

# The Holy Spirit and Grace

by Bob Hoekstra

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*The sermon explores the vital connection between the Holy Spirit and God's grace in empowering believers for effective Christian living.*

**Duration:** 1:02:02

**Scripture:** Zechariah 4:6, John 7:37, Ephesians 5:18

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Gods Grace"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God, emphasizing the connection between living by the Holy Spirit and living by the Grace of God. It explores the importance of being filled with the Spirit, walking according to the Spirit, and seeking the fullness of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. The sermon also includes warnings against resisting, grieving, or quenching the Spirit, and concludes with a powerful illustration of reconciliation through the Spirit's work.

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## Transcript

Our study for this visit together in the series on Growing in the Grace of God is the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God, and it's the fourth study out of six in this seminar series. We'll begin in the Word of God in a moment in Zechariah chapter 4, but let's open with a word of prayer as well. Lord, it is so good to seek you out in your Word.

We thank you for your Word, Lord. It is a treasure beyond our measure. And Lord, pour out your Holy Spirit, we pray, as we study on the subject of the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God.

Pour out your Spirit. Anoint us, give us hearts to receive, ears to hear, hearts to respond. And we pray that you will be glorified, and that we, your people, Lord, will be edified and built up in the faith and equipped to more fully and effectively serve you, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. The Holy Spirit and the Grace of God. Wonderful, wonderful subject.

Our last study was living daily by the Grace of God. Well, here's another perspective on the same thing, and that is God's Spirit at work, applying God's Grace onto and into and through our lives. Tremendous connection in Zechariah here between the Holy Spirit and the Grace of God.

Watch the connection. Really, kind of an indication of where we're going in the Word, what the conclusion we'll find is, that is that living by the Holy Spirit and living by the Grace of God are basically two different

ways to talk about the same reality. And twice in the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace.

It's in the book of Zechariah and also in Hebrews 10. But here in Zechariah, chapter 4, verses 6 and 7, this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Zerubbabel was God's man to lead the people of God back to reestablishing the testimony of God and the work of God there in Jerusalem from whence they had been taken away captive.

And the Lord is reminding Zerubbabel how the work of the Lord is accomplished here in Zechariah 4, 6. This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit. That's the way ministry gets accomplished. That's the way the Lord does His work among His people here on this planet.

Ministry, service of God, is not by might nor is it by power. That is, human might or human power. Quite the contrary.

Way beyond that. Way beyond human resources. Serving the Lord is about ministering by the Spirit of the Lord.

Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. Now, the connection with grace is found in the next verse, where the same truth is sort of restated, but with a different implication and with different terminology. Verse 7, 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.

Who are you, O great mountain? When we respond to the Lord in His calling to serve the Lord, it's amazing how you can document in scriptures, and we could document by our own testimonies, I'm sure, that here comes a great mountain. God calls us to do His will and to walk with Him and serve Him in such and such a place and in such and such a way, and before you know it, it's like you've run smack into a mountain. A mountain you can't get over.

A mountain you can't get around. A mountain you can't get through. A mountain of impossibility.

And that's certainly what Zerubbabel ran into. And the Lord is speaking, as it were, to that reality and to that mountain of obstruction, and declares, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel, His chosen servant, you, the mountain of obstruction, shall become a plain. You know, just a flat place across which Zerubbabel would march as he fulfilled the will of God.

And He, Zerubbabel, shall bring forth the capstone. You know, that last piece you set in an arch. It's completed and it's solidly now held together.

And He shall bring forth the capstone. That is, Zerubbabel shall bring the work I've assigned him to to the proper conclusion for his contribution in it, for his role. And when Zerubbabel would put that last piece in place that God had called him to in this season of service, Zerubbabel would do that, would recognize that completion of his task with shouts of grace, grace to it.

Why was he shouting grace to the completion of the task? Because that was his testimony. That's how it was accomplished. So in verse 6, we're told that service of the Lord is not by human might or human power, but by the Spirit of the Lord at work in our lives.

Then the same truth is restated in verse 7, crediting grace as the dynamic that brought the conclusion effectively to the ministry that Zerubbabel was called to. One verse, serve the Lord by the Spirit of God.

The next verse, serve the Lord by the grace of God.

Two ways to say the same thing. The emphasis in one, the Holy Spirit, is the person of the Godhead at work in our lives. The emphasis in verse 7, what the Spirit is pouring out, the dynamic he is using, the resource from heaven he's releasing in our lives, it's the grace of God.

So, here's the connection seen in Zechariah between the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. Now let's look at a couple of places in the New Testament. Luke 22, 20 and 2 Corinthians 3, 5 and 6. These verses speak of the New Covenant.

We've already had reference in Scripture to that in our studies, the New Covenant of Grace, contrasted with the Old Covenant of Law. The New Covenant, here Jesus speaks of it in Luke chapter 22, verse 20. This was when the Lord was establishing, you might say, the First Lord's Supper and linking it to the Last Supper, the Passover Feast.

Verse 20, likewise he, Jesus, also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you. The New Covenant. This is right at the heart of what the Memorial Supper, the Lord's Supper is about.

It's about the New Covenant. The bread, Jesus' body, perfect sacrifice lamb given in our place. And then the cup, which speaks of his blood, which purchased a new covenant, a new arrangement for living between us and the Lord God.

You might tuck in there Ephesians 1, 7, 2, along with this, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Ephesians 1, 7, In him, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood. Same kind of language.

The forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. So, the New Covenant, the shedding of Christ's blood to purchase a new arrangement between God and man, this is about the richness of God's grace. The New Covenant.

It's a new covenant of grace. Now, in 2 Corinthians 3, when the New Covenant is spoken of, watch the language. 2 Corinthians 3, 5, and 6. Not that we are sufficient to ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as servants, ministers of the New Covenant.

There it is, the New Covenant. Then the New Covenant is described a little bit in its essence. Not of the letter, but of the Spirit.

That's our subject today. The New Covenant is not rules and regulations and procedures to follow by our own best effort and ingenuity. That's not the way it works.

It's not of the letter, but it's of the Spirit. How important is that? The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

So, here, the Holy Spirit is linked to the New Covenant. The New Covenant is a Holy Spirit covenant. And, we're looking today at the Holy Spirit and the grace of God.

The New Covenant is lived out day by day in humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit to be supplying the sufficiency of the grace of God for our daily life and service. So, all of that, sort of introductory to the subject, the connection between the Holy Spirit at work in our lives and the grace of God at work in our

lives. There's a total connection.

When the Holy Spirit's working in our lives, it is the grace of God that He's pouring out upon us as a life-giving, life-shaping, life-changing resource from Heaven. By the grace of God, everyone must receive spiritual life by the work of the Holy Spirit, both initially in new birth and then continually, day by day, in growth and service. Of course, a great place to see those summary who's connected are in John chapter 3. John chapter 3, verses 5 and 6. Jesus answered, that is, Nicodemus' questions, answered, 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. Here's a contrast between natural birth and natural resources and supernatural birth and supernatural resources. This is a contrast between everyone's common interest into ordinary natural human life and their new birth entrance into supernatural spiritual life.

We are given life by the Spirit. Initially, this happens at new birth. People are dead in their trespasses and sins.

We were before we came to Christ. Those we're ministering to, if they don't know Jesus, they're dead in their trespasses and sins. They have a human life that's just an existence.

They don't have real life. That's only innate to God Himself and can only come from God. So, to enter into the family of God, enter into the promises of God, the work of God, we must be born again by the Spirit of God from above.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh. No matter how someone tries to improve themselves from just a natural human Adamic life that everyone starts out in, it just remains flesh, whether they educate it or try to reshape it or change it or turn over a new leaf, as people say. God knows that people need a new life, not a new leaf, a new chapter in their book.

They need a whole new life. It comes from God alone. Only that which is born of the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, is Spirit, is spiritual.

Spiritual life must come from God through new birth. But that's just a good reminder of where we stand in this whole issue with God. He's the life source, we're not.

We're always the recipients. And to grow in that life and be stronger in that life and maturing in that life and fruitful and effective in living that life, we need the work of the Holy Spirit all along the way. We need the Holy Spirit as much today to live this new life in Christ as we needed the Holy Spirit's work when we were seeking new birth by the Spirit through faith in Jesus Christ.

Look at John 6, verse 53. The end of the verse, Jesus said to his disciples, You have no life in you. And to whoever was listening on that day, this is a truth to embrace.

You have no life in you. People don't innately have life. As mentioned, they must get it from God.

Look at verse 63. It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing.

So that's where people are. People don't innately naturally have life. They have to get it elsewhere.

Where do they go? It's the Spirit who gives life. Flesh profits nothing. What an indictment of the flesh.

That is natural human life, natural human resource. What an indictment. The flesh profits nothing.

You can polish the Adamic life, the life that everyone in the unsaved world has, and you can impress people in groups, and you can make it look like this person is so much more advanced than this other person economically or educationally or in status or effectiveness or whatever. But you know, if they're both in Adam and they're both unredeemed, what they're doing spiritually profits nothing. Profits nothing.

And, by the way, we'll apply this in a minute to Christians. We have a choice every day. Are we going to walk according to the flesh or walk according to the Spirit? Well, let's not forget this verse.

The flesh profits nothing. This is not just a style preference, you know. Well, I like a minister with this style and he with that style.

Listen, forget style. Let's talk about substance and source. Sure, ministries can look different and have a different tone and all of that.

That's fine. But there are not two options on source, on where it all comes from. It has to come from the Lord, and it has to be a fresh touch of the Spirit of God to be effective in day-by-day walk and ministry.

Initially and continually, day-by-day, the spiritual life we need must be supplied by the Holy Spirit. Must be, non-optional. Therefore, it is vital for us to be walking according to the Spirit.

And indeed, that's our next heading. Walking according to the Spirit. Galatians chapter 5. Oh, this is a powerful chapter, Galatians 5, on life in the Spirit.

Verse 16. I say then, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The lust of the flesh.

The cravings of fallen humanity. The base desires of just humanity in general without God present and at work in their lives. How do you avoid fulfilling the lust of the flesh? Many have tried many procedures and regimens and vows and promises and commitments to God and monastery life and seclusion.

On and on the attempts have gone. Here's God's way to not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Live by a different resource.

Walk in the Spirit. Result? You shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Walk in the Spirit.

Take the day-by-day steps of Christian life and service. Issue by issue. Step by step.

Day by day. Face them with a dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God. Lord, by your Spirit, work in my life this day.

Maybe the day is going along and all of a sudden here's an opportunity, a challenge or a decision or whatever. You could even refresh what the issue is. Lord, oh for this opportunity.

Just lead and work by your Holy Spirit. Just step by step. Day by day.

Walk in the Spirit. Live in dependence. Dependence upon the Spirit of God.

The result? You won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. You'll fulfill the will of God. You'll fulfill the desires of the heart of God and the desires of a heart that is turning to God and growing in God.

Verse 18. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now we know from Romans 6.14 that we are not under law but under grace, positionally before God.

Here's talking about the day by day practical walk and whether or not we put ourselves back under law in thinking and behaving and performance. If you're led by the Spirit, if day by day you're looking to the Lord to guide you by His Spirit and then also be the empowering presence in our lives, if you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. Practically, actually, in day by day living.

Yes, we know how we stand with God. He's not measuring us by law performance. He's measuring us by the grace of God and by the grace of God we're now the righteousness of God in Christ.

But day by day we can put ourselves and others under law. In other words, thinking that. Our relationship with the Lord depends upon how well we perform in our own human effort up to the measurement of the law of God.

Bondage. That may be good intentions but it's bad methodology. Bad proceeding.

But if you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. In other words, you're actually living by and under the grace of God. Verse 22.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Oh, what wonderful characteristics to be growing in anyone's life. How pleasing to the Lord.

What a testimony to others. What an impact on the heart and mind of others. If a person, if you, if I have love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control developing in our lives.

Really, this is like a snapshot picture of the very character of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is growing in Christ-likeness. This is not activity.

This is character. This is fruit. But notice, it's the fruit of the Spirit.

We cannot set these up as goals to accomplish. You know? This week I'll work on love. Next week I'll work on peace and joy.

Next week, long-suffering. Next week, kindness. And then see, I'll measure where I was and how I'm doing.

Again, a declaration of good intentions, but unwise procedure. Why? Because this is the fruit of the Spirit. These are realities that the Spirit of God must develop in our lives.

He must be the dynamic. And it's the fruit of the Spirit. Fruit, you know, think of an apple or a peach or something like that.

Fruit is life in an ongoing development of maturing. It becomes more and more what it was created to be. And it's about life developing until there is an appropriateness for whatever that fruit is.

There is tastefulness. There is fruit that is sweet. And those who partake of it and fellowship in it, it ministers life to people.

Well, this is the work of the Holy Spirit. And we want to be walking according to the Spirit. And then verse 25.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. If we have found life, new life by the Spirit of God, then let's grow and serve by the same Spirit. If we live in the Spirit.

If we now live by the fact that the Holy Spirit is in our lives, has brought new life to us, and we live in the Spirit, we're in this new realm, the spiritual realm of connection with the Lord God. If we have found life in the Spirit, let's also walk that way. Another way to say, it's kind of a good companion again for that great verse in Colossians 2.6. As you receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.

And how do we receive the Lord? By the work of the Holy Spirit. We had to cry out, Lord, I need a new life. I need new birth.

My life will never be acceptable. It's flesh. I need a whole new life from You.

And those who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus are born again by the Spirit of God from above. Well, if that's our status, if we live in the Spirit, that's a picture of someone who's come alive by means of the Spirit of God. Let's also walk in the Spirit.

Let's live each day the same way we found new birth at the beginning, in other words. And you think, well, wait a minute, I was just instantly a babe in Christ. I'm thinking about maturity and victory and fruitfulness and godliness.

Listen, it comes from the same direction by the same means that that new birth did. Trusting in God, relying upon His Holy Spirit to do what man cannot do by his own flesh. Galatians we're looking at here.

And look at the linking with the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. Also in Galatians, many other places, there's a real linking with the grace of God. Let me read a quote on this very subject for you, if I might.

This is from that wonderful book, *Why Grace Changes Everything*, by Pastor Chuck Smith. I'm reading a paragraph from page 217 that restates what we've just looked at so far. Quote, 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. The grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians' greatest need.

And Pastor Chuck states that same truth in the closing sentence with completely different terminology. To walk in the power of his spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh, was their calling. Two different ways to say the same thing.

Yes, there is a total connection, reinforcing, restating connection in the word of God between living by the Holy Spirit and living by the grace of God. And of course, see, the Lord does that sort of thing throughout the word of God. He takes essential realities of relationship between us and him and just describes that same essence from one vantage point after another.

And that's for our benefit. And the Lord knows we need that, is also why he does it. Instead of just describing it in one set of terminologies and then restating those terminologies countless times, the Lord does that too.

Have you noticed how much repetition there is in the word of God? Let's see, I wonder if that could possibly mean that the Lord thinks we need to hear these things over and over and over again. Certainly. But then he adds that other dimension of restating the same realities in different terminology.

So a new opportunity to think with another aspect of our relationship with the Lord. Look at Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8. Of course, you know, there's a great correspondence between Romans and Galatians. Galatians is like the the mini-summary version of Romans.

Concerning walking according to the Spirit, now is our heading. Romans 8, verses 5 and 6. For those who live according to the flesh, you know, they live by natural human resource, just best human effort, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, that's where their mind is.

For to be carnally minded, that is fleshly minded, is death. But to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Those who live according to the flesh, they just sort of have a a mindset of things of the flesh.

Basically, what could be boiled down to. Each of us in that condition interested in my will, my glory, my sufficiency. Let me tell you what I'm going to do.

Let me tell you what I did. Things of the flesh. Things of the flesh.

Those who are not living according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, they set their mind on things of the Spirit. God's will. God's glory.

God's grace. God's work in and through our lives. And again, it's a life or death issue.

Verse 6. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Brethren, this is not a casual choice. This is not an insignificant option day by day.

This is life or death. Certainly in the initial sense, if you never in a whole lifetime set your mind on things above and seek God for new birth from above, you'll have everlasting death. Separated forever from God who is life.

But believers need to take this to heart as well. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. A believer whose mind is a carnal mind, a fleshly mind, they're always thinking about themselves and circumstances and temporal things.

It's death. It breeds deadness of heart and life. Produces instead in our lives fear and doubt and selfishness.

But if we're spiritually minded, you know, thinking of things of the spirit, things of heaven above, things of the will of God, it's life and peace. It brings a spiritual vitality into our lives. It breeds faith and hope and love and things like that, which are life on display as growing and developing within us.

This is a critical issue. Every day of our lives we're choosing what purposes are we going to live for? What resources are we going to get there by means of? And it's either the flesh or the spirit. And the result is death or life.

Thank God for making it so simple. You know, it's not that you have to make a hundred and fifty choices a day to progress in life with God. This is the one that will set the course.

Oh, along the way there may be other things to attend to and think about in light of God's word, but this is always right at the core because this is speaking about source and resource. Are we going to live by our natural human abilities? Are we going to live by the supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit of God pouring out the grace of God in our lives? Well, our next heading, being filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit.

We not only are called to walk by the Spirit, but even to have our lives filled to overflowing with the work of the Holy Spirit. It's like, yeah, we're called to walk by the Spirit, but the calling is to a multiplied superabundance of life in the Spirit. You know, be filled.

Be inundated. Be flooded by the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we humbly seek the Lord and trust in Him day by day, asking Him to do this majestic work in our lives. And, of course, when that's taking place, when we are filled to overflowing with the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, another way to describe that, we are thereby abounding in the grace of God.

Abounding in the grace of God. So let's think for a few minutes about this matter of being filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18.

Short verse, simple verse, profound verse. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation. The disintegrating, tearing down of life.

But be filled with the Spirit. We're not to be drunk with wine. We're not to be under the influence of any other element, drugs and other things that can deteriorate one's life.

But rather, be filled with the Spirit. One of the great verses calling us to the filling of the Spirit. And some Christians say, well, wait a minute, I'm already saved, I already have the Holy Spirit.

Absolutely. If you're saved, you have the Holy Spirit. If a person does not have the Holy Spirit residing and dwelling in them, they're none of His.

They're none of Christ's. Every believer has the Spirit dwelling in them. But this is a command given to believers.

So this is something to respond to, to obey, to move in the direction of the instruction. And it's given to believers who already have the Holy Spirit. So this is something that Spirit-indwelt Christians, the only kind you can have, they're to be attending to day by day.

And I say day by day because of the present progressive tense of the command verb, be filled with the Spirit. We could translate it, be always being filled with the Holy Spirit. That really catches more clearly the sense of present progressive.

You know, this is an ongoing issue. This isn't something you accomplish one time, and that takes care of that. Every Christian in the body of Christ, every time they read this, is reminded that this is something to attend with before God in an ongoing way.

Be always being filled with the Holy Spirit. And you can see here in the context how critical this is by the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit. What are the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit? They are listed immediately from verse 19, here in chapter 5, all the way through chapter 6, verse 9. All of those verses are about the consequences of being filled with the Spirit.

How do we know that? Well, verse 18 starts a sentence, verse 19 just continues the same sentence. Be filled with the Spirit. What will attend that? What will attend that? Some grammarians or theologians call these verbs here verbs of attendant circumstance.

Here's what's going to attend the circumstance described in verse 18, which is preceding it. What's that? Being filled with the Spirit. What will attend that? What will happen in a person's life? Well, they'll become one of those who are speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting also to one another in the fear of God.

That's what attends a person filled with the Holy Spirit. That's what develops by the Holy Spirit's full work in their lives. You might say, well, how does this stretch all the way into chapter 6, verse 9? Because the last evidence of the Spirit listed specifically is verse 21, submitting to one another, yielding to one another, having a servant attitude to one another, putting our place in the place of a servant when it comes to others, being interested in their welfare and their benefit.

It's a servanthood term, and it's developed in lives by the full work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was the servant of servants, and He is seen in Isaiah as the suffering servant of Yahweh, of Jehovah. We are to submit to one another.

Then all the verses from chapter 5, verse 22, through chapter 6, verse 9, are descriptions of key opportunities to submit one to another. Wives submit, verse 22. Husbands submit to your wives, in verse 25.

How do husbands do that? By loving their wives sacrificially. That's how they behave as servants with their wives. Chapter 6, verse 1, children obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right.

That's how children become spirit-led, spirit-filled servants in home, and people see it. Verse 4, chapter 6, you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. That's how parents, that's how fathers become spirit-filled and spirit-noticed.

Ah, that father is walking in the Spirit. I see it. He's filled with the Spirit because his children are just getting nurtured and trained in the things of the Lord.

And it carries that language into bondservants and masters, employers and employees. The filling of the Spirit, the fullness of the Spirit. It's for everyday life, at home and work, and of course, church or wherever else you are.

Be always being filled with the Spirit. Praise the Lord for those moments, those crisis events, like the day of Pentecost, the other times when they cried out to God and they were all filled with the Spirit, and individuals were filled with the Spirit in the book of Acts, and then early on in Acts, filled again and again. Praise the Lord for those moments.

Someone at an afterglow service or a worship response time to a word, and then they're seeking the Lord and they're filled with the Spirit. Praise the Lord wherever, whenever, a believer has another fresh encounter with the filling work of the Holy Spirit of God. But this verse is even beyond that.

This verse is a way of living. Be always being filled with the Spirit. Every day we live, we are candidates to be filled by the Spirit of God.

And sometimes, multiple times in a day, we will maybe have sensed the outpouring through our lives of a flooding, touching work of God in someone else's life, and we feel kind of depleted and empty and weary or discouraged in the battle. Hey, brothers, sisters, it's time to be filled afresh. What's going to happen in my life if I do that? You'll be more and more what Ephesians 5, 19 through 6, 9 describe here in the Word of God.

That's what. So, how do you enter into this? How do you get filled with the Holy Spirit? Well, one of the simplest descriptions of it is in Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11, verse 13.

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? I'm amazed how many times and how many ways in the Word God just brings it down to the most available and simplest terms possible. I mean, just ask, because He wants to give. And again, give is the language of grace.

It doesn't take a formula. It doesn't take a particular place. It doesn't demand a particular setting, though many kinds of settings are a great place to consider this and respond.

But every day this is available. The Spirit of the Lord is with His children every day. Listen, even evil people know how to give good gifts to their children.

God's built that into the likeness of fallen humanity even. You know, the likeness and image of God. How much more will our Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask? I've often said to people who've said to me, I don't know if my life, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'd love to ask this question immediately. Tell me, have you asked Him? Have you asked Him? Oh, yeah, I ask Him all the time. Well, then be blessed, be comforted, be assured because of promises like this.

Verse 9, So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you.

For what proportion of those who ask? For everyone who asks receives. I think that's what God would have us concentrate on. Sometimes we in the church, we concentrate on measuring the presence or absence of observable phenomena that we would say are from the Spirit of God.

Two things about that. Sometimes we're not looking for a large enough range of phenomena. How large is the range? Well, it certainly includes Ephesians 5, 19 through Ephesians 6, 9. That's pretty huge.

Everyday living at home and work, you know. Watch right there. See what God does when people ask.

And then there are others too listed in Acts and elsewhere. There are dozens of evidences biblically listed on the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Here's the place to concentrate.

Promises from the Lord. Everyone who asks receives. And he who seeks finds.

In Hymn of Knox, it will be opened. You have another factor. That is timing.

If we're asking, we can leave the timing of the outpouring of evidence, the outpouring of consequence and results and fruit in the hands of the Lord. It's not going to be exactly identical in each of our lives, though over a lifetime, you might say, there will be huge common identity in those things. And the timing of the Lord's significant outpouring of the evidences might not come 30 seconds after we ask.

It might come three days after we ask. But everyone who asks receives. This is something to be taken by faith.

We just shall live by faith. We walk by faith, not by sight. And we want the Lord to just work in His time and His will and His way in our lives.

Here's another great filling of the Holy Spirit prayer. Ephesians 3, 16 through 19. Ephesians 3, 16 through 19.

This is a prayer. Paul prayed it for the saints. We can pray it for one another and for our own lives.

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. Okay, here's a prayer that is asking God to do a further inner work where the Spirit of God already dwells in a believer. So here's an example of those who have the Spirit praying for a further work of the Spirit in their own hearts.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. That Christ may have freedom in our hearts to make our hearts His home. Rearrange them any way He wants.

Particularly this way, 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 of what? To know the spiritual dimensions, that is, of the love of Christ which passes knowledge. Knowing that which passes mere head knowledge. Knowing in our daily walk that which even surpasses just content of facts in our mind, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Oh, what a great way to pray for one another for the filling of the Holy Spirit. The language is there, the Spirit is mentioned. Filled with all the fullness of God.

Okay, that's another way to describe the fullness of the Spirit, the filling of the Spirit. And it's a prayer right out of the Scriptures. The safest, greatest prayers we can ever pray are those we find in the Word of God.

Because we're to pray after the will of God. Well, here's the Word. It is the will of God.

What a great place to be praying about the filling of the Spirit. One more, John chapter 7. John chapter 7. Remember these famous verses? They're right on target with our subject today. John 7, 37 and following.

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. But this he spoke concerning the Spirit.

So, this teaching is about the Holy Spirit. Jesus addresses this issue to those who thirst. If anyone thirsts, boy, that's pretty easy to qualify for, isn't it? For a thirsty person, a needy person, a sense of dryness inside or need or lack or inadequacy stirs the heart.

Oh, immediately you're qualified. Jesus is speaking to you, to me at that time. If anyone thirsts, here's what we are to do with that thirst.

Let him come to me and drink. We bring that spiritual thirst, that dryness, that sense of lack or inadequacy or need, we bring it to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let him come to me and drink.

How do you drink spiritually of the resources of a person that is of the Lord Jesus Christ? We're told in the very next phrase, He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, trust in him for the needs in our lives. Jesus in John 6.35 had taught, I am the bread of life, he who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.

Whenever those needs arise, come to the Lord Jesus Christ and tell him, Lord, I believe you can handle this need. Look what happens in the life of a person who lives that way. As the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

It's interesting. You'd think that Jesus would have said, if you're thirsty, come to me and drink, believe in me, and the thirst of your heart will be quenched and satisfied. He doesn't say that.

That's immediately assumed. He goes on to the characterization of a thirsty soul who just keeps coming to Jesus, believing he can handle such things. That person will not only have inner satisfaction for that thirst and that dryness, but out of his heart, it's kind of like John 4, welling up in his heart, this wellspring of life everlasting.

Those who consistently, persistently come to the Lord Jesus Christ with their spiritual needs, they find out of their innermost being flows rivers of living water. And this he spoke concerning the Spirit. This is a great set of verses to minister to folks who are a little hesitant or apprehensive about things of the Holy Spirit.

They might have had a very conservative background, which kind of rules out any after-conversion works of the Holy Spirit, you know, because baptism of the Spirit, fullness of the Spirit, aren't even mentioned here. They're important terms, and you can learn them elsewhere in Scripture, but what a great introduction to the fullness of the Spirit for those who are kind of skittish about it. I was taught and trained a lot in a pretty conservative Baptist background when I was first saved and early on as a pastor, and this is one of the places the Lord just got me for the first conscious that I was aware of filling of the Spirit in my young life as a Christian and early years as a young pastor back in the 60s and 70s.

I was alone in my study, weary, time-pressed, wanting to teach John 7, been teaching through it, and I wasn't even, and here comes Sunday morning, and the night is going away. And these three verses had just been all over my heart and mind that week. And I just told the Lord, Lord, I'm just going to go from here on just, I guess, teach those three verses.

I'm not even partially prepared for the rest. And I added, and by the way, Lord, I was under much warfare in the church at that time. I said, just do this in my life.

Just do this in my life. I've been debating with people in the church even about the baptism and filling of the Spirit. Well, the debate was not the issue.

The issue is, Lord, I'm dry and needy, and I'm telling you, He flooded my soul with glory from heaven above. My thirsty soul was so satiated and satisfied that night with Him. And people wanted to know after the next Sunday morning service, Bob, what happened to you? You never preached like that before.

Boy, that testified to me that God was at work, and before there was too much of Bob at work, you know. Well, we must be given life by the Spirit. We must walk according to the Spirit.

We want to even be filled with the Spirit. And just three notations to add. We won't read them for time's sake.

A conclusion of warning. Acts 7.51, let's not resist the Spirit, as the leaders of Israel did in their self-righteousness, their self-will, their self-sufficiency. Let's not grieve the Spirit as is spoken of in Ephesians 4.30-32. Grieve Him with bad attitudes, bad words, unforgiveness.

Let's not quench the Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5.19. You know, refuse to respond to His word, His conviction, His moving in our lives. Let's characteristically seek the Lord for His fullness. A concluding illustration from Pastor Chuck's book, Why Grace Changes Everything, page 80.

Pastor Chuck tells here of agreeing to go to a friend who was living in a shabby garage apartment in a filthy part of town. And he had left his wife for another woman. And he walked into this little dwelling place and he said, Oh God, how could he give up so much for so little? And he says that his heart was breaking.

He loved this man. The sight of his fallen condition caused Chuck to begin to weep. He said, I got up and left and went home feeling like a fool.

Here my good friend's wife wanted me to visit him and make an appeal for reconciliation. All I could do was sit there and cry. Then the next morning the friend called Pastor Chuck and he wanted to return to his family.

And he did so just hours after Chuck's visit. Concluding thought, Chuck shared, What did God use to achieve this miraculous healing of a fractured relationship? Not a holier-than-thou attitude to be certain. His spirit, God's spirit, had created in me a spirit of meekness and brokenness that led to a joyful reconciliation.

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, even in our weakness. Let's pray together.

Lord, thank you for these great truths, the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. Lord, fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit, we humbly pray. All of us have dry and needy places.

Oh, satisfy that thirst, that need. We believe you can. May you fill us up within so completely that there will be gushing forth from our innermost being torrents of living water, Christlike word and deed and attitude by the power of your spirit, abounding grace for the needs of our life and service.

This we ask, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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