growing in the grace of God.

Duration: 53:34

Scripture: Luke 18:35-43, Romans 8:5-6, Romans 8:14, Galatians 1:3, Galatians 6:18, Ephesians 5:18, Philippians 3:3

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Gods Grace"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck shares a story about a friend who had lost everything and was living in a shabby garage apartment. Chuck was deeply saddened by his friend's situation and couldn't hide his emotions, breaking down in tears. Despite feeling like a fool, Chuck's friend asked him to visit and make an appeal for reconciliation with his wife. Chuck emphasizes the importance of being led by the Spirit and not by our own efforts, as it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the grace of Jesus is applied to our lives. He references Romans 6:14 and Romans 8:5-6 to highlight the significance of walking according to the Spirit.

Transcript

Father, we give you thanks, we give you praise and glory, we give you honor, Lord. We come humbly before you, admitting our great need for you. Not just a partial need, Lord, but comprehensive, deep, constant, daily.

Thank you that you give grace to the humble, and we humble ourselves before you and ask that you pour out your grace in mighty measures today, graciously speaking to us, graciously touching our hearts, graciously working in us to will and to do of your good pleasure, and graciously, Lord, transforming our lives to the image of Jesus Christ. By your Holy Spirit now, unfold your word and make it life to us. Your words are spirit and they are life, and Lord, we confess we can only live by every word that proceeds from your mouth.

So speak to us, we're ready to hear, in Jesus' name, amen. Our fourth study in the series of Growing in the Grace of God is about the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. This study builds very much on our study from last time, where we were looking at living daily by the grace of God.

We're asking the question, how do we live day by day by the grace of God? Well, another perspective on this is our study now, and that is God's Spirit must be at work in us and on us and through us, applying God's grace to our lives. And there's a profound relationship between the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. In Zechariah chapter 4, verses 6 and 7, give one of the wonderful joining words of the scripture that show us how the Spirit and God's grace are just linked completely together.

So he answered and said to me, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain, and he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of grace, grace to it. The relating of the work of the Spirit of God to the grace of God.

We cannot walk in the grace of God without the work of the Spirit of God. And whenever the Spirit of God is at work, it's the grace of God that is being provided. Verse 6, Zerubbabel was the leader of the people of God.

The word of the Lord to his people, not by might nor power, but by my spirit. The Holy Spirit must be the dynamic agent in the work of the building of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Zerubbabel was leading the people back from captivity into the promised land to rebuild the temple of God.

This was to be done not by the might and power of man, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. We are the temple of the living God today. The building up of the church, the building up of our lives is not by our might or power, but it's by the work of the Spirit of God.

In Zerubbabel's day, when he looked at the task of building again the temple of God in a hostile alien world, the task looked to him like a great mountain. No way. The word of the Lord to Zerubbabel was that this mountain would become a plain, just a flat place to march across when God was through with his task.

And then ultimately, Zerubbabel would bring out the capstone, the last stone for the temple, that final piece set in place. And what could be said to that last stone but a word that explained the whole work of God building the temple in that day? Grace, grace to it. So it is in our lives.

Our lives must be built by the work of the Holy Spirit. And when that last piece is put in place in our lives and in the life of the church before she is raptured to be with the Lord, what can be said at that time about the whole process? Grace, grace to it. John 1.16, grace upon grace, we looked at before.

That's how God works in our lives. Of his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. In our lives, God works by grace.

In the New Testament, there is a linking together of the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. Luke 22.20, likewise he also took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you. At the Lord's Supper, when we take the cup that speaks of the blood of Jesus Christ, it's the cup of the new covenant.

The new arrangement for walking with God. The new covenant of grace. The old covenant was the law of Moses.

If you want to jot down in your notes, Ephesians 1.7 makes it very clear that the shed blood of Jesus Christ was a work of the grace of God. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. When the Lord Jesus Christ shed his blood for us, he was purchasing

for us the new covenant, a new arrangement between us and God.

Here we're told when he was shedding his blood to give us forgiveness of sins, it was according to the riches of his grace. The new covenant is a covenant of grace. It's what we've been looking at in these studies together.

2 Corinthians 3 picks up this theme of the new covenant and in verses 5 and 6 show us the deep necessary involvement of the Holy Spirit in this new covenant of grace. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers, that is, servants of the new covenant. Not of the letter, but of the spirit.

For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. We who are in the Lord Jesus Christ through faith in him, we are servants of the new covenant. We looked at that in our second study, the grace of God.

We don't relate to God, build a life with God through our best efforts to live up to the law of God. We begin and maintain a relationship with God through the grace of God. That is echoed here in these words.

We don't come before God on our own sufficiency. We don't serve God by our own sufficiency. We are not sufficient to live up to the standards of God, the perfect holy law of God.

In fact, we're not sufficient of ourselves, verse 5 says, to think of anything as being from ourselves, anything that matters. This echoes John 15, where Jesus said, apart from me, you can do nothing. Some of us were speaking the other evening about that.

It seems like we can do so much and that unsaved people can do so much. Yes, but it amounts to nothing. People can do great works of art and make discoveries and explore and travel and theorize and impress one another.

But none of that can save a soul, transform a life, prepare anyone for glory, or let them be used now for the glory of God. What does that amount to? Nothing. Apart from me, you can do nothing.

Oh, many, many busy things, but they amount to nothing. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as coming from ourselves. That's the word of humility.

We talked about humility and faith, how there's so much at the heart of living by the grace of God. There's the humility. Our sufficiency isn't enough.

Here's the faith. But our sufficiency is from God. We don't have what it takes.

He does have what it takes. We humbly confess our insufficiency. By faith we trust in His sufficiency.

And that makes us sufficient servants then under the new covenant. Not of the letter, not rules to try and keep, but of the spirit, a person of the Godhead to work in us. How important is this? The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

This is a life and death issue. This is not just an interesting doctrinal point. Oh, should we or shouldn't we put it on our statement? Will I or won't I sign it? This is a life or death matter.

Living by the letter, that is rules even from God to keep, by our own best effort, kills us. It says you didn't measure up and you can't. But the spirit gives us life.

The Holy Spirit supplies the life we need and changes our lives. The new covenant is live day by day in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit to be supplying the sufficiency of the grace of God into our lives. Now that's by way of introduction.

Linking the Holy Spirit and the grace of God together where one is involved, the other is. If we need one, we'll find the other comes along. We need grace, it must be by the Holy Spirit.

We want the Holy Spirit to work. He works delivering the grace of God. How do we live day by day? By the grace of God.

It has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Initially, we're given life by the Spirit, our next heading. By the grace of God, we must receive spiritual life by the work of the Holy Spirit.

John 3, verses 5 and 6. John 3, verses 5 and 6. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The life of flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Everyone on earth is here by way of a flesh birth, a natural human birth by human resources. That life cannot go into the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is populated by those who are children of the family of God through new birth.

New birth, new life by the Spirit. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. It'll never change.

It might get religious. It might get zealous and dedicated. It might want to turn over a new leaf.

But when it turns over the new leaf, underneath is more flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. We don't need a better flesh.

We need a new life. And we get that by the Holy Spirit. When we believe that Jesus died for us and we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, confessing our sin and our need for salvation and forgiveness, by the grace of God, the Holy Spirit brings us new life in Christ, new birth.

John chapter 6 adds to that. John 6, 53, toward the end of the verse says, You have no life in you. That is no spiritual life.

No life that is forever. No life that can relate to God. All we have is a physical life existence.

We don't have real life in ourselves. Verse 63 says, It is the Spirit who gives life. Again, we have humility and faith.

Here's the humbling word. You and I have no life in ourselves. Innately, we cannot supply the life that's needed to know God and walk with God and serve God.

But here's the matter for faith. It is the Spirit who gives life. We can count on God the Holy Spirit to bring us the life we need.

Initially, this is so in new birth. Continually, this is so day by day. The spiritual life we need must be supplied by the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, it is vital for us to be walking according to the Spirit. And that's our next heading to consider. Walking according to the Spirit, Galatians chapter 5. So many great revelations in Galatians

about the work of the Spirit, especially in chapter 5, though not exclusively.

Walking according to the Spirit, Galatians 5.16. I say then, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. What is our hope that we will not indulge the natural base cravings of just human flesh? Is it trying to change or trying to avoid or trying to get control? No, it's walking in the Spirit. Every step of every day in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

That's what gives us that confidence that we shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Walk in the Spirit. Every day in every way, every step, every issue.

Face it with hope and confidence in the Holy Spirit at work in our lives. Verse 18, but if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Each day we should be guided by the Spirit of God.

What to do, what to say, what to get engaged in, what to pass by, how to do it or whether to do it. Be led of the Spirit. Then we're practically experientially not under the law.

We're not following rules. We're following God as He works in our lives. Conversely, when we were looking at Romans 6.14, that you are not under law but under grace, when we do not walk by the Spirit, not led by the Spirit, we're led by our own will and our own drive and our own resources, we put ourselves back under the law.

Now we have to live up to the commands and demands and standards of God on our own best effort. No way to live. It's always failure.

So we want to be led by the Spirit every step, every day, learning to be led by Him. Verse 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

The fruit of the Spirit. We looked in a previous study at living daily by the grace of God. If we want day by day fruitful lives, we saw it must be by the grace of God.

The Word of His grace effectively produces fruit in our lives. Here we see it's also tied into the work of the Holy Spirit. That fruit is the fruit of the Spirit.

It's not something we conjure up or muster up or forcefully try to bring out of our lives. It's the growth of the Spirit of God working in and through us, the things of God. The fruit of the Spirit is described in these ways.

Really a description of the life and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 25. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

If we have found new life by the work of the Spirit in new birth, let's grow and serve day by day by the work of the Spirit, walking according to the Spirit. These verses in Galatians brought to my mind a quote out of Pastor Chuck's wonderful book on why grace changes everything. We've been using, this is one of our textbooks at the Bible College in the class I've been teaching on growing in the grace of God.

Pastor Chuck wrote on page 217, Paul opened his letter to the Galatians with the salutation, grace be to you. He closed it with, quote, brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with your spirit, amen. His benediction takes on a rich depth of meaning in light of the letter's sharp focus on the glorious grace of God.

And that is the primary focus of the book of Galatians, the glorious grace of God. Then Pastor Chuck adds, the grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians' greatest need, to walk in the power of his Spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh was their calling. Pastor Chuck sees here in his writing the very point we're making in the study today, the linking together of the grace of God and the Spirit of God.

The grace of God, the primary theme of Galatians. But in that book, much revelation about the work of the Holy Spirit, including the fact that we must live day by day by the work of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because that's the only way the grace of God comes to bear on and in and through our lives.

Notice in these two parallel sentences how Pastor Chuck ties the grace of Jesus Christ into the power of his Spirit. Grace and the Spirit linked together. He said, the grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians' greatest need.

Then he restates it another way, to walk in the power of his Spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh was their calling. It is the Holy Spirit powerfully at work in us that applies the grace of Jesus into, upon, and through our lives. Romans chapter 8 also speaks of this matter of walking according to the Spirit.

Romans chapter 8, verses 5 and 6. 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, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

In verse 5, things of the flesh and things of the Spirit. Those who are living according to the flesh, they're living by drawing just on human resource in thinking, deciding, acting, relating. They're setting their mind on the things of the flesh.

In other words, they're putting their attention on things like this, my will, my glory, my sufficiency. Now on the other hand, those who are walking according to the Spirit, day by day, step by step, they're looking to the resources and work of the Spirit of God. They set their mind on things of the Spirit.

They set their mind on God's will, God's glory, God's grace, which is our sufficiency. Verse 6 contrasts the carnally minded with the spiritually minded. And again, we see the contrast in the choice is life or death.

Sometimes along the way, folks have said to me in some of these studies, now wait a minute, you know, law and grace and things like this. Aren't you just kind of splitting theological hairs? I mean, isn't it all just things of God to try to learn and get into? And I want to assure them that it's not just splitting hairs. But even if they're convinced it is, I still like to exhort them on this issue.

If it is just splitting hairs, be sure and split the hair carefully. Because one side of that hair is death and the other side is life. That's how serious it is.

See? Verse 6, to be carnally minded, that is flesh resource thinking, is death. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. We're not talking about what color carpet to get or whether or not to hang a mirror off the dove or, you know, what kind of chairs to get or whether you want pews.

We're choosing between life and death. That's how critical it is to understand law and grace, the Spirit of God at work, or our own flesh resource. Those who are carnally minded, it leads to death, spiritual deadness.

It produces things like fear and doubt and selfishness. The spiritually minded produces life and peace. It brings into lives faith and hope and love, evidences of God's life at work in us.

Walking according to the Spirit, it's God's will for us. Verse 14 puts it this way, For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The practical fact is, if we want to live as children of God, we want to be led by the Spirit of God.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, we know those are the children of God. A life day by day that gives evidence and indication that they're following the leading of the Holy Spirit, that's a child of God. The world has no interest in such things, and if they did, they couldn't do it.

They don't know the true and living God. Walking according to the Spirit, vitally important if we want to grow in the grace of God. God wants to intensify this issue, though.

He doesn't want us just walking according to the Spirit. He wants us to be filled with the Spirit. We not only are called to be walking independent step by step, day by day, upon the Spirit, but God wants to have our lives filled to overflowing with the work of the Holy Spirit.

That's the only way we can be abounding in the grace of God, is if our lives are just overflowing with the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5.18 speaks of this, recall? Ephesians 5.18. It's that classic command the Lord gave through the Apostle Paul, and do not be drunk with wine in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.

That could be translated, be always being filled with the Holy Spirit. It's kind of the present progressive tense, all the time, every day be filled. Our lives are not to be controlled by things like human influences, wine and other things.

That dissipates our lives, tears them down and wastes them. But we are to be filled with the Spirit. What are the evidences, by the way, of being filled with the Spirit? There have been many debates through the years on this subject.

Many people start the discussion, if they've been filled with the Spirit, by whatever happened to them. That's the easiest standard to think as the absolute and only one. Years ago I read a book called, Let's Stop Fighting About the Holy Spirit.

I read it back in the mid-seventies. In it, the author tells about two blind men sitting on a bench. The amazing thing about these blind men is they were blind no more.

They'd both been healed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And they're sitting there talking, and they begin to realize they had a relationship with, an encounter with, and touch of Jesus on their lives, and they're starting to give each other their testimonies. Well, tell me how you were healed.

Okay, then I'll tell you. And one says, well, here's how I was healed. He just said, receive your sight, and I could see.

And the other previously blind man says, wait a minute, you mean no spit, no clay, no go wash it off? No. He says, then you weren't healed. We so often measure the work of God by what we went through, instead of what the Word has to say.

I was teaching once, as I have often in the past dozen or more years, at family camps up at Twin Peaks, and Brian Brodersen and I were teaching and alternating, and the Lord led us by His Spirit to teach about the Spirit quite spontaneously on the first night. And I taught about worshiping in the Spirit, Philippians 3.3, and the next message Brian taught on being filled with the Spirit. And that afternoon I went to my room, and I thought, Lord, that just stirred my heart.

I want to get in your Word, Lord. Show me some of the indicators, the evidences, the signs, the expectations people can have if they are filled with the Spirit. And I know there are many more of them, but just that afternoon I was running through the Word and wrote down 24 different indications of being filled with the Spirit.

How narrow-minded we can get, you know? You can build denominations just on that. You know, the wind and cloven tongues of fire denomination. That's a pretty small group, because that only happened once.

Then the tongues denomination, the prophecy denomination, the denomination that when you're filled with the Spirit, you proclaim and everybody hears in their own language. That's a pretty small group, too. That's only recorded once.

But you know, in the New Testament, the most extensive, broad, and practical explanation of the fullness of the Spirit? And it doesn't set aside any of these others. I mean, God can do any and all of these, and in some cases, He can do it. Some lives does many of them and some a few.

Right here in chapter 5 Ephesians where it says be filled with the Spirit, there's a list of what happens to people's lives when they're filled with the Spirit. What should be expected? Be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Ministering to one another. Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. That's an indicator of a life filled with the Spirit.

Giving thanks always for all things. That's an indication of a life filled with the Spirit. Look at this one.

Aren't many people lining up fighting to get this one? Submitting to one another in the fear of God. When you see someone walking in great submission and humility out of reverence for God, it's an evidence of the full work of the Spirit of God in their lives. These are tied immediately, grammatically, contextually, directly in to being filled with the Spirit.

Do you know the amazing thing? After verse 21, God begins to expand on that verse. And we say, submitting to one another? How does that work? Who to whom and where do we do it? That's what brought into the scriptures the major classic passage on Christian household living and working on the job. How do we submit? What does it look like? Who does it where? Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.

Verse 25, husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church. It doesn't end there. Chapter 6, children, obey your parents in the Lord.

Then if you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Then verse 5 goes on to the employee, and then verse 9 of chapter 6 to the employer. The most extended explanation of Spirit-filled living is Ephesians 5 and 6, living at church, at home, and on the job.

Thank God for the power and the fullness of the Spirit to go out and witness. Thank God for the fullness of the Spirit to gather in corporate worship. But how many of us, too much of the time, have forgotten the fullness of the Spirit is for daily living at home and daily work on the job.

See, we need God's grace at home, don't we? If you don't need God's grace at home, you have a very unusual home. And if you don't need God's grace at work, you have a very unusual job. The grace of God is not just some theological issue that we learned where to put it in our outline of our theology.

It's for living and serving and working day by day. And we're to be filled, we're to be being filled with the Spirit. How does that take place? Well, one simple answer is Luke 11, 13.

Luke 11, 13, Jesus said, if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? God the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. This has an application both in salvation as well as the fullness of the Spirit for sanctification and the work of grace growing in our lives. The Spirit of God is not in our lives, we're not born again.

We humbly ask the Lord Jesus for forgiveness and new life, admitting our need. The Father will send the Holy Spirit with new life. But many Christians fail to apply this verse to their own lives.

Sometimes I've read this verse with Christians and urge them to ask the Lord for the fullness of the Spirit. And they say, I don't need to ask for the Spirit, I have him. Yes, but does he have you? Sure, if you're a Christian, you have the Spirit.

But the fullness of the Spirit means he totally has you. He has room to work in every area of your life in every way he wants to. And we who have the Spirit can ask the Father to send the Spirit's full work upon us, which the Scriptures speak of so often.

From Acts 1-8 and elsewhere. The fullness of the Spirit is for those who ask. See, it's a work of the grace of God, so you can't buy it, you can't earn it, you can't conjure it up, you can't make it happen, you just ask.

Humbly ask. The asking is humility and faith. The asking is, I need it, humility.

But the asking is, I believe you'll give it, that's faith. Being filled with the Spirit, it's for all those who ask. Just humbly ask and walk on, and you'll see the evidences more and more and more.

Ephesians chapter 3 has a great prayer in it that also is related to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Seldom do we think of this prayer as about the Holy Spirit, but it definitely deals with the fullness of the Spirit. There are two great prayers in Ephesians, chapter 1 and chapter 3. Two of my favorite prayers in the Bible.

I pray them often for nearly 20 years. It took me almost ten years as a Christian to discover these prayers. And that I shouldn't just be reading them, but I should be praying them.

And I've been praying them for those many years to the Lord, for my life and others and family and church and ministry. Chapter 3, verse 16, a prayer that he, God, would grant you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might through his spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height to know the love of Christ, the great dimensions of the love of Christ, which passes knowledge. In other words, get to know experientially the love of Christ, which

is far beyond mere head knowledge.

To what end? That you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now, a prayer that God would work in our lives by his spirit, letting us know the dimensions of the love of Christ to the point that we're filled with all the fullness of God is directly related to being filled with the spirit, being filled with the spirit of God, who is God himself. The third person of the Trinity, and being filled with the spirit are not two different things.

They're directly related. If we seek the Lord in such a prayer, we can expect that our lives will more and more characteristically be filled with all the fullness of God. If we ask anything according to his will, we've been heard and we have the requests we ask.

There's no safer prayer than prayer that is directly out of the word of God. The word of God is the will of God. It's our prayer list.

Sometimes folks say, you know, I like to pray, but I just don't know what to pray about. Kind of want to hand them a Bible and go, start here. And when you're through there, as if they ever could be, that's our prayer list.

Above all prayer lists, the word of God. Prayer that we might be filled to all the fullness of God. One other wonderful description of the fullness of the spirit is in John chapter 7. This was one personally God used to change my life back in the early 1970s after struggling as a Christian under the letter of the law and killing people for five years as a pastor with the letter of the law.

Well, it's not bad enough you live under the law yourselves. You bring people together and have a corporate execution. Here, go out and try to live by this.

I know you can do it. You didn't do it? Come on, try harder. You know, it's dying by degrees week after week.

This is where God touched my life mightily on this issue of the fullness of the spirit, John 7, 37 through 39. On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

What is that all about? Well, verse 39 explains. But this he spoke concerning the spirit, whom those believing in him would receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Once the Son, God the Son, would be back at the right hand of the Father, the spirit could be poured forth.

And Jesus is talking here about how one can enter into that fullness. Look how simple it is. It's so subtle almost.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. If anyone has a spiritual need, a yearning, an aching, a lack, a desire, bring that to Jesus Christ. Let him come to me and then drink.

How do you drink of Jesus Christ? Basically the same way you would a glass of water. You come to a glass of physical water to quench physical thirst and you take it believing it will meet the need. So if we bring our thirst spiritually to Jesus Christ, believing he will meet the need, that's drinking.

And I'm not imagining that, that's exactly what the next verse says. He who believes in me, as the scripture said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water, he who believes in me. If we characteristically

believe that Jesus can quench the thirst in our lives, can meet the needs in our lives, fulfill the yearnings and desires, and fulfill the lack and insufficiency in our lives.

If we just take those things to Jesus Christ and believe that he can deal with them, that's drinking of him by faith. And if we keep doing that, if we characteristically do that, it's assumed, immediately assumed, that that will quench the thirst. That isn't even stated here, that's implied.

If you're thirsty, come to me and drink. But it goes far beyond that. He who believes in me, he who keeps coming, believing I can meet those needs, out of his heart, out of his innermost being, shall flow rivers of living water.

This is a picture of bringing our lack and need to the Lord humbly in faith. He giving to us a thirst quenching, life giving drink of the Holy Spirit. Not only meeting our needs, but building up in us living water, until we just overflow onto the lives of others.

Many, many years ago, I told the Lord, by his grace and the work of his spirit, this is the way I would love to walk and serve and minister. By coming to him characteristically consistently, having him quench and satisfy and fill me with living water, and while I'm concentrating on him, he's filling me, till I overflow. This is a great way to minister.

We're out of our heart, out of our spirit, out of our inner being. We're so full of the living water, of the work of the Holy Spirit, because we just kept coming to Jesus, who kept pouring living water into us, that we just bubble over on other people. I would love my life to be more and more, one who out of their heart flowed, could be translated gushed torrents of living water.

Isn't that a beautiful picture? Someone come up to you and, I'm just so dry and weary, can you help me? You go, yes, God has something for you. Not making something up or trying to, I can't remember. Just so full inside of the work of God, that it just pours out on the lives of others.

That's the work of the Holy Spirit. The abundant grace of Jesus Christ is here seen meeting our needs within, and leading on to this overflowing grace, touching the lives of others. The abounding grace of God, overflowing our lives by the deep work of the Holy Spirit upon us and in us.

The Holy Spirit and the grace of God, they are absolutely linked together. How do we live day by day by the grace of God? By the work of the Spirit in us, upon us, and through us. In conclusion, a warning.

A set of three warnings. In Acts 7.51, Stephen was speaking to the leaders of Israel and he says, you do always resist the Holy Spirit. They were self-righteous, they were self-willed, they were self-sufficient.

That resists. What the Holy Spirit wants to do. May we not be like that.

We can't resist the Spirit and then have lives abounding in the grace of God. Jump over 1 Thessalonians 5.19, it says, do not quench the Spirit. That's closely related to resisting.

When we won't respond to His Word, won't respond to His convictions, won't respond to His moving, we're quenching. Putting the blanket over, the blanket of the flesh over what He wants to do in and through our lives. Let's not quench the Spirit, we're also quenching the work of the grace of God.

Ephesians 4.30 says, grieve not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a power. He does have power, but He isn't a power.

He's not heavenly electricity. He's the third person of the Godhead. And He can have a heartache over the people of God.

The following verses 31 and 32 speak of bad words and bad attitudes among Christians, malice and other things. Speaks of unforgiveness. These things grieve the Spirit of God.

We cannot walk in the fullness of the Spirit if we're grieving the Spirit of God. God's grace is available to abound in our lives, but it can only come by the full work of the Holy Spirit. One concluding illustration of how this works in a given life and situation, to me it's a powerful, beautiful, simple, stirring picture.

Again, I'm quoting from a story Pastor Chuck told on page 80 of his book, *Why Grace Changes Everything*. What a classic work of the Spirit this was. Pastor Chuck says a friend of his left his wife, and the wife called Chuck and asked if he'd go talk to this man.

Chuck writes, I agreed to go and found my friend living in a shabby garage apartment on the bad side of town. When I saw his filthy little home, I was struck by how much he had lost. I thought, oh God, how could he give up so much for so little? He writes, my heart was breaking because I loved this man.

The sight of what he had fallen into tore me apart. I found myself unable to conceal my feelings. And much to my embarrassment, I began to weep.

He stood up and said, I'm sorry, I just can't talk right now. And he said he went home feeling like a fool. Here my good friend's wife wanted me to visit him and make an appeal for reconciliation, and all I could do was sit there and cry.

The next morning, Chuck says, I received a phone call with news that left me in shock. My friend had returned to his wife and family just hours after my visit. What did God use to achieve this miraculous healing of a fractured relationship? Not a holier-than-thou attitude to be certain.

His spirit had created in me a spirit of meekness and brokenness that led to a joyful reconciliation. Chuck says, I thought I had blundered terribly, but I discovered that whenever we choose to walk in the spirit, God delights to work powerfully in stunning and unexpected ways. See, that's a testimony of the grace of God at work.

That's a testimony of walking in the spirit, being filled with the spirit. The spirit of God was grieved over that situation and expressed it through his sobbing and tears, through Chuck's crying. Now you and I, and I'm sure that's the way Chuck was thinking, would want to go in there with a thus saith the Lord, I'm another Elijah here.

You get back home or I'll call down lightning. Or if not that, if the man says, I don't know why I did this, what should I do? We'd have such a word from God. He would run out the door ahead of us.

But Chuck was so broken hearted, he wept and thought he blew it terribly, not at all. When we walk according to the spirit, when we're filled with the spirit, what's of God and on the heart of God and is the power of God overflows our lives. And what looks like weak foolishness can change lives completely.

It's critical to see the union between the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. We can't have one without the other. We see God wants us growing in his grace.

It must take place by the work of the Holy Spirit in, upon, and through our lives. Let's pray together about that. Father, how we thank you for your good grace, your great grace, your abounding grace, and thank you that it's not left us to try to figure it out and make it happen.

Your Holy Spirit is there to explain and to deliver the grace of God. Lord, for any among us who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, have not had new birth by the spirit of God, stir their hearts even right now to say, Lord Jesus, forgive me a sinner, and by your spirit send me new life. For all of us who might need in any measure, small or great, a new filling, a flooding work of your spirit, Lord, we humbly ask you, fill us again.

Fill us to overflowing. We bring to you, Lord Jesus, our thirsts, our needs, our yearnings. We believe you can meet them.

Quench our thirst by your Holy Spirit. And keep doing it as we believe in you until you fill us with living water that it might flow out to others who need a touch from you. Lord, we do not want to resist you, quench you, or grieve you.

Work by your spirit in our lives, we pray, in Jesus' name, amen.

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