

How Satan Destroys a Church - Part 6 (The Road Home)

by Don Courville

The church is destroyed when leaders operate in the natural, rather than being led by the Holy Spirit, and when they lack humility and dependence on God.

Duration: 54:41

Scripture: Psalm 133, Luke 5:36, Luke 5:39, Acts 1:8

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses how Satan destroys the church and focuses on the importance of unity among brethren. He reads from Psalms 133, emphasizing the goodness and pleasantness of dwelling together in unity. The preacher also shares a personal story about a dangerous situation on the road, highlighting the significance of letting go of control and trusting in God's guidance. He concludes by asking the congregation if they think it is dangerous to attack leadership within the church.

Transcript

Psalms 133, listen as I read the Word of God. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. You may stand up if you like, we usually do that, don't we? Do it again, get a stretch break.

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life evermore.

I'm going to slip over and read you another passage, just listen. From Luke, chapter 5, verse 36, you can turn there if you want. And as he spake a parable unto them, no man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old, if otherwise then both the new maketh the rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled and the bottles shall perish. The new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, The old is better.

Let's pray. Now Father, we ask you to minister to us now through the Holy Spirit, and that our eyes should be open, our hearts should be tuned in to what you have to say to us as we look at this subject of the church, in Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated.

I appreciate all of you brave boys and girls that sit through teaching time together as we keep our families together here, and then as we take a little singing break, and you're still in here for another one. May God bless you. We're doing our series on how Satan destroys the church, and I think this is our sixth one, if I'm not mistaken.

Sixth lesson on this. And this one might be a little bit different. None of them have got any easier for me.

And this one here gets a little bit close to home. As a matter of fact, it's just all over the place for being at home in the area of failure in this area. And it's on the subject of the Holy Spirit.

I wrote out this little statement this morning, that two cannot walk together without unity. Two cannot walk together without agreement. And two cannot walk together without the Holy Spirit's oneness.

We started off our series with the idea of the basis of a lifelong relationship is agreement. We looked at Adam and Eve, and we looked at how all that worked. And I can't go back because of time and go back over that again, but listen to this statement by Dr. Jerry Benjamin.

We're going through his tapes on the book of Revelation as a family. He said, human reasoning will always lead us astray. It led to the first sin.

Human reasoning. That's what we do in our churches and in our lives that brings destruction. Now, the question is, it's like the prodigal son.

When he found himself off where he didn't want to be, he thought he knew better than his authority, his father. And once he found himself out there in the pigpen, and he got it all figured out, and finally he got things straight. It was better back at home under authority, under his dad.

It wasn't better to have his own way. The Burger King philosophy didn't work out for him. How do you get back? Well, he came to himself, first of all, and then he repented.

That's how we get back on the right path. We go back through the gate of repentance. And our churches, some of them are in pretty bad shape.

And so, how do we get back? It's going to be sort of what we're going after today. And I'm going to look at this subject of how do we get back on the right path by looking at this area that we need to have leaders who are led by the Holy Spirit. We all need to be led by the Holy Spirit, but we get into trouble when we don't follow the Holy Spirit.

Have any of you ever got into trouble by not following the Holy Spirit? I'll hold up both hands, I'd hold up both feet, everything I got. Someone said, most of our problems we bring upon ourselves. That's a little bit embarrassing, but probably a little bit true too, maybe a whole lot true.

I was looking in the book of Acts, and I was going back through, and I won't go through all of the passages, but it amazes me how well they got along in the early church without all the committees, without all of the things that we have to have today. Doesn't it amaze you how well they got along? And it came out of prayer and reliance upon the Holy Spirit. Now, I don't know if you've ever done a study on this.

I've got all these verses written out here, but I'll just take you back to maybe a few that they didn't work alone. Out of their prayer, their being of one accord, which was vital. The enemy knows if he wants to knock you out, just break that agreement of being of one accord, and he can begin to work in there.

But they had the Holy Spirit talking to them, guiding them in their spirit. I can't say that He talked out loud to them, but He talks to us. He talks to us in our spirit.

He said, Jesus said He wouldn't leave us alone. He's going to send us a comforter. So just as He was communicating with His disciples, He said, I can't just do what I need to do in this world.

I can only be in one place here in this body, but I must send the Holy Spirit back, and He'll be with each of you. And so wherever we go, we have God with us in the person of the Holy Spirit, and He talks to us. And if we will be tuned in, we will hear Him.

And if we're walking with God, we'll obey Him. And walking with God is just simply a matter of obedience, just obeying. And we cease to walk with God once we quit obeying.

And it's amazing how sensitive it is. It's like one of the men in our church here has one of these cars that works off electricity and gas. That thing will just switch back and forth.

And we're just like that. We can switch from the Holy Spirit right into the flesh just that easy, and then maybe come back to the Holy Spirit. Well, that was lost time in the flesh.

And if, you know, maturity is not... Someone said that maturity is not necessarily living a life that is sin-free, but maturity is living a life where we learn that it doesn't pay to stay down. If you've fallen, just get right back up. Confess it and keep on going.

And it can happen in just a second. You did a thought that wasn't right. You go with God right on that.

That wasn't right. Lord, I'm back with God again. It's the difference.

Maturity is the difference, the amount of time that we stay down. And so living in victory is our choice to live in victory and walk in the Spirit. And these verses in the book of Acts.

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us. It seemed good unto us being assembled with one accord to send chosen men unto you. I'm in chapter 15 of Acts.

To send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul. Men that have hazarded their lives. And they talked about that.

And then he comes down. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us. What do we do? Well, it seemed good to me.

Good to you. But the Holy Spirit should be right in there in our agreements. And when we're walking along.

That's just one place. I'm going to keep on going now because of time. Abraham was a mighty man of God.

Right? He walked with God. He was a friend of God. Did he do everything right? Nope.

One day they got a bright idea. Or he did, maybe. Let's just say, Abraham, there's a famine in the land.

So what do we do? Hey, there's food in Egypt. There's food in the world. So let's go down there.

God didn't tell him to go down there. While he's down there, they pick up an Egyptian maid by the name of Hagar. And they bring her back.

Then one day they have another problem. They're not going to have children. It just seems like God's not coming through on this deal.

So Sarah comes up with an idea. And Abraham went along with it. And what do we got? We got the war between the Arabs and the Jewish people.

Been going on for a long time. And so, without the Spirit of God, we just continually get ourselves into problems. Now, in the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul warned the church before he's leaving, in the book of Acts, in chapter 20, that they were going to be overtaken by wolves.

This was the Spirit of God witnessing in him that after he left, that these grievous wolves were going to come in. Now, how does Satan destroy the church? He destroys the church by getting us to operate in the natural. And we looked at that last week.

But if he can get leadership to operate in the natural, they will destroy the church. And we all go down. And so we need each other.

I need you. I need your checks. And when I have not listened to the checks of the body and whatever, just went ahead and did what I wanted to do, it's brought problems.

And that's what happens in our churches. I'm sad to say, and maybe you might have to say this too, that a lot of our wisdom and a lot of our lessons that we've learned, we've had to learn by going to the school of hard knocks. That's a hard school.

And if we can learn from other men's mistakes, we'll get just as much wisdom with a whole lot less pain. I guess we like pain. I don't know.

Anyway, he's warning these guys in Acts, chapter 20, 28. He said, Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. He's saying the Holy Spirit has put you men into leadership.

And He's been guiding you. But I'm telling you, there are men lurking around that want to get into positions of power and want to get into control that are not led by the Holy Spirit. This is what He's saying to them.

And they will destroy the church, feed the church of God, which He had purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Now, we can go into there almost like Isaiah and just spend a whole lot of time right on one little verse, a couple verses there. But He gives you some things about men that are operating by the flesh. They're going to speak perverse things.

They're going to be criticizing those that are spiritual. The enemy loves to take somebody that he's captured, so to say, he's got their mind, he's got their thought, he's got their attention, and use them to attack somebody spiritual. Somebody that's maybe being used by God.

And I don't know if we'll go into this area, but one of the most devastating areas is the spirit of envy. The book of Proverbs says, who can stand before envy? It is treacherous. And a man that has, so to say, fallen out of the realm of operating in the Spirit has dropped down into the area of nature.

If there's other men he's working in with other leadership, he's going to have a spirit of envy. The Holy Spirit is not envious. Moses, when he was put upon, he said, hey, more men are going to work.

Who was it? Joshua? He was jealous for him. But Moses said, boy, the more the better. That's great.

But a natural fleshly thinking will be watching out for themselves. What does he say? Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Is this dangerous? To have a spirit of envy? To have a spirit of jealousy? I say it is.

I believe it opens up the door to come in. I know of a man one time that he was off hunting in the mountains. And while he's hunting, he's going down the road.

And the guy driving, and maybe did I share this with you before? Losing my memory. Anyway, he's going down the road. The man driving begins to go off the road.

And the preacher who's riding over there by the passenger window looks out in the Rocky Mountain scenery and says, this is getting a little bit close over here. And he looks over there and he reaches over to grab the steering wheel and says, I don't think I want to go off this side. And the man driving says, let go of the steering wheel.

Somebody is passing me on this curve and I see another car coming up ahead. He let go real quick. And just like that, three vehicles all pass together.

The one passing came around and realized there's another vehicle coming. He moved over. That guy stayed right in the middle of the road.

The one that was going off the mountain stayed right on the edge. And just like that. Do you know what was going on at another time? At that very instant, that man's family was going down the road and I think it was a semi that came over on their side and they had to drive off the road at the same time that that happened.

That man's family was almost killed. He was almost killed. There was a third thing that happened right at that moment.

Right at that moment, that man was working within the leadership of a church and the pastor was criticizing that man and attacking that man to another elder in the church. All three of those things happened almost at the same time. Do you think it's dangerous to attack leadership? It's dangerous for the leadership and it's dangerous for the ones that do it.

Because the man that did the criticizing, God had to take that man and put him in the desert for ten years and beat the daylights out of him. Not only was he dangerous because he began to operate from a spirit of envy and jealousy, but he was also dangerous to the glory of God. And that church that they were in, I might come back and tell you something else about that.

God was fixing to give them a quarter of a million dollar building to put 2,000 people in for less than \$50,000. But the spirit of envy had got into this fellowship and this was a major deal because this area had

had revival for ten and a half weeks. It was a continuation of the revival that we had been involved in seven years earlier.

It was a continuation. It was such a big thing. Burlington Railroad had to write a special letter out because so many of the railroaders were bringing back their stuff that was stolen.

The glory of God was smashed through a spirit of envy. The church was destroyed. It is serious.

My heart breaks. I've talked with many others around this country that had these similar stories that God was working. God was coming in and this happened and this happened and that.

Now let's go into this. This wolf spirit. We did this here three years ago on the commands of Christ.

And I drag out this thing on the wolf spirit. It is so sad. But here's some of the things it said.

They infiltrate the church. They despise authority. One of the most dangerous things that can happen in a church where God is working is for men to take upon themselves to do things themselves outside from the leadership.

This is dangerous. Dangerous. Another thing.

They speak eloquently. They draw away disciples. They ridicule God's standards.

They're morally corrupt. Wow! It just goes into this thing and all these things. I don't have time to get into it.

They're void of spiritual power themselves. And so they are trying to get other ways to get some things for themselves. They produce corrupt fruit.

Another thing. I just think all these things. Now, in the book of Acts, in chapter 6 verse 3, they were to get men of honest report and full of the Holy Ghost.

One of the requirements was that they had to have a Bible school education. They had to have a doctor's degree from a seminary. Are those requirements? No.

Do you know how many of our churches in this land will not let a man of God in their pulpit unless he has a doctor's degree? There are hundreds of them. Where did they get that? Instead of going and seeing the qualifications in the spiritual light, they look at the academic. One of the ways that we are being destroyed is we are being drawn into the academic kingdom of worshiping intelligence, which would put some of us out, where we just never make it.

Men who do not savor or have the affections for the things of the Spirit of God, men who do not have an affection and attraction to the old rugged cross to be crucified with Christ are dangerous men because they will lead you along the line of the flesh and you'll get the fruit of the flesh. And if these men get into leadership, it's just really not going to be too good. Here's my seven qualifications that I've listed out of a spiritual man.

I just jotted these down. Number one, a man that's going to be, I believe, usable by God, is going to have these seven things. He's going to have a sense of inadequacy.

He's going to have a sense of inadequacy because the Spirit of God won't use him until he's got that. Because as long as he thinks he can do it, remember our old stupid story, so to say, of the frog that can

fly? He's got that mentality. I can do it.

I can fly. But as soon as he opens his mouth, what comes out? The wisdom of self. And everybody says, we don't like that.

Here's the second one. Qualification of a spiritual man. Weakness.

He's weak. He's weak. The third one, he's needy.

Poor and needy. Fourth one, He doesn't see himself as humble or meek or special in any way. He sees himself as he really is.

And that's why God can use him. He's not trying to hide everything with all the razzle-dazzle of a fancy degree. Those degrees are okay.

They're not bad. I'm not against them. I've got some pieces of paper myself.

I'll save them in case I need to start a fire someday. But you know, I was programmed, and most of the men are programmed to operate. I was thinking about this morning, just before I graduated my senior year, and God got me a piece of paper.

Boy, I had to work a long time for that. But one of my teachers, a very godly man, graduated from one of our major seminaries. He kept pushing on me.

Don, I think you ought to go on and get another degree. Get the next step up. Get another one.

And finally, just before graduation, he came back and he said, you know, I don't think you need to do that. I said, really? And this man, last I heard, he's the president of a seminary, one of our major seminaries in our country now. I liked him.

He was a humble man. A godly man. He said, yeah, all you're going to do is just get the same stuff we got.

When we were being taught, we're just teaching you, and you're going to get a little bit more Hebrew and a little bit more Greek and a bigger degree. And I don't think you just necessarily need that. But this push to get all of this stuff.

Where is the push to get the filling of the Holy Spirit? To have the Spirit of God come upon you. When I first went to Bible college, the first one I went to, there was a teacher there who had met God and had learned the Spirit-filled life. And he was the most popular teacher there.

And I've told you about him before. He was just filled with Jesus. He was filled with joy.

He was filled with life. He was filled with love. He was filled with power.

And so I, so to say, just attached myself to follow this man. That's, by the way, one of the ways if you want to be discipled, you find somebody that's walking with God and you follow and you learn what's in His life from God for years. He may not necessarily say, hey, come on, I'll disciple you.

But you find somebody. Some of you can listen to different men on tapes and whatever. So I followed him.

I learned from him. I played tennis with him. We went to church together.

We went out soul winning together. I got into all his classes I could. We became friends.

This man was just an example of a Holy Spirit filled man in the power of God on his life. And everybody loved him except one man. And guess who that was? A man that did not have the power of God on his life, did not have the Spirit of God in his life like he needed.

And so he began to attack that man. Later on after I left, he was attacked and he was basically academically or whatever you say, crucified and thrown out. And his only crime was being filled with the Holy Spirit.

This spirit of envy, this spirit of jealousy does not come from the Holy Spirit. It comes from the flesh. You know, I've said this before.

By the way, I didn't finish up my list. Four was don't see themselves as anybody's special. Five, they have a total dependence on God.

And six, they have no confidence in themselves. And seven, they have learned they have to rely on the Holy Spirit. A total dependence on God.

No confidence in themselves. And they have to rely on the Holy Spirit. Where do you learn these things? You learn these things out of failure.

Hard things to learn. And here's what happens. If we get men that are not in this category of being inadequate, being weak, being needy, seeing themselves as humble or not humble and meek, they just see themselves as nothing basically.

You look around. The men that God is using, God is using them for a reason. And that's because they see themselves.

They've learned like Job what is really in there. One of the teachers in that same school that I was in, he had a fear. This man was very dynamic and very enthusiastic and very driven.

He was an intense type person. And when he taught, boy, his hair flew all over the place. He jumped all over the room.

He was a lot of fun to have in the class. But he had a fear. And he expressed it all the time.

This one thing he did not want to happen, and I don't know how his life went. I do know he went on later on to get his doctor's degree, and that's the last I heard of him. But he had this one thing.

He was afraid of being set on the shelf by God. He did not want to get to the point where he was not usable. I sometimes wonder if we don't have enough fear of God in our lives.

And we're not careful enough to watch ourselves that we would not become usable. I said this, every church is someone's kingdom. How do you know if it's someone's kingdom? Or somebody's trying to get it.

They will fight to try to get themselves in. Or either they will try to fight to keep it. But either way, all this fighting doesn't do too much to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

Now, I want to take you into this thing a little bit. No confidence in the flesh. 1 Corinthians 2.12, and also Philippians 3.3-4. Let's just talk about this a little bit.

When we are trained, I never do remember going to a class on humility 101. And I'm not against all of the education that I got. I need everything I could get.

It's not wrong to have that. But without the emphasis of the Holy Spirit, it could become academic. And thus it can become not very practical in our lives.

I've got more practicality from the men that taught me that were filled with the Holy Spirit, that knew the power of the Spirit of God, and taught the Word of God like that from those that just got up with the academic, and we just today will turn in our Bibles, and do this and that. Which is okay if you've got that style, as long as you're filled with the Holy Spirit. And you can have a lot of charisma and not be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Let me read you something. This William Law was quite a man. And I got a hold of this book once I heard, actually somebody gave it to me last fall.

In all my reading, I've never found anyone who has so helped me in understanding the Scripture truth of the work of the Holy Spirit. Andrew Murray. The power of the Spirit.

The power of the Spirit. You know one of the things that William Law does, and William Law was driven out because he had learned the Spirit filled life. He was driven out.

Couldn't preach out of the pulpits. So what did he do? He wrote. He wrote books.

If you are filled with the Spirit of God and you go to work and don't have any trouble, check and ask how come. Ask and how come. Because the Spirit of God is going to be looking for needy people.

And not all needy people like to be told that they're needy. Not all people like to know that they're going to die and go to hell. And sometimes we get in trouble because of our tact and our witnessing techniques.

But listen to what Law said. We are born of the Spirit to the end that we might live and walk in the Spirit. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit right now? Back in Nebraska after we had revival.

And by the way, it was 23 years ago we were in the midst of revival up there. And this is one of the things that after God tuned us up, jerked us inside out and stomped the daylights out of us, I equated my experience of revival as like getting hit with a semi-truck and the guy stopped and backed back over me again. When God opened up my heart and showed me the bitterness that was there, He broke my heart.

He broke my heart. And then some others of us, we got to ministering around the area. We'd go into a pastor somewhere in another part of the state.

We'd walk in. We'd ask this question, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Somebody asked me that question this week. It called up from Nebraska.

He got me though. He caught me. He did it tricky.

But we would ask them that. And you'd watch their countenance fall. Or they'd say, yeah, I'm filled with the Spirit.

You know if Jesus Christ is present or not. You know if He's reigning or not. You know if you're in the flesh or if you're in the Spirit, if you've been born again.

You see, we were born again. He said we are born of the Spirit to the end that we might live and walk in the Spirit. This guy called me up this week.

And he said, is this Don Corville? And I said, yes. I thought I recognized that voice by the way. Is this Don Corville in the flesh? And he got me.

I said, yes, it's him in the flesh. He said, what are you doing in the flesh? Oh! Now I'm in the Spirit. You've got to watch those guys up there.

The enemy will come in every time you're in the flesh and get you. He will get you. He will use you.

And if leadership is in the flesh, He will use them to destroy the church. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit, wrote Paul. For as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

It is a shocking experience for a preacher to get saved. Or a pastor's wife. Or a deacon.

And this is what we've seen in this revival. Things like that. It is very shocking to realize that you've been winging it.

You've been living in the flesh all your life. And you have never been born again by the Spirit of God. And we heard this statement over and over and over again.

They say it's just like being born again again. And the evangelist that God was using up there, we said this many times. He thought, many of those really probably just got saved for the first time.

Because the Spirit of God came into their life. And it was something to behold. William Laws said, Are we not here plainly taught that to be led of the Spirit is just as vital as to be born of the Spirit? Do you know if we're not led of the Spirit of God and we are a child of God, we are being led by the flesh, or the devil, or other people, or whatever.

And it's dangerous. Therefore, the necessity of a continual inspiration by the Holy Spirit as the only possible power and preservation of a divine life in man stands upon the same ground as the new birth. And he goes into all these things.

Where the Spirit rules not, there is all the work of the flesh, though nothing be talked of, but spiritual and Christian matters. I say talked of, for the best ability of the natural man can go no farther than talk and notions and opinions about Scripture, words and doctrines. In these he may be a great scholar, an acute teacher, a dramatic orator, a moving preacher, and know everything of Scripture except the Spirit and power.

You look at your Bible. You look at the book of Acts. God has said you wait in Jerusalem until you be endued with power.

He said you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you. And what's going to happen when you have the power of the Spirit of God in your life? You shall receive power after you're filled with the Spirit in what? You shall be witnesses unto Me. How many times have I shared with somebody about Christ, hundreds of times, about giving them the Gospel, and then they say, oh, I'm a Christian.

And I've taught this. If you're a Christian, why didn't you try to say something to me? And so I begin to ask this, and I find out that's a very uncomfortable question to ask. So unless you're ready for a fight, just don't

ask it.

You'll be filled with the Spirit. You'll witness. William Law.

All these things down here. The Scriptures are studied much as the arts and sciences as though a learned comprehension of doctrine is everything. And the present inspiration of the Holy Spirit is nothing.

This is one of the dangers of academics. It's just to study the Greek and the Hebrew and all of that stuff, and not go to the Spirit of God and say, Lord, what do You say? That's probably the best way to start. What do You say? What do You say? And I like to see what the Greek says.

And I like to see what other commentators say. But do I desire to know what God says first? This area of being led by the Holy Spirit. So that there are Christian leaders in abundance who have become experts in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit without experience in His leading and power in their lives.

Natural wisdom is the chief object of Christian circles, especially by those who seek positions of leadership in the church. And the very demonstration and power of the Holy Spirit, which Paul said made his preaching effective, is not only uncultivated and unknown by pastors and teachers, but more lamentable those who claim to stand the most strongly for the truth of all that Paul wrote, deny and decry any thought of a manifestation of this power such as he experienced in his day. Need any more than this be known to explain why the church of Christ today is in a fallen and apostate condition.

We are content to play our games. We are content to have our meetings. We are content to have our social functions, our potlucks, suppers.

We are content to do all of these things without the Holy Spirit. When we get to the point where we will not live without the Holy Spirit's leading and working in our lives, when we get to the point where we have to have Him. I remember one time I was over in Wichita, Kansas, at a conference.

And this was shared. And the preacher was anointed with the Spirit of God. But this story was shared.

He was supposed to go out and speak one time. The speaker was supposed to come out and speak. And one of the men in the church went back to get him.

And he heard him talking back there. And the preacher was saying, I'm not going to go out there without you. I'm not going to go out there unless you go with me.

And so the man went back and said, he'll be here in a few minutes. And that other one is going to come with him too. He was talking to God about the Holy Spirit.

When we are content to go without the Holy Spirit, then we will be destroyed. No confidence in the flesh. No confidence in the flesh.

Let me maybe give you one more little tidbit from Law. Paul said, My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of all my academic degrees. No.

But in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Who then could be a greater enemy of the Gospel than those leaders and shepherds of the flock who write and preach against the manifest power of the Holy Spirit as if it were as much to be avoided in our day as Paul said it was vital in his own day. We have some little booklets by Torrey on the

Holy Spirit.

Wherever Moody went, he tried to get Torrey's teaching on the Holy Spirit. He tried to get it given out. Not that everything he said might be perfect or whatever, but God was using him to teach about the Holy Spirit.

And Moody himself had to learn about that. We all know the story how those two little old ladies were always out there in the front praying for him. And they said, We're praying for you.

It sort of offended them, I think, a little bit that they were praying that he would get the power. He said, Look at all the people I've got. But once he received the Spirit of God on his life, it was something different.

Let me go on here. I need to be probably thinking about winding down. You know, Peter was in need of the Holy Spirit to keep him from failing Jesus at the trial because all that he had in him, flexing all of his muscles and all of his strength.

I'll never deny you, and we talked about this last week, without the Holy Spirit, we can't do anything. He needed that great crash. And we do too.

No confidence in the flesh. There was a pastor. I talked with him.

He flew me into the area. He preached in a bunch of churches up there in that area. And I think I probably told you about this.

This man, he got into this church and he was really something. I wasn't around there, but from what he tells me, he was a ripping and a snorting and a tearing around. And he took that church from 300 down to 50.

You remember him? Took the church from 300 to 50. It's really quite a church growth program. You know how he did it? Operating in the flesh.

And then he met God in revival some years later. And he wanted me to come in and he wanted the evangelist to come in. So we went in and worked that area.

And I'll never forget that man because he was just humble and filled with Jesus now. And the church was still... I remember being there, I told the evangelist, I think you need to have your meetings on neutral turf. Things are a little bit hot around here.

But God had met him. And whatever it took, he wanted God to bring revival in his church. And we went over into another church and I learned just a few weeks ago that that pastor who was just really a tremendous man, very humble.

I couldn't imagine. This man was so humble. You wouldn't have believed that God could even use him.

But I went there and the place was packed out with people. He was just humble pie all over. Filled with Jesus.

Filled with Jesus. And God worked. But this pastor that had taken his church through this tremendous growth program of 300 to 50, he took me around the area to meet the other pastors.

And one by one, he would confess his criticalness, his fault finding, his doing this against them. And he'd ask them, would you please forgive me, brother? I was wrong. God has convicted me of all this stuff.

Without the Spirit of God, we'll do nothing but fail. Without the Spirit of God, we'll do nothing. Pride goeth before destruction and the Holy Spirit before fall.

And I've probably experienced all of that. I have, through my pride, brought great damage. And I want to close up.

Maybe a long close, but I want to share these things with you. John Flaviel said, Take away union and there can be no communion. It's only through the unity of the Spirit that we have the oneness of the Spirit, that we have the power of the Spirit.

You know, I've talked about this revival that we had. And it was going on, maybe starting right about now, 23 years ago. After it was all over and people had come from all around and two times the building had been packed all the way out to the front door, out through the foyer, I never forgot this, and I never will, because after we had revived, when God came in and He revived me and many of us, not all got it, something happened.

After the smoke all cleared and all the crowds and everything had gone, we had half as many people as when we started. Over a period of a few weeks, we had half as many. What was that? I'll tell you what it was.

We had three things we didn't have before. After the smoke all cleared, we had purity, we had unity, and we had power. The pretenders had to get out and God moved some others out.

Several just moved out. Is that going to happen in a church that has revival? Not always. But if you have revival and you don't end up with purity, and you don't end up with unity, and you don't end up with power, have you really had revival? It's going to do something to us.

Now I want to read you something from Ian Bounds. This book really rips right through things. It goes through and it begins to expose some things in our lives.

Master Bounds said this, Nothing is in it that savors of God, but all that savors of men. Man makes the devil's church by turning Christ's church over to men's leaders. The world is sought and gained in the devil's church, but the man, the soul, heaven are all lost.

Lost to eternity. To all eternity. The very heart of this disgraceful apostasy, and that's what's going on in our country.

We have apostasy abounding. The very heart of this disgraceful apostasy, dethroning Christ, this dethroning of Christ and enthroning the devil, is to remove the Holy Spirit from His leadership in the church and put in unspiritual men as leaders to plan for and direct the church. The strong hands of men of great ability, men with the powers of leadership have often displaced God's leadership.

The ambition for leadership and the enthronement of man leadership is the doom and seal of apostasy and it's going on in our land all over the place. May God have mercy on us and on our churches. There's no leadership in God's church, but the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The man who has the most of God's Spirit is God's chosen leader. Ambitious and zealous for the Spirit's sovereignty. Ambitious to be the least, the slave of all.

Mordecai had to deal with his Haman. Jesus had to deal with His Judas. And you and I have to deal with ourself, which is nothing more than a Haman and a Judas who lives within me.

He's the Pharisee in me. Where are we going? Are we on our way back to the path? Iain Bowne said, The church is distinctly and preeminently and absolutely a spiritual institution that is an institution created, vitalized, possessed, and directed by the Spirit of God. Her machinery, her rites, her forms, her services, officers have no comeliness, no power save as they are dispositions and channels of the Holy Spirit.

It is in His indwelling, His inspiration that makes for the divine being to secure its divine end. If the devil can by any methods shut the Holy Spirit, Iain Bowne says, out from the church, he has effectively barred the church from being God's church on earth. The devil's knocking every day on the doors of the churches in our country and other countries too.

He's knocking saying, Can I come in? You see, he has to be given permission to be coming in. When Eve did what he suggested, she gave him permission to become the Lord of her life. When we say no to the Holy Spirit, we say yes to the devil, personally or corporately.

Is it serious? So is her stake. The glory of God is at stake. Iain Bowne went on to say, the enemy accomplishes this by retiring from the church, the agencies or agents which the Holy Spirit uses, and displaces them by the natural, which are rarely, if ever, the media of His energy.

Christ announced the universal and the invariable law when He said, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The church may have a holy preacher, a man of great prayerfulness, of great grace, filled with the Spirit, but if Satan can by any method retire him and put a man of no prayerfulness, plausible, eloquent, and popular, the church may seem to have gained, but it has gained by the substitution of natural for spiritual forces. Again, which has all unconsciously revolutionized the church.

And so he says, if you offer a church with holy men, not highly cultured, but well versed in the deep things of God and strong in devotion to Christ and His cause, not wealthy, not of high social position, that's the type of men the Spirit of God wants to use. He says, now change these officers and put in men who are very every way decent in morality, but not given or noted for prayer in piety, men of high social position and fine financiers, and the church scarcely marks the change, save marked improvements in finances, but an invisible and mighty change has taken place in the church, which is radical. It has changed from a spiritual church to a worldly one.

The change from noonday to midnight is not more extreme than this. At this point, Satan is doing his deadliest and most damning work. The more deadly and damning because unnoticed, unseen, producing no shock, and exciting no alarm.

And it's not by positive, conspicuous evil that Satan perverts the church, but by quiet displacement and unnoticed substitution. The higher he is being retired, the spiritual gives place to the social, and the divine is eliminated because it is made secondary. The perversion and subversion of the church is secured by Satan when the spiritual forces are retired or made subordinate to the natural and social entertainment and not edification becomes the end.

Well, these things are really not so nice to hear, are they? And he goes on and on. He's got some things even stronger to say. But I'll close up with this last thing that Ian Bound said.

And he's talking about how churches just become social centers. They've got all their social functions. And he says, The house of God made a house of feasting and social cheer is sought after rather than a house of prayer.

The unity of the Spirit and the holy brotherhood are displaced and destroyed to make room for social affinities. If anything's going to go, the last thing that ought to go, if the church goes down, it ought to go down on its knees. And they're not out in a ball.

And you look at the true churches being persecuted and slaughtered around our country. Around the world, we should say. They're going down on their knees.

They're born in prayer. They thrive in prayer. They grow in prayer.

And they'll die in prayer. But once we quit praying, we are done. How do we get back on the path and turn the church back over to the Holy Spirit? Turn the church back.

Let's let Christ be the head again like it was in the book of Acts. Let the Holy Spirit lead. Keep the unity of the Spirit.

Very simple things. Unity is used three times in the Bible. Once in Psalms 133 and then the other two times in Ephesians chapter 4. Let me read Ephesians 4. I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called with all loneliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

If we lose it, we've lost it all. Without agreement, we have no unity. Revival should produce that unity again.

It should bring that back to us. That church I was talking about where one man was attacked by the pastor had the potential. You see, not only did they have the eye of the community, a community of 10,000, with ten and a half weeks of revival, but they had the eye of the country.

A couple of magazines wrote up what was going on. Part of that revival that started 23 years ago, the continuation of it, somewhere along the line, the enemy got in. He can get into anybody's heart.

Let's close in prayer. And as we close, just ask God to search your heart. Ask God to speak to you as I ask Him to speak to me.

It could be that apostasy is going on in our heart or in our home or in our church or in our country because we have pushed the Holy Spirit to the side. Could it be that He is grieved with what's going on in your life or mine? Could it be He is quenched? He does so many things. He sanctifies us.

He comforts us. He teaches us. Just on and on and on.

He does all these things. But if He ever ceases to lead us or we cease to let Him lead us, then we're operating without God. Dear Father, these have been some strong things.

It's a pretty big pill. Not easy to swallow. Not very popular.

But we have been destroying ourselves. We've been destroying our country by destroying our churches. And we realize that wherever You do not get the glory, whatever will not give You the glory, You will let the enemy come in and destroy it.

I ask You to have mercy upon us. Lord, we've seen such sadness and such sorrow and such grief because of our failure to follow the Holy Spirit. And Holy Spirit, I'm sorry of my quenching You and my grieving You and my not following You.

And I'm sorry for the devastation and the pain and all the heartache that's come in my lifetime because of failure to follow You. And I've seen so much blessing and I've seen so much of You working. And I've seen such powerful things in seeing You work.

But also, I have seen that like Uzzah, I can put out my hand and I can touch the ark. We can all do that, Father. And I pray that we would have a tender spirit toward each other.

That we would maintain the unity of the Spirit. Whether we be just 50 people or 500 or 5,000. We must have You, Holy Spirit, to be leading and guiding us.

Thank You for teaching us this morning. Thank You for using a weak vessel. Unworthy, inadequate in every sense.

But it is Your pleasure. And we trust that everything that we would do this week, this day, would be done for Your glory. Thank You for ministering to us.

And I pray that You would bless us, Father. And that we would be blessable. That we would be what You want us to be.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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