

Walking in the Spirit - Part 2

by Bruce Wilkinson

The Holy Spirit is essential for the Christian life, and believers must understand and experience His power to fulfill their spiritual potential.

Duration: 1:27:23

Scripture: Luke 4:1, Acts 2:38-39

Topics: "Spirit Filled"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit. He refers to the events of Acts chapter 2, where the disciples were filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The speaker also highlights Jesus as the primary example of being filled with the Spirit, stating that the Spirit was in Him, led Him, filled Him, and anointed Him for ministry. He encourages the audience to believe that the Spirit can work in and through them as well. The sermon concludes with a reference to Luke chapter 24, where Jesus opens the disciples' understanding of the Scriptures and commissions them to go and preach the Gospel.

Transcript

We come boldly into the throne because of the blood of Christ, and we do worship you together as one person. We bow as servants of yours, bought by the blood of Christ and redeemed, and we do worship you together. We now come to you and ask for your divine blessing upon this meeting, that your spirit would be free in all parts of this room and all parts of all hearts.

There be no opposition in any form by anyone, and that you would teach us as only you can through the power of the spirit and through the reality of the revealed word of God in the scriptures. We thank you for the navigators and for their delight to you because they honor you, and they praise you, and they work for you, and they honor the word of God. We now pray, Lord God, that this may pull away the scales on some of our eyes and set some of our hearts free.

In Jesus' name, amen. Two members of the Trinity had an advent. Two members of the Trinity came to earth.

Isn't it interesting that 99% of all the celebration about the coming of two members of the Trinity goes to one? Jesus Christ's incarnation, when he became flesh, one member of the Trinity came down and became flesh, and we celebrate that for almost a month, it appears to me, or if you go in stores, almost 11

months. And then when the other member of the Trinity had his advent, the Holy Spirit, called the day of Pentecost, he didn't become flesh, he indwelt flesh. And I dare say I've yet to be around one church that celebrates the second part of the Trinity or the third part of the Trinity coming to earth.

The Holy Spirit's been in more people than you can imagine. The Holy Spirit's closer to us than Jesus was when he lived with his disciples. And he indwells you and me.

Perhaps we ought to back away and realize we may have forgotten the spirit. When you think about Christianity, you typically think about the Christian life. Maybe tonight you can see, as we go through these things together, that the Christian life is when a person becomes rightly related to Jesus Christ and accepts him as their personal Savior.

The spiritual life, however, is not equal to the Christian life. There are many Christians who are not spiritual. The Christian life is being rightly related to the Son of God, and the spiritual life is rightly being related to the Spirit of God, and they're not the same.

Obviously, you cannot be rightly related to the Spirit of God unless you're rightly related to the Son of God. This is impossible without the other. But it is possible to be right related to Christ as far as salvation is concerned and to have the Spirit in you and to not rightly be related to the Spirit of God.

I've been meditating on this all day since early this morning, and my heart is full, and my notes are full, so I hope that I can get out what I have here, and that it will be as meaningful to you in your life as it was to me, just reviewing all of what the Bible teaches about this. It's difficult for me, as it probably is for you, to explain the Trinity. I've never been able to do it, and I always say at the end of all my illustrations of water and all these things, I really don't understand.

I don't understand how Jesus can be fully man and fully God at the same time. I don't understand that. I've given up trying to understand it.

What I do try to do is believe what the Bible says, and sometimes I don't understand it, but I believe it. For instance, I do not believe how God can choose me and I can choose him. I don't understand that.

I don't understand the predestination of God and the free will of man. I do know, however, that both of them are true, and both of them are clearly in the scriptures. People who say that God chose you and you can't choose God are not balanced in scripture.

They take other scriptures and bend them way out of kilter. But on the other side, people who say God didn't choose you and you chose yourself to believe in God, they also bend as many scriptures out of the way. Those two are not a paradox.

Paradox is a contradiction. They're an antinomy. An antinomy means a seeming contradiction, but it's not a contradiction.

Somehow God chose me, and God chose you if you know Christ, and at the same moment you chose him too. One of those antinomies is Jesus Christ, God, man, and God. I don't quite understand it, and I don't really fully understand how Jesus Christ related to the Father all of the time and how he related to the Spirit all the time.

I've tried to think a lot about that, but I always end up one of those cul-de-sac canyons that you have around here in Colorado. You just walk all the way and say, I finally got it, and you realize, no, you don't. I got to turn around.

This isn't it. This is the end of the canyon. I believe, however, that Jesus Christ was the primary illustration of what it means to be filled in the Spirit, and that if we watch how he lived and what he said, we would realize that the Spirit of God was in him, led him, filled him, and anointed him to do his ministry.

Don't ask me to explain that, but the Bible is very clear, and that's exactly what it says. Maybe it'd be helpful to some of us who are struggling with these concepts to see that in the Scripture. Therefore, turn in your Bible to Luke chapter 4. We'll just take a look at one or two verses here.

Luke chapter 4. I do not know why Jesus, the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity, needed the Holy Spirit, but he did. Luke chapter 4 verse 1 says, then Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, not only am I and not only are you commanded to be filled with the Spirit, but Jesus himself was the living illustration of a person who was filled by the Spirit.

Was Jesus led by the Spirit? Let's continue our verse. Then Jesus being filled with the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. That means Jesus didn't say to himself, it's time to go in the wilderness.

It means the Spirit, one text says it drove him into the wilderness. The other one says it led him into the wilderness. That is the Holy Spirit acted who was in Christ, acted within him so that he knew it's time to go to the wilderness.

He of his own mind didn't say it's time to go to the wilderness or else it would have said, Jesus said to himself, it's time to go to the wilderness. It doesn't say that. It says the Holy Spirit led him into the wilderness.

Then in verse number 16, he quotes Isaiah and as you know, he says in verse 21, today the scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. That is where he quotes from Isaiah. But look what Isaiah said about Jesus hundreds and hundreds of years earlier.

Verse 18, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Why? Why? Because, here's the reason, he has anointed me to do what? Number one, to preach. Number two, to heal the broken hearted.

Three, to set at liberty those who are oppressed. I believe Jesus somehow in some way needed the Spirit of God in some way that I don't understand to accomplish these things. Therefore, when I try to understand what does a person look like who is fully filled with the Holy Spirit, I simply go to Jesus Christ and say, that's what he looks like.

Now I know the model. I also realize that if he did it, I must do it. And to minister, to preach ever without the Spirit of God is of the flesh and not like the Spirit and not like Jesus and will not receive the anointing of God.

And even to help those one-on-one who are broken hearted. I was helping somebody today who was weeping over something that happened in their life earlier. Broken hearted over it.

And as this person wept, I prayed to the Spirit, Lord help me help this broken hearted person. And I listened and shared and then we prayed. And she was less broken hearted.

The Spirit. Not only did Jesus Christ know that it was the requirement for his fulfillment, but he went so far as to say, I don't say anything of my own and I don't do anything unless I'm told to do it. And you know from studying scripture that the agent who did that was the Father speaking through the Spirit to the Son.

I don't say anything and I don't do anything unless I'm told to do it according to the gospel of John. Therefore, as I look, where is the finish line look like in spirituality? It is to be able to say as you cross the finish line and turn around, I learned, I learned, I learned how to not say anything except by him, not to do anything except by him. And I am filled by him.

I believe that is the task of the spiritual life. And I believe that is open to you and open to you and open to me. And the only requirements are those which we'll talk about tonight, tomorrow night and Sunday morning.

Because Jesus realized that he could do nothing without the Spirit in some ways. I will do nothing unless he passed that on to his disciples. Because there wasn't, now listen very carefully, there isn't another third way of doing it.

If you're going to walk with God, you do it by means of the Spirit. He causes spirituality. And he is a power source by which you're able to fulfill in obedience what you're asked to do in the scriptures.

And he knew it was the key and he made it very clear to his disciples that the Spirit is the key. And as you remember from last time we spoke in John 16, verse 7 to 14, he said, nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. Because when I do, I will send the Spirit in you.

He was with you but he'll now be in you. Question, where was the Spirit? Was the Spirit with Jesus or in Jesus? In Jesus. Therefore, that break, and you know from some of the Gospels why, I must first return and then I can.

I can't send him in you until I'm gone. A wall that had to be broken down. That Jesus sent the Spirit to be in the same place that the Spirit was in him.

To fulfill the same roles that the Spirit did in him. And to give him the same power that he gave to Jesus. Don't ask me to explain that because I can't.

But that's what the Bible teaches. Now, numerous ones of you on the way out last night were sheepish about the number that you had. Some of you didn't look me in the eye as if I was a 98er.

Come on, this is something we're learning together. And I love the honesty of some of you. One man looked me right in the eye and said, I got low 30.

It's terrible. I love the man. I said, you know, that's so good.

Not your number, that stinks. But he said, I've never understood any of this stuff before. And I've been trying to walk with God all my life.

Where have I been? I said, well, at least you're here. And maybe the Lord has something for you, very special. Somebody else said to me, this was a special moment.

I got an 11, person said. And you could see the heaviness. I said, don't be.

Be sobered, but don't be depressed. That's not of God. Be sobered, examine yourself.

And then the person said something I wrote down in my notes. Maybe you saw me scribbling back there. I just didn't want to forget it.

And was passing through scriptures, thinking about what the person said. Person said, you know, the spirit has done some of those things in my life, but it's so faint and so few. And I said, yes, I understand what you mean.

That the spirit of God wants to fill us until it happens all the time and is very clear to all of us. Well, Jesus recognized that if you wanted to boil down the spirit into a word of what the spirit does for him and what it did for him and what it does for us is a five letter word. And he hinted at it in the gospels and revealed it in Acts.

Take a look at the last chapter of the book of Luke, Luke chapter 24, and you'll see how Jesus himself spoke of this. This is one of my favorite parts of scripture, the proof of his resurrection and the giving of his great commission as recorded in the gospel of Luke. But take a look at Luke chapter 24, verse 45, starting in the middle of this discussion.

And he opened their understanding that they may might comprehend the scriptures. And they had studied it for years with him, but he opened up their understanding. And he said to them, thus it is written, obviously in the old Testament, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And you are witnesses of these things. Now look at verse 49. They're probably sitting there saying, come on, how are we going to do that? All nations behold, I send, I send the promise of my father upon you, but tarry, wait in the city of Jerusalem until now, here it is.

You are in dude with P O W E R five letters with power from on high. When I study scripture and try to answer the question, what, what, where would you put above what the spirit does? I believe it is the word that Jesus himself used. He will in do you, he will put upon you.

He will bless you with power, power that you could not have of your own. And as you remember, just turn over a few pages to acts one, you'll see how this exactly occurs. Acts chapter one.

Now, some of us misunderstand acts one, eight, and we limit when it doesn't limit acts one, eight, Jesus says, but you shall receive power. Notice the same word. When the Holy spirit has come upon you, put a period there and in your own mind, don't confuse it with the second half of the sentence and you shall be witnesses.

This is another part. You shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and other most parts of the earth. I hear too many people define the power of the spirit is equal to witnessing.

It is not one of the powers that the spirit gives to us is boldness and witnessing. But as you heard from last night, it's a lot more than that. Don't ever limit it.

When the scripture does not limit it, in fact, is very clear and gives more than a half a dozen specific things. He empowers you and me to do. Therefore, here was a group of people that had known Christ, believed in Christ.

And we would in vernacular say we're born again or saved, but yet not had the spirit in them because Jesus hadn't gone to heaven and gave it back to them. They were in that transition period where you could say, if any one of them want to die, they'd have gone to heaven. So they were saved, but they didn't have the spirit in them.

And they didn't have the power because the spirit wasn't in them, but they had all the teaching of Christ. Why didn't have the power to have all the teaching, but not the power. We can have all the teaching, but not the power.

Amen. Come on. Is that true or not? Yes, that's the truth.

Hello out there. How are we doing? We're working tonight. At least one of us is Now, when the spirit came within them, when the spirit came within them, they had listened so carefully.

They had the identical, identical, identical same spirit Jesus had in him. He was the same. They didn't have half of him.

They had the same spirit who did all these things for Jesus and they turned around and some of them did the same thing Jesus did. Oh, no, they didn't. Did they? Who did the same things? And the spirit of God is upon me to preach, to heal.

Yes, the spirit is the one who did the miracles through Jesus. And believe it or not, the spirit did the miracles through the disciples. And even though they were with Jesus, they didn't have the power.

After Jesus left, the spirit came in and they had the power. You can have the scripture and not have the power. You can have, listen now, the spirit in you and quench the power.

So, the power is of no value to you. It's almost like the electricity is flowing through these walls and you walk over for whatever reason and pull out the plug and say, my light won't shine. And I don't know why.

The power has been there all along. We pull it out. Now, what happened to these men when the spirit came within them is one thing we all know.

Just turn the page over to Acts chapter 2. And you remember the filling of the spirit the day of Pentecost, the speaking in tongues and the mocking that occurred. And then in verse 14 of chapter 2, Peter gets up, raises his voice and gives him this unbelievable message. I mean, it's wonderful.

Now, what was the result of it? Verse 41. Then those who gladly received his word were baptized. And that day, about 3,000 souls were added.

You want to hear about spiritual power? That's spiritual power. That's not Peter power. That's spiritual power.

When the spirit is fully unleashed in the personality of any man or any woman or any child, the spirit is almighty God. Almighty God. And is not limited.

All he needs is a vessel. Excuse me. All he needs is a vessel to let him flow.

Now, the question I have for us is, do you believe in your heart of hearts that that's true for you today? Because so many of us in this room struggle with unbelief. You read these passages last night with me. You can't miss them because they're all over the scriptures.

But in your heart, there's a big but that arises up. But this, but this, but this. And I keep giving you more verse after more verse after more because I can outdo your butts with scripture.

But the issue is the sin of unbelief exists in the heart of a non-believer and it exists in the heart of a believer. And to be honest with you, that is the sin that I work with while I'm with us together for these four sessions. It is the sin of unbelief that what the scripture says, it doesn't mean.

My friends, what the scripture says is precisely what it means. Thank you for that weak amen. Verse number 38, only teasing you.

Any amen is better than none. Acts chapter two, verse 38, back up a little bit and let's see if it is for you and for me. Then Peter said to them, repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now look at verse 39. For the promise of salvation, the gift of the Spirit is to you and to your children and to all who are afar off. Guess what? I'm afar off.

And that promise of the gifting of the Spirit was to me and to you. And you have, if you've trusted in Christ, the fullness of the Spirit dwelling within you and you may have unplugged Him. The same salvation, the same Spirit, more scriptures than they had by far.

What's the problem? Number one, maybe the Spirit changed and He became weak. Number two, maybe the situation changed and He flat out decided, I'm tired of indwelling believers. Then I only did it for a while and now I'm back up in glory.

I don't think that's true. If the Spirit hasn't changed and if the situation hadn't changed, then what happened? I believe our unbelief has stopped the action of the Spirit in our lives. And I personally believe unbelief is sin.

Now, in the next few moments, I'd like to help you understand some things about the Scripture because the Spirit, excuse me, because He works before salvation, He works precisely at the moment of salvation and He works after salvation. Somebody came up to me today and was asking questions and used different terms and said, do you believe you have to be this and do you believe this happens numerous times? And they were using words incorrectly in Scripture. Don't define words yourself if they're used in the Bible.

You'll misuse them and you'll misunderstand what the Bible teaches. The Bible is real clear and I want to take away clarity because some believers today are saying, you've got to have this happen to you when Scripture is real clear. It happens once and it happens at salvation.

Therefore, don't be looking for it. But Scripture is all clear that this happens after salvation and that's up to you and me whether or not it happens in my life and your life because it has conditions tied to it. Now, what does the Scripture teach that the Spirit does before salvation? It's the C word.

John. Conviction. That's right.

Therefore, if I was like taking notes, I'd put number one, before salvation colon conviction. Before salvation colon conviction. C-O-N-V-I-C-T-I-O-N.

Then I'd write down John chapter 16 verses 8 to 11. Let's take a look at it together. John chapter 16, 8 to 11.

Again, verse 7. Nevertheless, Jesus said, I tell the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the helper or the spirit cannot or will not come to you.

But if conditional I depart, understood, then I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the W-O-R-L-D, the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And then it goes on to discuss this.

I don't want to spend much time on here at all. It's not the point of the series. Does the spirit work in the hearts of a non-believer to tell them the truth about the fact that they are a sinner, that Christ died, and they'll be judged eternally unless they trust Christ? Absolutely yes.

Can you see it? Yes, if you are discerning. The fingerprint of the spirit is the same wherever you go in the world, and he looks the same. And those of you who know how to understand him, see him when you're witnessing.

And sometimes when you realize he is not convicting, you'll be smart enough to stop and not go on in the flesh, like so many people do, as if people can get saved without the spirit. But when you see the spirit active, and it's obvious on people's faces, it's obvious in their body language, and it's obvious in their tone of voice, that the spirit is pressing conviction. Conviction, biblically, has the concept behind it that the person sees clearly the truth.

Therefore, when you're sharing the faith, make sure that you give the truth, listen carefully, on the basis of the truth that you have spoken, the spirit convicts. So many people say, how come this person can lead so many people, the Lord and I can't? Well, part of it isn't that they have more of the spirit than you do. You don't.

A big part of it is you don't give the spirit much to work with, because he and you work together. When you preach, you can watch the spirit of the Lord come upon an audience and sweep it. I've preached all over the world, he is the same in every culture, because he's the same spirit.

And you watch him when he moves, and you watch him when he's finished, and it's the same. Does the spirit convict? Yes, of course. Now, what does, number two, the spirit do at the time of salvation, at salvation, colon, conversion.

Conversion. And there's four sub-points under conversion. Number one sub-point.

The first thing he does at conversion is called regeneration. Regeneration slash being born again. Same concept.

Regeneration slash being born again. Two verses behind it. Number one, John 3, 3 to 6. Turn with me.

John 3 is the story of Jesus with Nicodemus. Remember Jesus in chapter 3, verse 3, answered and said to Nicodemus, most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Verse 5, most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and, and the, what's the word? Yes.

Listen to me. A person isn't born of Jesus. They believe in Jesus, they're born of the spirit.

The spirit does the converging, not Jesus. Second verse that says the same thing is Titus chapter 3, verses 4 to 7. Titus chapter 3, verses 4 to 7. Take a look at it. It's very, very helpful.

Book of Titus chapter 3, verses 4 to 7. This is the apostle Paul. And he says, but when the kindness and the love of God, our savior toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us. Now, how did he save us? Through the washing, here's the word, of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy spirit.

In Greek, it goes like this. It says this through the washing of regeneration, through the renewing back together again of the spirit. Renewing and regeneration is a work of the spirit.

Verse 6, whom that is the spirit he poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our savior. Why? That having being justified by his grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Therefore, what does the spirit do before salvation? He gets us to the point we're ready to believe.

At the point of belief, what happens? This Holy spirit regenerates us and we go from death to life. Darkness to light. No spirit, spirit.

Going to hell, going to heaven. Spirit outside, spirit within. Regeneration.

Number two thing that he does is called the word indwelt or indwelling. At the point of salvation, therefore, never pray and say, Holy spirit, please come live within me. Don't ever pray that because of this particular truth.

So many times you hear people praying, spirit come, come within me. I'm here. I'm here.

I'm with you. And I hope you do realize that the Holy spirit does have a sense of humor because he does. Romans chapter 8, verse 9. He loves fellowship with people, especially people who aren't boring.

Romans chapter 8. I'm only kidding. Sort of. Romans 8, verse 9. The word indwelt.

But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. If indeed the spirit of God dwells in you. Now, if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he is not his.

Verse 11. But if the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the spirit of God the father, obviously, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give you life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, never ask the spirit to come into you at the point of salvation.

Listen at the point of salvation, he is given to you. Therefore, people who say, please pray that the spirit will, will come in. You do not understand scripture.

There's a passage that go with you goes with that. And that's Galatians chapter four, verse six, Galatians four, verse six, a famous verse. And because Paul says you are sons, God has sent past tense, past tense already happened, has sent forth the spirit of his son into there.

It is not around or with or upon into your hearts, crying out Abba father. Therefore, at the point of salvation spirit comes now, you know what? He didn't announce his coming. Usually he just comes and comes in

the back door and puts his baggage in and gets in the spare bedroom.

He doesn't say, Hey, I'm here with the band. And the million of angels, not once, listen, not once. The scripture say the coming in the works of the spirit at the time of salvation can be felt by anyone.

Now once, therefore do not claim something experientially. If the spirit, if the scripture doesn't reveal, you have a right to it. This is some God does saved to indwelt three sealed, sealed by the spirit.

Ephesians chapter four, Ephesians chapter four, verse number 30, Ephesians chapter four, verse 30. Do not grieve the Holy spirit of God by whom you were past tense, past tense sealed for the day of redemption. Notice you're sealed for a time period for the day of redemption.

What's the day of redemption? The day of redemption, according to scripture would be either when you meet Christ in the air or when you're you die and you come to before him sealed to the day. Go back a few chapters and you'll see another passage. Ephesians one 13 in whom you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation in whom also having believed you past tense were sealed with the Holy spirit of promise.

Last passage on this one. Second Corinthians chapter one, second Corinthians chapter one, verse number 21 and 22. Second Corinthians chapter one, verse number 21 and 22.

This is a, this is a very helpful passage. Now he who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God. Notice the past tense of the word anointed.

We're not talking about anointed. It's another whole area, but past tense anointed us in his God who has also sealed us and given us the spirit. Where is the spirit in our hearts, in our hearts? What as a deposit deposit means a down payment.

Here's a down payment. And I don't have time to get into this because this isn't about salvation. It's pretty clear that the gift of the spirit happens once into a believer.

Never again in any of scripture is it talked about that you have to get the gift twice. You get the gift once and you get all of the spirit. And when he comes in, he regenerates you.

He indwells you and he puts his powerful almighty omniscient, um, sealed until how long until you get there? Cause I, I'm the deposit of my father. I'm the deposit of my father and I'll stay in here until the day is there and he's in or else you don't get sealed, but you do get sealed. So don't worry about it.

Number four, what a confusing number four is baptized, baptized. So much confusion about this. There's many verses on this.

I'll give you the clearest in the Bible. Always go from the clear to the unclear. Don't start with the unclear and try to figure it out.

Clear to unclear. All we're Corinthians chapter 12 verses 12 and 13. It's a long time after Pentecost.

First Corinthians 12 and 12 and 13 for as the body is one. Remember in chapter 12, he's talking about the body of Christ, right? The body of believers. So that's the body he's talking about for as the body is one crisis and have many bodies is one and has many parts of the body or members, but all look at this now, but all the members of that one body being made many are still one body.

So also is Christ. Now he's talking to believers for by one spirit. We were all baptized into one body, whether Jew or Greek slave or free and have all been made to drink into one spirit.

If ever you want to be around a group of people that shouldn't meet the conditions to be quote baptized by the spirit because they weren't godly enough. He'd be the Corinthians. I mean, you're talking about immoral people, but Paul writes a very clear comment that says there's an act of the spirit.

Now listen carefully. There's an act of the spirit after the transition in the book of Acts, when things were, even Jesus said, you don't have the spirit yet. They're even saved, but they don't have the spirit yet.

But after I'm gone, he'll have the spirit. Well, if you built your doctrine, the fact that you're saved, and then later on, you got to ask for the spirit to get them or wait for them 120 days, you'll have heresy as a doctrine. So always be careful to go from the clear to the unclear and watch out in that period when Jesus was with them until Pentecost and the church gets going in that transition when things happen, and then try to find out from looking at those, what does the scripture teach clearly here that will help me understand this? Because if I just took the verse about Jesus, you don't have the spirit yet, but he's going to come and say, that's the way it is for everybody because Jesus is that way.

I'd be saying to everybody, believe on Jesus and wait 120 days. Right? So what is baptism? And the spirit is, baptism in the spirit is a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit at the point of belief in which the Holy Spirit puts you into the body of Christ. Done.

You know what? You might not even know it until years later, when you even understand the body of Christ. All four of those are done for you sovereignly. All of those are done in heaven to you.

You have no control over them. Don't ever ask to be regenerated if you already are. Don't ever ask to be indwelt if you're regenerated.

Don't ever ask to be sealed if you're regenerated. Don't ever ask to be baptized in the spirit if you're saved, but ask some other things, but not to be baptized. It's past tense.

All have been baptized. Now, how do you get the spirit? How do you get the spirit then? Talking about conversion, key word, you believe, that's the word, in Jesus Christ. And the passage I want you to take a look at is John chapter 7. John chapter 7, verse 37 to 39.

Is this helpful tonight? Things that may have been confusion in you? Numerous ones of us in this room have been praying to be baptized in the spirit. Stop. By tomorrow night, you'll know what to ask him to do to you, but don't say baptized, even if you're not a Baptist.

John chapter 7, verse 37. On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, if anyone, notice free will, notice free will, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He doesn't say, if anyone who's been chosen by the Father come, because both are true.

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, excuse me, in me, as the scriptures has said, scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke concerning the spirit.

That means the spirit, if he's fully released, will be in your my heart as a river of water that gushes forth and you praise him and you thank him and you're in submission and you're singing and you're receiving

and you're hearing and you're being led and you're being guided and you're being taught. Yes, but verse 39, 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.

When Jesus glorified, he's given to all those who believe. Now, those are the basics of the scripture regarding the spirit to the point of post-conversion. Once you are saved, the spirit now is within you.

All of him, not part of him. Never call the spirit an it. It's not in the neuter in scripture.

It's basically in the masculine. He's known as he. God is not a she or an it.

God the father is a he. God the son is a he. And God the spirit is a he.

I don't understand all that, but I know they're he or him. What's the plural of he? I don't know, but they're all he. We're going to have to edit some of this tape.

Now, Jesus was very clear that the spirit is the most wonderful thing that he's going to give to you after salvation, at the time of salvation. Because he has such incredible power and does these things. What's the problem? Well, I'm going to try and open your eyes a little bit tonight, and more tomorrow night.

When you're talking to a non-believer about the work of the Savior, which is salvation, why can't that person, every one of them thinks the same? Every non-believer says the way to get to heaven is by being good enough. That is a universal belief. You don't have to tell anybody that anywhere in the world.

That's known by everyone in the world. It's a universal belief of man, and it's a universal lie. Ultimately, I want you to follow real closely, because I don't have any time for this part of the talk.

Why can't a person do the work of this of the Savior dying? Why can't he get salvation or she get salvation for themselves? Why is it impossible? Ultimately, here's a very simplistic answer. The penalty for sin is death. The only way you can pay for sin is to die for it.

Therefore, the only way a human can do it is to die. Once they're dead, they can't come back. You can't.

You gotta die. And doesn't even pay for the sin then. It's the result of it.

But the wages of sin is death. And humanly speaking, if you sin, the payment for it is dying. We can't go out and therefore say to God, um, no, I think I'll give away all my money.

And then I won't have to die. No, it's impossible. You have to die.

That's why you can't do it. That's why I can't do it. If I only be good enough, forget the good part.

Just die. That's why I can't do it. I can't die.

It's over then. It's humanly impossible to fulfill the condition. You knock at the door.

Lord, I'd like to come in. I would love for you to come in. I have a lot of sin.

Not half as many as you really think you have. How do I get in? Like my father said, you have to die for your sins. That's why you can't do it.

And that's why Christ had to die and take your place. Now that's so obvious, it's a little pathetic, speaking it to this group here. But we are so clear in our mind that salvation can only be done through another.

And we are so clear in our mind that spirituality can only be done by ourselves. And I'm going to show you right now why you cannot do it. But the verse I want to back away into is Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Because the stronghold of unbelief we must deal with together is the belief in the evangelical community that the spiritual life can be lived by our determination to do the will of God, which is me doing it myself.

My friends, I'm here to announce that scripture teaches you can't. You can not only not save yourself, you cannot sanctify yourself. We aren't saved by the flesh, but we think we are sanctified by the flesh.

And that's why we have no power. Because we do the work of the Spirit and we wonder why there's no power. Because we've done his work and he's not working.

Works are the issue on both sides of the cross. And I think we've become so foolish. And so does the apostle Paul.

And therefore in Galatians chapter 3 verse 1 he says, oh foolish presidents, council attendees, living Bible translation, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth? Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly betrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you. I love his question. He's saying, please tell me the answer to my question.

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? How did you get the Spirit? How did you get salvation in the first place? Answer by what you did. That's the work of the law or by faith. By faith.

Verse 3. Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain? What's he mean by that? Have you suffered so many things in vain? Here's what he meant. If you try to live your spiritual life in the flesh, you will suffer your whole life. Unnecessarily.

That's what vain means. Empty, stupid, foolish. It's your own fault.

It's my own fault. If I try to do the work of God for salvation, I am foolish. If I try to do the work of the Spirit after salvation, I'm just as foolish.

And I will suffer eternal damnation on this side, and I will suffer physical life here before I die. Because I've not unleashed the power of the Spirit. Why is it so clear to us that on this side of the cross, I must believe in somebody else's work to be saved, but on this side of the cross, I think I must do the work myself.

You cannot do it yourself. I cannot either. And my friend, as I shared with you last night, I've tried most of my life.

I tried to live the spiritual life without the Spirit. Because that's how everybody else around me did it. And we never talked about the Spirit.

Well, is this making sense? How many of you say, you know what, I think that, not me of course, but the people on my right and left probably have been trying a lot of our lives to live the spiritual life in the flesh. Come on, raise those hands. Yes.

If I was Satan, and I wanted to make the church powerless, I would take away the power. I can't get the Spirit out of your heart. But I can confuse you, and I can make you think that the Spirit are for kooks and extremists.

When the Spirit of God led Jesus, filled Jesus, and anointed Jesus, and Jesus said, you don't have a smidgen of power without the Spirit. I'd say that Satan has won, hands down. Well, I don't know about you, but it's time he loses that one in my life and in your life.

I want to spend the next few moments sharing something with you that will be a little bit disconcerting, if you don't already believe it. The truth, why we cannot do the spiritual life ourselves, and the truth, why the Spirit is the only one that can do it in us. The truth sets us free.

The evangelical community, for most part, has believed a lie. And that lie has controlled the church. And therefore, the church, for all intents and purposes, at least the vast majority I go and speak in, are powerless, are powerless, wimps, because the Spirit is so bound.

So what is part of the lie? That's what I'm dealing with, the lie. The truth sets us free. The lie binds us.

What's part of the truth? Part of the truth is Jesus did it all by the Spirit. Maybe I should. Jesus said you can't do it without the Spirit.

Wait till he comes, and then, and then, you will have Spirit. You will have power. Truth, as I can't be saved by works, but must have faith in another part of the Trinity's act for me, known as the Son of God who died for me, to be saved.

Likewise, I must have faith in the Spirit of God to live the spiritual life in me, or I will never discover what it is. The Scriptures are not the spiritual life. The Spirit is the spiritual life.

The Scriptures are the truth of God by which we pull down lies, and we build in truth, and we walk more closely with the Spirit, who then is free to live out his life through us. That's how it works. Well, let's see if we can't stab that lie right smack in the heart.

You know what the heart of the lie is? Pride. That's the lie. It's the utter lie on this side of the cross, and the lie on this side of the cross.

I myself can earn my way to heaven. I myself can do the work of the Spirit in my life. I can do it, and God says, you cannot.

You'd expect the lie to be like that, because that's like Satan. I will. I will, and I will not.

So until the Spirit of God convicts us in our heart of the root of the error, we'll never really believe that we can do it. Make sense? Philippians chapter, excuse me, Luke chapter 18. This is under the heading called The Truth About Why We Cannot Live the Spiritual Lives Ourselves.

Nice short title. The Truth Why We Cannot Live the Spiritual Lives Our Life Ourselves. Luke chapter 18, verses 9 to 14.

This is the very famous parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the publican. Jesus, in verse 9, also spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others. Notice the words, trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

You know what we're talking about here? Sanctification. You know what that's called? Righteousness. Same root word.

Trusted in yourself to be righteous. The root of the issue is what you're trusting in to become righteous. Not the righteousness of Christ and salvation, but the day-to-day righteousness of the walk with God.

It's a great passage, verse 10. Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

So he says, I'm not these negative things. Now he moves to the positive. In fact, I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Now, is that a true or is that a lie? I believe, personally, he did not lie. I believe when he said, I don't, I'm not an extortioner, I'm not unjust, I'm not an adulterer, I'm not as this tax collector, I fast and I give tithes. I think in that man's mind, he was telling the truth.

I do not believe he was lying. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner. Then Jesus says this, I tell you, this man went down to his house, justified rather than the other.

For everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. What was the difference of the two people? If you don't watch out, you will misread the whole point of the parable. The Pharisee was telling the truth as far as he saw himself in his own light.

He had a perspective about himself that says, I'm doing okay. And the publican said, I'm not okay. Which one was right? What is the truth about you and me? What is the truth about you and me? There's this heresy that says, if I just stay at it, I'm getting better.

That I'm improving. If you boil that all down, what's the I that's improving? You see, your body, your soul, your spirit. If we look around, we wouldn't say to each other, our bodies are improving.

At least most of us wouldn't. And you know that the time of salvation, your spirit is awoken. So when you say you are improving, what does it really mean? And are you really improving? The average evangelical believes they're improving.

That's why they think they can do the spiritual life. I'd like to look at a few verses that switch the whole thing to the truth, which may be difficult to cope with. Number one, Mark chapter seven.

Mark chapter seven, verse number 20. Jesus is speaking and he's in an argument, kind of. There's some things going on under the surface.

A discussion, not an argument, a discussion. And in verse 20, he says, what comes out of a man that defiles a man? For from within, out of the heart of some men. No, from within, out of the heart of men, come what? Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.

I keep looking for good terms there. All these evil things come from within and defile a man. Question, how much of a man is good? Answer, none.

None. None. That's why you cannot do it.

The lie of Satan is, we are getting better. The truth of scripture is, that's who we are and will always be until we are redeemed. Take a look at how Paul talks about this in Galatians chapter five.

What does it look like when I'm not led by the spirit, which is I'm led by myself? What is myself look like? What is my flesh? What is my old man? Who is Bruce Wilkinson anyway? Answer, verse 19, now the works of Bruce are evident. Their adultery, their fornication, their uncleanness, their licentiousness, their idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousy, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. That's who I am.

I never get better. Never. I am the same.

My flesh is the same. My old man is the same. My old man never changes.

You don't convert your old man. And the sooner you and I see the truth, the more you and I will realize you cannot, you cannot, verse 16, I say therefore walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. You know what we think that says? Use all the self-discipline you can and you'll not fulfill the lust most of the time.

You know what that is? That's a lie. It's from the pit. It has the concept that says that your flesh can do it right.

You or my flesh can do no good thing. The flesh never changes. The old man does not change.

There's only one thing in me that can do good. It is known as the spirit. That's why when it says, verse 16, if you walk in the spirit, you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

You know what that says clearly? If you walk in the spirit, you're not going to sin. You know, we think, how do you not sin? Well, you do all these things here. No, you don't, because you're not getting better.

You walk by means of the spirit and the spirit won't let you sin because he's in control. Look at verse 17, for the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. You know what? There's only two.

There's only two things. There aren't three. In Christianity, we've invented a new person here.

There's the flesh, and now there's me, and there's the spirit, and the me can do good. No, there are two things. There's you before salvation, and there's the spirit.

That's it. And you haven't changed, and I haven't either. It's the spirit who fights with the flesh.

That's me. And they fight. I want to do it.

He wants to do it. Who is going to do it? If I do it in the flesh, I know what the flesh will do. That's why there's so little power, if any.

That's why so many of us in this room have so many sins in our lives that control us. They control us. We pray against them.

We try to break them, and we do the same things next week. Why? You're never going to get any better. You only can get out of the way more and let him do it.

And if you think that's the same as the way evangelical Christianity is living the spiritual life, then I've not done anything in my teaching tonight. Verse 17, for the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things you wish. Why not? You can't.

You cannot. You are unable to. I'm unable to.

But if you are really self-disciplined, no, but if you are led by the spirit, you're not under law and won't fulfill those. What happens? What happens if we let the spirit lead? Verse 22, but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace. Where's the flesh in verse 22? There isn't any.

Where's the good Wilkinson? There is no good Wilkinson. That's one of the biggest ahas of the spiritual life, that Wilkinson isn't getting any better. That's why when people come up to me and say, can you believe that Christian leader did this? And they're shocked.

I'm never shocked. Why not? Because I know the nature of man. And that Christian leader is no different than in some ways he was before he was saved, except the spirit's now in him.

And he doesn't have to sin anymore if he doesn't choose to, and he can have all the power in the world if he obeys the spirit. But if he quenches the spirit and stops the spirit and lives by the flesh in time, he'll fulfill those words, and so will I, and so will you. You are not getting better.

Therefore, the human heart is the fallen self. It's the old man. It's the flesh.

And that's why you, and that's why I cannot do it of the flesh. My flesh is wicked. And the second I'm not under the spirit, he'll show how wicked he is.

Won't he? Yes. How come you can walk with God, and then something happens, and the next day you can have this big sin? Where'd it come from? What happened to the new you? There is no new you. None.

It's either the flesh, or it is the spirit. And if you walk in the flesh trying to live the spiritual life, you will sin and be defeated and never know the victory of Christianity. I remember walking with Dr. Mitchell.

Many of you know who he was. One of the greatest men of God I've ever known. He was 87.

He disciplined me for almost three years. And he was walking along on a gray day in Portland on the way to a class. And he was very old and walking very slowly, and I was walking next to him.

And I was so awed by the man. And I stopped and said, Dr. Mitchell, you've been walking with God so long. You're so godly.

I bet you don't struggle much with all that sin stuff by now. He stopped. I'll never forget this.

I see him up there. Turned right at me and said, young man, I'm a wicked old man. But he didn't laugh.

He wasn't kidding with me at all, because I wasn't kidding with him. I was making a statement that showed I believed the lie about Dr. Mitchell. That's a lie.

Dr. Mitchell was a wicked old man. And Bruce Wilkinson is a wicked middle-aged man. And it's only by the Spirit of God that I can ever hope to be like Jesus Christ.

And it's only when I believe that there's only two, and this is no good thing, that I will stop and I will release the Spirit to do what only He can do. And that's true about you as well. In my flesh dwelleth absolutely no good thing.

Will you stop living in the flesh instead of giving over to the Spirit? You are wicked. In Christ you are righteous. But when you walk by means of the flesh, you will sin and have no power.

It is only when you say to yourself, just like before salvation, I cannot save myself. I must by faith depend upon Jesus for my salvation, that you have salvation. It is only when we come to the end of ourselves and we say, I cannot live the spiritual life, and I trust in another person's work, the work of the Spirit in my life, that I ever receive spirituality.

Oh foolish Christians of the 20th century, who on earth has bewitched us? But having begun in the faith, do we think we will be made perfect by the flesh? Stab it. Kill the lie. You can't do it.

You're not better unless you're walking in Christ and it's not you then anyway. It's Him. But you're there to watch it.

And it's glorious. You know what you'll say? That's not me. And I'll be the first to tell you.

And so will your spouse. Therefore, let me close by looking at one passage. It's heavy truth.

It's my conviction that we have been the Pharisees toward the Spirit. And we say, I read the Bible every day. I pray every day.

I witness. I serve God. I did the best as I can.

And why isn't it working? I'm not like those other people over there who sin all the time and live in carnality. I'm better than them. No.

Your flesh is equal to theirs. It is a foul thing. Am I in Christ? Yes.

And I must free the Spirit. And never again try to do the spiritual life on the basis of the flesh. The passage I want to read as we close tonight.

And I want to thank you for sticking with this hard message. James chapter 4. James 4 verse 5. It says, Do you think that the Spirit says in vain that the Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously? I love that about the Spirit in me. He is a jealous lover and wants no adultery from me.

He doesn't want me chasing after anything but Him. That's why in verse 4 it calls us adulterers and adulteresses. Because when we are disloyal to the Spirit, the Spirit yearns jealously in us for us.

And it is adultery. And you know how adultery ruins a marriage and a relationship. Do you know how spiritual adultery, what it does to the Spirit in us? But what do you do then? Verse 6. But He gives more grace.

Therefore, what does He say when He's yearning jealously with us? That God resists the proud. You know what that stronghold is I've been dealing with all night? Pride. There is no room for pride.

You will never find the Spirit in you until you realize there's no good thing in you. And then you're finally ready for Him to reveal Himself. He resists the proud.

Lord, where are you? No! But I'm memorizing Scripture. No! I can't. I cannot.

Without your help, I can't. I love this. He resists the proud but He gives grace to the humble.

Yes, I know. It's taken you a long time. Here is some power from me.

Some grace. You know what humble is? You don't make yourself humble. You just meditate on who you are and you'll be humble.

Therefore, submit to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you. You know how you submit to God? You by faith and by reality say, Oh my, I'm a wicked person and in my flesh is no good thing. And it's only by means of God's Spirit that anything good will come out of me.

And it's Him who does it anyway. What should I do then? Verse 8. Draw near to God. And He will.

I love this promise. I claim this promise. I draw near to God and I claim the promise that He will draw near to me.

What should I do? I must cleanse my hands. You sinners. Sinners.

Us. Cleanse your hands. Why? Recognize the issue we've been talking about.

And purify your hearts. You double-minded. The double-mindedness is like this.

Sometimes me, sometimes God, I think. I don't know how to do that yet. No.

There's no good thing in me. And my spirit's been born again. And I am being transferred in my form according to Romans in the Greek term morphe.

My form is being transformed into Christ. But it's only the Spirit who does these things. How should I feel then if I realize these truths for the first time? I should lament and mourn and weep, says verse 9. And let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Why? It's a pretty heavy thought to realize that you haven't improved. And you never will. And that you die, you die to it.

I'm stopped trying. All I will try to do now is to work with the Spirit. So that I could say, I'm led by the Spirit, like Jesus was.

I'm filled by the Spirit, with the Spirit, like Jesus was. And the Spirit anoints you for everything you do. And you don't say anything that He doesn't say.

You don't do anything that He doesn't tell you to do. And you have died to self. You don't make it better.

You die to it. It's dead. Don't improve it.

You can't. Die to it. Live to Him.

And you'll find a whole other life. Verse 10. Humble yourselves therefore in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up.

How many would say to the Lord tonight, you know, I had no idea that I had this pride in my heart about myself. Many. I remember on a retreat years ago, Darlene and I, my wife, were together.

And something happened in route to the retreat. I don't remember what it was in the car. And both of us acted fully carnal.

And it kind of blew both of us away when we saw each other act that way. Because that's unusual for us to act that way toward each other. And we both were kind of quiet when we drove in.

We unpacked and I remember sitting on the bed saying to her, I haven't gotten any better all these years. And I went to Dallas Theological Seminary. And it blew me away that I could have been like that.

And you know what? I'm still like that in the flesh. And I will never change. Until I die to self.

And live to the Spirit. And then you will love the Spirit in me. And you will say, He's so much like Jesus Christ.

How did he do that? Well, he's not so much like Jesus Christ. You're seeing the same Spirit in me that you saw in him. And you read about in him.

It's not Wilkinson. It is the Spirit. But Wilkinson got out of the way.

And lived with him. I believe that there is a critical point. That releases the Spirit in people.

And there's a number of them that occur. And that when those moments come, You must act upon them. And not pass them by.

Or else you will enter back into the desert. And like Galatians says, You've suffered in vain. You'll go back in the wilderness wondering what happened.

Scripture is real clear in James, isn't it? He resists the proud. And he gives grace to the humble. And he ends that passage by saying, Humble yourself therefore.

And God will lift you up. I believe in humility. More and more.

And I believe that humility. Humility is also tied to posture. Therefore, when I'm repenting of a major area in my life.

I get flat on my face. I don't sit on the chair. I don't kneel.

I lay on the floor. A posture is a part of how David lived with God. And how you and I are to live with God.

I believe there's a posture of humility. I believe the posture of humility is kneeling. And in our Evangelical Church.

We've destroyed so many. So many touch points of the Spirit. That he can come and move.

Because we've made it. Not like him. If the Spirit of God has moved in your heart tonight.

And you know it. And in your heart you say, You know. I never really realized.

That I have and cannot improve. And all this time. I've been trying to do it.

Because I thought I could. Then you should repent. You should ask for forgiveness for that.

That's a sin. And confess it. And tell him the truth about yourself.

And then say to him. In your honest humility. Please.

Please help me. I cannot do it by myself. There's a freedom that comes in a person's life.

When they do those things. Therefore. I'm going to open the altar here.

It's a holy place. There's no choir. There's no stained glass windows.

And no need to close your eyes. But if you as a man or a woman. Or a couple.

Sense you know. I think that I need to do that. Then I'd like to open the front of this.

As a kneeling rail.

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