

# Imperatives - Prerogatives of the Holy Spirit

by Devern Fromke

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*The sermon explores the necessity of understanding and cooperating with the Holy Spirit's prerogatives in our lives and ministries for true spiritual growth and fulfillment.*

**Duration:** 1:09:57

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:27, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 5:1, Matthew 6:33, John 16:8, Romans 3:23, Romans 8:16

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the danger of rigid and cold teachings that lack the essence and heart of God. He refers to the parable of Jehovah's Vineyard in Isaiah 5, where God describes His people as His vineyard. The speaker emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose for creating humanity and how mankind often falls short of it. He shares personal experiences of leading individuals to recognize their sinfulness and turn to God, highlighting the power of God's conviction and the need for repentance.

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## Transcript

May we bow our hearts together for a moment. We do not rush into Thy presence or into this meeting, but we wait before Thee and open our hearts toward Thee and realize that we must have a word from Thee, not the voice of a man, not the mere letters from this blessed book we love so much, but we must have Thy word, living, quickened, fresh. O dear Lord, make this to be Thy hour.

Let it be Thy time for Thy glory, Thy satisfaction, the pleasure of Thy own heart, and we shall be sure, dear Lord, to walk softly and quietly, knowing how easy it is to go our own way. We ask this in Jesus' name, with thanksgiving, amen. Many of you have joined us since we started last Monday, and therefore I must be careful in some of the things we allude to that we can all be on the same ground of understanding.

But let me say in preliminary this morning, we've been trying all week to just say one thing, and it is simply compounded in the little diagram we used the first evening. There is such a vast majority of the Lord's people who are most concerned for what God can do for them, what He can be to them, the enjoyment they can receive from Him for themselves. And however elemental and however that might be a necessary first stage, so to speak, we've been saying that God wants to move us out of our little box and move us into the larger framework or the more expansive horizon until the undertone, the overtone, the throb of our life is, oh God, just that You might be satisfied.

Just that You might realize from my life what You want, whether I ever get another thing or not, just so You do. Now I realize the danger of drawing pictures. I do.

I realize the danger of anything that takes on hard, cold lines and form. And with that in mind, I realize how easy it is for us to get a hold of the teaching, the framework of a thing, and miss the reality as we've heard already this morning, the essence of it. Let me once again turn us to that which I believe is, looking from God's own heart and standpoint, the throb of His heart as He looks upon Israel.

Turn to just a few verses in Isaiah first, if you will, please. Isaiah chapter 5, Isaiah chapter 5, verse 1. The parable of Jehovah's Vineyard. You know, of course, that in many, many places in the Old Testament, the Lord has referred to His people, His own heritage as His vineyard, and He uses this simile, He uses this by way of describing that which He wants from them.

Listen to these lovely verses as we get just a short synopsis of what I've been trying to say. Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill.

Look what he did now. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine press therein. And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, a real harvest for his own satisfaction.

And it brought forth, you say, it brought forth wild grapes. Oh, the disappointment of his heart, so to speak. What more could he have done? Well, let's read on.

That's it, isn't it? Verse three. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes.

Turn to Hosea, chapter ten, the book of Hosea. Same simile, same thing before us. Chapter ten, verse one.

The prophet is saying, Israel is an empty vine. He bringeth forth fruit unto himself. Isaiah said it's fruit, but it's so wild nobody can eat it.

Wild grapes. Hosea comes along and says of this vine, this vineyard, so to speak, it always has a hand and it reaches around and grabs the fruit for itself. According, let's see, an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.

According to the multitude of his fruit, that is his fruit, he hath increased the altars. According to the goodness of his land, they have made goodly images. Their hearth is divided.

Now shall they be found faulty. He shall break down their altars. He shall spoil their images.

For now they shall say, we have no king because we fear not the Lord. What then should a king do to us? Sit with the Lord for just a moment as we've been trying to say in these two readings. His heritage, not really bringing forth that which will satisfy him, at least at that given moment.

Turn over to Hosea, the seventh chapter. We just add this sort of parenthetically and then get to our burden this morning. Here he speaks of Ephraim.

Ephraim, chapter seven, verse eight, Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people. Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not.

Yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not. Here again, he is speaking and he is seeming to say, oh, what I have done for my people, and yet how they have missed that which I want, for that which will bring satisfaction. Is Ephraim too much mixture? You know what Ephraim did, getting involved with the other nation.

Too much mixture. Ephraim is a cake not turned, burned on one side and raw on the other. You know anybody like that? Lopsided and blind as a bat, brilliantly in one area of truth, completely ignorant in another whole vast area, a cake not turned, overemphasis, lopsidedness.

Strangers have devoured his strength. Oh, the dissipation that comes if there is not this holding of something very clear. I have seen brothers and sisters in their zeal and their longing to do and their activity, and all the siphoning off, strangers who come along and know how to dissipate and use up energy, strength.

They do not know it. Why? We are so busy for the Lord, getting things done, but there has not been an eye to the glory, the satisfaction, the purpose, the realizing of the thing the Lord wants. And then finally, I hate to mention this, but gray hairs are here and there upon him.

But I can spiritualize that if you'll allow me to. Simply by saying, if God's speaking through it, he's saying it's oldness. Rehashing same old things over and over.

It's oldness. Just going through week after week, Sunday after Sunday, all that represents the oldness. Nothing fresh.

Only God can give the freshness. Only God can keep a life tuned to that which he wants, and out of it there comes the continual livingness. Well, here's his concern for these.

Well, hold that all in background now as we pick up what my burden really is for the morning. Beloved, there's any one thing that seems to have grown within me. It is to watch the Lord's people in their desire and in their zeal.

Somehow it's so easy to usurp the prerogatives of God. Of God, the Holy Spirit. Now, we're all thrilled in the days of fellowship here and our promise in desiring to share and desiring to help others requires great sense of God's helping us and God's authority over us as we do it.

I hesitate to say this, but I know how many times we go from a conference with the knowledge of things. Dear sweet lady who has already gone, came yesterday and said, oh brother, I've been exploded. She said, I've been so nailed into a little box for so long I can hardly wait to get back to my church.

And I held my breath. What do you mean? Well, I won't tell you what she said the next. But I wanted to, I wanted to say, sister, be sure that you understand the prerogatives of the Holy Spirit in his work.

Only God can really expand it. Only God can really enlarge. Only the Lord.

Now, let me see if I can illustrate what I mean. This is a concern because I do long that we will realize that life within us must be shared. It must be expressed.

You follow the course of the Lord's working in and through your life. You realize how impetuous and how zealous we have been. Consider first when we have attempted to win someone to the Lord.

The first prerogative we have to recognize is that the Holy Spirit alone can show someone their need, their lostness, their bondage. Only he can do that. I look back at the days when I was director in a youth in a service center during the war and with such desire to win young fellows who were headed for the battlefield.

And I had learned the methods and the techniques of trapping them. But all I can say, and I would take my Bible and go down and sit on the mezzanine or down on the floor where they would come in and flip up on their blindside, so to speak. And first thing we knew, I would start with my verses.

You know, God says all have sinned and proceed a little bit further to fence them. That all includes you. And after a while, I shut them up.

No place to run. Nothing they could do but say, well, what do I do? And in the process of it, I get their name on the little page of the Gideon Bible. I hereby confess Jesus Christ as my Lord and so on.

Well, I meant well. But I did not know that the prerogative of that which is God's work is to unfold to the sinner that he's a sinner. How lost he really is.

How totally helpless he really is. I was doing it. Now and then I'd meet someone that was just right.

The Lord had already been preparing. But I got confused, and it's very easy to get confused. I thought that my duty and obligation was to bring the world to Christ.

Notice the phrase to bring the world to Christ. No. You will go down under the heap if you don't get it straightened out.

We are to present Christ to the world. There's a big difference. Our efforts to bring the world to him and we'll surely think.

But ours is the privilege of presenting him, you see, Christ to the world. And this helps us to see the distinction between the privilege that's ours of witnessing. And so many.

You are my witnesses to go out in the most simple way to just declare what God has wrought, what he has done. That's the simpleness of witnessing. Only the Lord knows the time for soul winning.

That is, when the rightness is come. It's within his prerogative, you see. Remember now, God wants to use us, but we must know how to cooperate, not usurp.

We get so anxious. And the next thing that has come to thrill me in the realizing of God's way and the cooperation with him is to realize that he works along certain lines. Whenever I've held out to people their need for peace, their need for joy, their need to go to heaven, their need along certain lines, I strangely was left all alone.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to cooperate when there's the unveiling of the individual having missed that which God really wants, the larger scope. Maybe I can illustrate it. I've used this probably here.

I don't remember. But it came with great joy to my heart a number of years ago when I began to realize the difference between standing with a lost individual and trying to somehow get him through to see God or standing with God with the word of reconciliation and the ministry of reconciliation, standing with the Lord in his behalf. Sharing and I've discovered that when our appeal is to their selfishness, the Holy Spirit does not cooperate.

We can live in the larger framework where it is God's glory. It is God's satisfaction. It is that which he wants and hold that before life and the Holy Spirit delights to cooperate.

Let me illustrate it this way. I could go on all morning. This is not my real burden.

It's just background for getting to the thing. I remember years ago when this thing first began to unfold, the working with God, cooperating with him in his appeal to a heart. One morning I was headed, leaving Missouri and headed for the West Coast, San Diego.

Having loaded the car early in the morning, I sat at the wheel for a moment and said, Lord, three hard days of driving, how I dread it. But somehow you come in and take over. If you can get something out of this these days, go ahead.

Out of the car and headed on, got a couple hundred miles on the bypass around Oklahoma City. And I was lost. It was a new road.

I saw a fellow standing at a junction, and I thought I would ask him if he knew how to get onto the main highway. And as I stopped, he opened the door, put his suitcase in and sat down. And I said, I said, where are you going? I'm lost.

I said, I don't know. I can take you where you want to go. He said, where do you want to go? And I explained and he said, well, you go this way.

I said, is that where you're going? He said, I'm going wherever you're going. I said, what do you mean? He said, well, I've been without a job for a couple of weeks. And I heard that that there was no possibility of jobs around here because they're laying all the oil men off.

So I'm getting away. He said, if you don't mind, I'll go to the West Coast with you. Well, I confess for a moment inwardly, I wasn't sure I wanted his company for three days.

And just about that moment, the Holy Spirit said, I put him here. I said, all right. He put his suitcase in the back.

We drove on. I kept breathing. Lord, what do you want to do in this? What do you want to do in this? It didn't take long before I discovered he was a professional bum.

Been on the road for many, many years. Of course, that helps your spirit. Then I found out he was a Catholic and that helped still more.

Then I found out that he'd been in missions practically every night for years to get a bowl of soup. You know what I mean? To get a bowl of soup. But the Lord just kept me quiet.

We drove along that first day. I discovered when we stopped to get the first meal, he didn't have any money. The Lord said, now you've been preaching that you just have one pocket.

It's my pocket. If I want to use it, can I use it? But like this, Lord? Yes, like this. I must shorten the story.

That night I got tired. We were heading into Amarillo. So I asked him if he'd drive.

He did. As we were meeting headlights, I began to sense that maybe we ought to, maybe we ought to just trust the Lord to open a way. And he said, you know, did you ever notice when cars are coming and the people here wonder where they're going? Wonder why we're all here? It struck a chord.

He said, yes. You know, I've wondered why we're here. I wonder.

The most innocent way this began to unfold, and we began to talk about why God had created man, why God had made us. We went to bed that night. I admit, I really prayed, Lord, he could hit me over the head and go off with the car and my billfold and keys and everything.

But I'm in your hands. Next morning, we got up and drove the whole day. And it was he who started the subject by, after breakfast, saying, you know, you're talking about why we're here.

Why are we here? Why are we here? All day long, he kept pulling. Why are we here? What's it all about? We got out into the middle of almost nowhere. We're stopped by a line of traffic.

And I was informed by the flagman that they were putting a new bridge in and we would be there for three hours. Never had that happened before. Three hours, he said, before we'll take traffic through.

But the Lord was in it because just a few minutes before that, he'd been asking so many questions. And I said, you know, I have discovered that both the Protestants and the Catholics are wrong. You have? Yes.

I said, I don't belong to either group. You don't? No. Said, I've been making a private study, going way back to get things from God.

You have? I said, yes. This had happened before. And I said, you know, I think someplace if you hunt around in the back there, you could find a Bible.

I think I brought one along. And he found it. He'd been sitting there.

I'd say, look, if you turn, he said, my, you must use this. It's really marked up. He said, yes.

I must hasten on because I'm only interested in really one thing in all of this. The three hours we sat there just talking about why God has made man and how man had missed God's purpose and was coming short of the wonderful plan that God had. Tears coursing down his cheeks.

Finally, we went through the bridge, got on several hours. I'll never forget as long as my life as I live. I saw that man finally look around at me.

He said, you know, I don't know why, but I just begin to feel so sinful and so guilty. I had never mentioned sin, never mentioned his smoking, never mentioned some of the things in his life. Not at all.

Just missing the glory of God, the purpose that God had for creating it. And he turned right around in the front seat, all on his own, made a little altar there and wept his heart. He kept saying, oh, God.

For years, I've been a runaway. I didn't know what was wrong. And Lord, I want to give myself to your purpose.

He never talked about getting saved because I didn't. But I want to give myself to your purpose. He turned around, sat back.

We were still driving along, just left him with the Lord. It's the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to show men they're sinners. And it's the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to tell them when they're accepted.

And I will never forget when he looked at me and he said, you know, I feel so different. I feel so good. He said, I've given myself to the Lord.

I said, you know what that is? It says someplace in the book there that when we do this, the Spirit of God testifies or witnesses to our spirit that we're the child of God. Nobody has a right to tell you, but you just know because you know. That's the prerogative of God.

You see, we thought all the time in our evangelistic preaching that if you preach sin, you preach judgment. There's a place in the time, don't misunderstand me. You can preach for a hundred years on all of those things.

But the scripture says when he has come, he convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. We went to bed that night. I tell you, I had a new partner.

I don't know how to explain him. He was alive. He kept talking.

And you know, that third day, I'll never forget it. He looked at me and he said, say, no, I must go give you something else before that. We were traveling on and he said, where are you going? Well, I said, I'm going to visit, first of all, for a day with an uncle and an aunt, and then I'm going on up the coast a little way.

And I'll never forget, he's saying, you know, he said, we've been together for three days now. You know, I'm just a professional bum. He said, say, what do you do? What do you do? What do you do? And I reached my arm over and I said, that's a good question.

I've been traveling across this country no less than 70-some times hunting for fellows just like you. Is that the truth? I hope it is. He said, is that what you do? I said, yes, in different ways.

That's exactly what I do. As we drove along that day, I'll never forget him looking back at me and he said, you know, if you don't mind, I'd like to travel with you and do the same thing. Would you let me go along? Would you let me go along? Now, I'm only trying to say something to us this morning, beloved.

It's the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to do certain things that so often we try to do out of eagerness and zeal and ambition. There are some shortcuts when the Holy Spirit's in the business. I believe that.

I could give you story, illustration after illustration where we have time after time just started out with folk. You know why you're here? What life is all about now to be solid, established Christian. Of course, there are other things.

I used to live just across from the tuberculosis sanatorium in Missouri. For a number of years, it was my privilege morning day after day to just slip up among the wards, move from room to room. It often take my testament hidden in my coat for a while and pencil and piece of paper.

And I had an illustration that we often would just draw and explain to people the full purpose, the full scope, the whole thing that God was after. I wish you could, I wish it were possible to just somehow tell

you the various lies that watch suddenly the Holy Spirit lay hold of as you stand with God to unveil his claims, his desire and how man has missed. And I've had so many things.

I've been in church for years. I didn't know that. We wonder why the world is hard and we wonder why religious circles are so numbed and indifferent.

The Holy Spirit is still here. He's just as eager and jealous for God's claims and God's glory. But we have had an innovation for a number of years of an approach that's always appealing to man.

Poor man, you need peace. What you need is joy. What you need is, and we are appealing to the selfishness and wonder why the Holy Spirit does not cooperate.

I repeat, we usurp the prerogatives that are his. He alone can really awaken an individual to his lostness, to his sinfulness. And of course, he does it in his own timing, in his own way.

He alone can witness. How many times through the years have I tried to give people an assurance that ended up with just a legal hanging to some verses, but they never really come to grips with God. And I believe in the word and I know that through the word he speaks.

But he alone can tell you when you're accepted in the beloved. Witness when there is peace with God through the Lord Jesus. It's his prerogative.

Let's go on a little bit further. The one who is accepted, the one who has come to know by a witness in his own spirit through the word or whatever that he belongs to God. It's quite something wonderful when that individual begins to go on away.

But the Holy Spirit once again begins to move in and it is his peculiar way to begin to expose the enmity in our life. While we have come to know him as our savior in his exposing of the enmity, enemies in areas of our life. I've rushed many individuals in whom I recognize some of these symptoms.

I've rushed them to Romans 6 because they're about to throw up the ship and say, I wonder if I'm saved. And I know that it is God taking them on to the exposure of what they are, and he wants to bring them to see their death with Christ on the cross. But I have to say once again, all of the attempt to bring individuals to see their co-crucifixion, their burial, their resurrection is for naught until the Holy Spirit comes and brings a personal unveiling and an exposure.

Somehow, as I rolled and tossed last night with great concern, lest these days some people be able to slip away with just some more knowledge. The Lord has kept shutting me up to this, and I share it again with us this morning. Beloved, we need to know what it is to then unveil the enmities of our flesh, the enmities of the mind, the enmities of the spirit, the high and the proud places.

All when God puts a mirror before his child and begins to expose. I have tried to do it so many times in places. But I'm convinced it seems like the Lord keeps shutting me back to the fact that years ago when for at least five years there was nothing but the emphasis of the cross, I believe we got a more healthy brand of God's children awakened.

I don't know how to say it. He keeps shutting me back. And I say to us this morning, oh dear Lord, don't let us escape the fact that only you can really expose us, help us to see what we really are in the enmities of our flesh, of ourselves.

It's so easy to prune ourselves outwardly and to take on some conformity. But only the Holy Spirit can really, really tell us what we are and make real to us that we died with Christ and were risen again. This is a deep groaning in my heart for it.

I look back through some years in which I've seen individuals who've gone along so long. And then one day the Holy Spirit brought a mirror. I remember a particular church in the West.

God had moved and worked in that Oregon city for a number of weeks. And if anyone would have asked me, I would have said the pastor's wife was really going on with God. They moved after four or five years to a place up in Washington.

We were invited to have ministry there. I remember one morning at the Bible time when we gathered, she stood up just before I could speak. And she said, for eight long years, I've listened to what Brother Verne has been talking about.

The death work of the cross, the burial, the resurrection to newness of life. She said, I've known it. My life has been pruned pretty well outwardly.

The tears gushing from her eyes. She said, last night for ten long hours, the Holy Spirit was at work. I no more have a doctrine about it.

She said, I saw why I led the Ladies Missionary Society. Why I've done this my whole life. She said, it was so miserable.

And my husband snored all the time. And I got so irritated with him. How could he sleep when I was having a funeral? It had been proper.

I wanted to go to your room and knock and get some help. And the Lord said, this is a private affair. I don't know how to say it this morning.

But I am greatly concerned that we get swept along with just good fellowship. And it's wonderful. And a little bit larger vision of what God is doing.

But if we miss a bedrock basic work that God has to do, we're missing. It's the prerogative and the work of the Holy Spirit to really expose and lay us there. And I believe you can tell there's something of an overtone in a life that's been through it.

An overtone in a life that's been through it. There's such a light way of talking these days about my flesh. My indulgent habits, my aspects of the old Adam.

There's such a lightness about it. And that always speaks to me of people who have the knowledge. And can glibly quote Galatians 220.

I've been crucified. Brother, sister, when we see what God sees and the stench that it is to his nostrils. Now it fails.

How it gets right in the way of bringing glory to him. I tell you, I don't believe anyone can ever really see what God sees. What he nailed to the cross and said it's so bad it has to be buried in the tomb.

We cannot talk lightly about it. We take our stand with God against it. Well, you see, we talk about our death with Christ.

You say, Brother Byrne, I don't know if that's happened to me. I know the knowledge of, I know identification. I know the theories of it.

Would you get alone today? Would you in the quiet of your heart just this morning? If you really, really, really have been crying out to the Lord, you just say, Lord, I do open myself before him. You make the exposure. You make real to me by the Spirit what you see and all that's involved.

I don't want to put it in a little framework of what to expect. Because I've noticed God's peculiar way in his own way. But there are certain symptoms.

There are certain things that you always think that we need it in this country. We need it here. And the thing that so thrills me is at this point when a life really comes, really comes through, and it's the prerogative of the Holy Spirit.

And yet he seems to answer something of the groaning heart within. He brings us into an aliveness. You can reckon from not all the millenniums over and never be one bit more dead.

But having really seen, really seen by his Spirit unveiling, it seems that there comes a new aliveness in the lives of individuals. A new aliveness, alive unto God, alive unto God, alive unto God. We can have the doctrine of it again.

But the essence and the reality of it is something that's within the prerogative of the Holy Spirit when he has wrought a real death working, wholly alive to him, bringing forth truth, married unto him that we might bring forth truth unto God. We were saying of Israel that all the way through she was alive to God as her deliverer when she needed to get out of Egypt. She was alive to him as the one who provided some of her needs.

She was alive in using him. But he looks and he says, an empty vine so far as I'm concerned, wild grapes. What was it? Well, we go on to that.

It's very wonderful that just as soon as an individual begins an aliveness, that aliveness has within it all the desire to be used to do something for the Lord. Once again, if we're not careful, we put people to work. That's the Lord's job.

Notice how Paul put it. All those years he had been so zealous in the working for the Lord, but he finally comes to say that the Lord put me into the ministry, putting me into the ministry, putting me into the ministry. It's misunderstood so often when I say it, but oh, there's something of a blessed day when we resign, when we really resign all of our religious activity for the Lord.

And it's the prerogative of the Spirit of God to put us in that kind of, that phase of a reality that he wants. It's the Lord's way to bring in this next phase all the emptiness finally of our own working. I am amazed how Christendom this morning is filled, literally filled, with organizations that are doing jobs for the Lord.

Every day it seems someone writes with a new established organization, Brother Froggy, we wonder, we are out, this is our objective, this is our goal. How much discount can we have on books? Are you against, you say, are you against all of the desires of people to do something for the Lord? You see, it's right at this

point that once again we get into this great difficulty of the prerogative of the Holy Spirit, the prerogative of God, our zeal to do things. And we've been hearing, and if there's been something going on in the hearts of those who have a ministry, don't, don't turn a deaf ear.

This devastating work, and I like the word because it seems to so speak, what is taking place when some of our little pools, our little organizations, our little efforts to do something for the Lord, suddenly the Lord begins to allow them to wither up, and to dry up. Even things that we call by the right name, simply because we've been the builder, or we've been the starter, but the prerogative is with Him, it is with Him. And the reason I'm saying it is because, we'll hold one thing clear, it is that the Lord Himself must have in it all of the satisfaction, the glory.

And our promise is, there's something private in it for ourselves. I think we can talk just a little bit openly with you. So many people misunderstand why about three years ago, we came to a crisis in which the Lord just said, you stop publishing your journal.

We prepared for a great funeral, so far as all the ministry of Sure Foundation, and all that it represented. You say, why? Well, when you come to see something in a little clear way, you realize the subtlety of carving out a little kingdom as a means by which you can do something for the Lord. And I began to see down the road that it might be something I'd have to protect, or something that would become other than that which the Lord really wanted just for Himself.

You say, what do you mean? I believe in the sharpening of our vision, the sharpening of what we see. We come finally to realize that it's the prerogative of the Holy Spirit in devastating and bringing to naught all the kingdoms and the things that men have carved out, and to bring us into the focus of what He's really wanting to do. But we're so prone to just restart it on a little higher level.

With a little bit more pure for the glory of God. Only to find it's going to have to have another devastation. Why? As long as there's within the desire to build something, there might be some fruit.

Israel's an empty vine. She brings forth fruit unto herself. According to the multitude of our altars.

Oh, that was a day of building lots of altars, lots of religious activity. The multitude of the altars. But our heart is divided.

I don't want by intensity of my own desire to... But I pray that in the midst of what we're wanting to say to you this morning, we'll go back to wherever our place of fellowship, wherever the Lord sends us, we'll go back with a new inward confidence that the Holy Spirit is working. And if we know how to cooperate with Him and His prerogative, God will bring forth some fruit. God will do something in and through our lives.

But it's His prerogative to hold us in the place where there is more and more of a purifying instead of so much of the mixture that He talks about with Ephraim. Lord, make that real to you. And not only that, but instead of our lopsidedness, He allow us to get the other side turned and the raw side to be developed.

Let me illustrate what I mean. There is such an emphasis on the Holy Spirit today. You walk amongst the Lord's people and everyone's alive to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

And that's wonderful because God must have His way through the ministry of the Spirit of God. But we get wrapped up in terms, the baptism, the filling, the various experiences. Let me just pull away, as was already said this morning.

Let me just pull away our terminology and ask, what does the Holy Spirit really want the prerogative to do? What really is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit? What does He want to do? I like to use some new terms until they get worn out now. And the best way I know to explain it is a term that dear old brother Bach used with my dear wife when she was headed for the mission field a number of years ago. He had talked to all the candidates, met her in the path one day and said in his gracious way, girly, I know you've got your outfit, but what about the infit? You can see she never forgot it because she has shared it with me.

I know about your outfit, but what about your infit? What do you mean? If we'll hold the essence of what the Spirit of God really wants to do in our lives, there is the outfit, the clothing of the Spirit of God, that which gives anointing in service. It's just that simple. You can call it any name, get wrapped up in all the mechanics and the scaffolding of it.

Ye must receive, ye will have this clothing and the byproduct of it is power. But don't get your eyes on the power, just the need for the outfit. Everybody is interested in outfit, even as my wife was, the outfit.

But what's the infit? It is His work within us in the life nature within, dealing with all that's necessary to bring character, inward reality. You can call it, the term you've always used, the filling with all the infit, the infit. And I don't want to be misunderstood, but you can talk to me about all the experiences you've had.

I don't know. The outfit and the infit are the prerogative of the Holy Spirit and He has His own way of accomplishing it. We're all the time saying, if you just this and just that, we develop the technique of a thing and miss the reality.

Ephraim, oh, you're so strong in something, but you're lopsided. Outfit, no infit. But then we have so many of our precious friends who are all infitters.

I'm after you too. Mouth is buttoned, never known any clothing, never known any glorious anointing in liberty. Get the other side of your cake over now.

Not half turned. I lose all my friends at this point because people are either infitters or outfitters. Well, I'm starting a new denomination.

We're the bolters. God must give both sides of the cake. Just because of our prejudice, He must have both outfit and infit.

Do you see what I'm trying to say? It's the reality of the thing we've been all week long. And I pray that this will lay hold of us. Strangers have devoured His strength.

Oh, how much activity there is and how much we can give ourselves to. Brother, sister, the Holy Spirit has a peculiar way of developing priorities and sharpening our focus. Strangers have devoured His strength.

What does it mean? Tell you, when people sense the empowering of God and the full measure of the infit within, there's great desire to be used. But it's at that time, it's at that time that God has to put the greatest bridle on us. I mean, if He's going to focus this car for the thing that He really wants.

This is where I have to once again plead with this. Lord, let us be shut up to know the Holy Spirit sharpening of the priority in our life. What we really give ourselves to.

If we don't, there'll be some strangers that'll come along and devour our strength. Get us all wrapped up in good things, better things, important things, wonderful things. Brothers, I do pray that the Holy Spirit might

have His own prerogative in life.

To sharpen, to so sharpen that there'll be that intense desire within that says, Lord, let me give myself to that which is really on your heart. And not let others capture me according to their vision or their project. It's really interesting these days to see somebody come alive.

I tell you, the people that are ready there, they'll lasso you and capture you for their cause and their programs. But I meet some people who never get captured by anybody. They never commit themselves to anything.

We have friends that have come to see us now for I don't know how many years. They've been on the road at least for eight or ten years. Two months here, three months there, looking in on this, looking in on that.

They almost came to this conference, but they've been here once and so. But they'll never settle on anything. They're not capturable at the present because they're looking for some new thing.

And the Holy Spirit reserves the priority, I mean the prerogative. And don't let anyone think we're trying to capture you for anything around here. I'm not.

God's work is much bigger than we have any idea. And He's flowing in a much broader and larger scope. But oh, I do pray that the Holy Spirit may capture.

This is my burden. And there'll come an undertone in your life, it's the throb that says, oh God, that you might have this. Not wild grapes, but fruit.

And take away the dissipation of my energy and my strength. It says Ephraim doesn't know it. Doesn't know it.

I must close. But we wanted to say just this. We sum it all up this morning.

Oh, the blessedness of a life under the authority of the Holy Spirit. Recognizing His prerogative in all that we do. Don't let my sense of over-caution, don't let it get you.

Remember, when God makes contact, it's very much like a current of electricity. It takes both the ground wire and the hot. I do make contact on the ground.

When I know how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, how wonderfully He is always there cooperating. He's the hot wire. He's the power.

I'm just the ground, but it takes a ground. It takes contact. This is the Lord's way.

So as we go out, knowing how to cooperate with an intense desire, let us expect Him. To help us to be the ground by which He will come. We were referring earlier this morning to Paul and Silas.

There they were at Philippi. I always thrill when I think of their imprisonment. I've heard men for years preach about what they did to capture the Philippian jailers.

But if I stay with just what I read, I don't find them doing much more than just being alive to the Lord. The dark nights, the prison, circumstances so unconditional. But they were alive to the Lord.

They were singing. They were praising the Lord. They were the ground.

And out of that, the Holy Spirit had a way of getting a hold. And the jailer comes running. I wonder how he knew where to go.

Somebody had been representing some reality. Somebody had been witnessing. Sort of unconsciously.

Remember it says in the book of Acts, of the things that Jesus began to do and teach. They were the embodiment of a life alive to the Lord. To His purpose.

And the jailer knew where to turn. Our doing is the way in which things are spelled out so clearly in teaching. To do.

To do. And people have a way of coming around and saying, why did you do that? Why do you do it that way? Then we have the opportunity to teach. You see the difference? Why? God has made the thing so livingly real.

We just can't do anything else. We can't do it any other way. And it's so much easier when people come and say, why do you do that? Then the teaching begins.

But we're always out teaching what others ought to do. Having not really done it ourselves. Oh, to learn to cooperate with Him in this wonderful way.

Shall we bow together? Lord, how we thank Thee this morning that our heart is fixed. We believe we can say with so many of those who've gone on before us, even the words of the Apostle Paul, for to me to live is Christ. Oh, it is not the Christ that I get.

It's not what it means. It is that which Christ represents to the Father. The glory that the Father realized through Christ.

The joy in His own heart because He found one who was so alive, so sensitive, so devoted. We pray this morning that there will be a new sense within every one of us. That it is in the Lord Jesus.

Not in our struggling or our trying that we can ever be fruitful. But it is in our abiding. It is in our being occupied with Him.

It is in our being alive to Him. Oh, we may be like Paul and Silas, locked up in the jail. And the darkness of the night comes.

Lord, you're so wonderful. You get the doing. You do it.

You have your peculiar way. Your prerogative, your initiative is also different. Send us out now to work with Thee.

Don't let us just fall into passivity and get a hold of the wrong aspect of what we've said. But in our going, dear Lord, in our going out. Oh, let us learn the glorious cooperation we have with Thee.

We're ground wires. You're the one who works. You will, I know you will, because you've wrought some things in the lives of my brothers and sisters.

Help us not to be preoccupied with the byproducts of what men can get. The joy, the peace, the blessing, the heavenly salvation. All of these things come when we're right standing with Thee.

All of these things come when you can have your way. They're automatics. We want Thee to be glorified.

We want Thee to be satisfied. In Jesus' name we ask it with thanksgiving. Amen.

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