

The Spirit

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of understanding and following the commands related to the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

Duration: 31:14

Scripture: John 15:5, Acts 16:31, Ephesians 4:30, Philippians 4:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, Hebrews 10:25, James 4:8

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of following three deep commands that go beyond the surface-level commandments. The first command is to not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, which involves getting rid of bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice. The preacher explains that while commandments like not stealing or lying are important, these deeper commands are crucial for understanding how the New Covenant works within Christians. The sermon highlights the need for the power of grace and truth through Jesus Christ to enable believers to obey these commands. The preacher encourages the congregation to draw near to God, believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, and trust in God's provision for all their needs.

Transcript

I want to talk to you about three commands that are in the Bible that are not thought of as commands very often. When we hear the word command, we think of not a promise, it's a command. A promise is draw near to God and He'll draw near to you.

That's a promise with a command in it, draw near to God. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. There's a promise.

My God shall supply all of your need. There's a pure promise. But when we think of commands, we think thou shall not kill, don't lie, don't murder, so on and so forth.

But there's deeper commands than any of those commands once you understand the new covenant that we live in and how Christianity works. Because the commands of the Old Testament did nobody any good because everyone broke them. In fact, the Bible says that through the law, the law that was given to Moses which was written on stone, through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

The law was given so we could know how sinful sin is. The Bible also says that that law that was written in 2nd Corinthians, we read in the 2nd and 3rd chapters, that that law that was written in stone is called the covenant of death and the covenant of condemnation because all the law does, all the commands that God gives us, although they represent his holiness, they have no power in them to help us obey them. Do you get it? You can tell somebody any command, don't covet, don't lie, honor your mother and father.

The command is true. The command represents God's holy character. The only trouble is in the command there's no power for weak Jim Cymbala to obey the command.

All it does is it tells us do it and the soul that sinneth and breaks it shall surely die. That's why the law came through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. That's why we're happy we're not under the law but we're under grace.

So how does grace work and how does the gospel differ from the law? Well, the gospel is based not on commands but the gospel is based on promises. That if we would believe in the one that God sent, his son Jesus Christ, we shall be saved and pardoned from all of our sins. And that would open up a new way of living with the blood of Christ washing away all of our sin.

It doesn't give you new commands. It first gives you a promise of cleansing. How many are happy for the cleansing that we can experience every day from the blood of Jesus Christ? Are we not happy for that? Have we not all taken use of that fact and applied that forgiveness and mercy to our lives? Once you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you then start to learn but it doesn't happen right away.

For most of us, like it happened with me, you know that Christ forgave our past sins and then you try to do the best you can for the rest of your life in trying to please God and obey God. And for many of us, we never get past that step. My sins are forgiven in the past and now I'm going to try my best to be what God wants me to be.

And I know He wants me to be like Christ and that's where the rub comes. How in the world, even though I know I'm forgiven and even though I love God because of what He did for me, where do I get the juice, the energy, the power to obey commands which go against my flesh? That go against habits that are deeply ingrained in my life. And that brings us to what the new covenant is really about.

If you would have asked somebody 2,000 years ago in the days of Peter, Paul, James, John, and the early apostles, what is a Christian? They would have not answered like we would answer someone who goes to church on Sunday, someone who came forward and received Christ as their Savior. They would say that about receiving Christ as their Savior. But what they probably would say is that a Christian is someone who is inhabited by the Holy Spirit.

What marked a Christian in the early church, you'll see it in all the writings and all the epistles, is they now, because of the cleansing that comes through Christ, they now can become a living temple indwelt by the Holy Spirit. That's why the temple in Jerusalem falls totally out of the picture once you get to the gospel age. No one's talking about going to the temple, the importance of the temple.

Why? Because Paul says, don't you know you're the temple of the Holy Spirit. We don't go to buildings anymore. We are the buildings.

Can we say amen to that? We are the buildings. And just like the Holy Spirit dwelt in the Shekinah glory in the Holy of Holies in the temple, now God says this is the new creation that I've told you about. Remember

in the Old Testament, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, it said in that day I'll make a new covenant.

The old covenant will be gone, the covenant of law and try to obey it. I'm going to give you a new covenant and I will write my law in your hearts and I'll put a new spirit in you and everyone will know me. So that is, and it's very lost among many of our churches and in many of our lives, that is what a Christian is.

A Christian is someone who has been born again and has the Holy Spirit living inside of him because in Romans 8 it says, if anyone doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Christ. Nobody goes to church and he reads the Bible every day and he tries to live a good life. He does not belong to Christ.

The seal, the down payment that you are a believer is the Holy Spirit living inside of you. That's the down payment. Now the down payment is let's say 10 percent or two percent or one percent or thirty percent.

The full payment is coming in glory when we get to heaven but the down payment, the seal, the sign that I belong to Christ is not that I live a perfect life but that the Holy Spirit lives within me and he was given to us so that we can be what God called us to be. That song Daniel sings with the choir, I will be what you call me to be. I say yes.

Now this all-importance of the Holy Spirit, that's why it's so sad now what's happening in America today because Christianity is in very marked decline now. A very marked decline and the culture is becoming more anti-Christian by the day, by the hour, right? And some of you have heard how this is totally out of control now. This man who was supposed to say a prayer who I've not met of but I know of him, Louis Giglio, this pastor from Atlanta who has done tremendous work in this large church.

He pastors against child trafficking, human trafficking, the sex trade. He was disinvited to pray at the inauguration because they found a sermon that he preached in 1990s where he said according to the Bible homosexuality is a sin and for that the White House has disinvited him. He cannot pray at the inauguration.

That means Billy Graham couldn't pray. That means anybody who believes in the Bible, that is the new litmus test now. You are mean-spirited and you are harsh and you're not inclusive if you stand by some of the teachings of the Bible.

That's a very sad day now for us. That also means a Muslim or a rabbi could not pray because in both their religions homosexuality, along with many other sins, not to pick that one, but that's the one that's come to the forefront now. It's a very sad day.

This is a huge movement. The only way we can stand and be what God wants us to be is for us to understand how the new covenant works which brings us to these three commands that I want to tell you about. Pardon me if I do a little extra teaching but it'll help us to pray.

Before we get to the commands, have you ever noticed this? Well, I remember as a kid reading this and I scratched my head and I couldn't figure it out. When Jesus was called in league with the devil, which is mentioned in Mark 3 and a couple other places, Matthew and Luke. Remember, he was casting out demons and they said, you know how he does that? He's in league with Beelzebub.

He's hooked up with Satan. And then Jesus told them, no, a house divided against itself can't stand and no kingdom. And then he said this, blasphemy against the son can be forgiven.

But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, that is the unforgivable sin. I don't want to go in and the commentators disagree and the experts disagree, the theologians disagree on what that actually means in terms of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. But isn't this interesting? To speak against the Father can be forgiven.

To speak against Jesus, our Savior, can be forgiven. But to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. One of the reasons that's true is because there's no one else coming after the Holy Spirit.

He is the last and final expression of God on earth until Christ returns. In other words, you can blaspheme me, but after I die and shed my blood on the cross, if you open to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and you let him do his work in you, you can be forgiven and saved. But if you resist what the Holy Spirit wants to do in you, then there is no pardon for that because there's no one else that can help you.

Powerful truth, isn't that? The Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Spirit. The Spirit is not sending anybody. This is it.

We live in the era of the Holy Spirit until Jesus comes again. Now, let's get to the commands now. The Holy Spirit lives inside of us, and this is going to answer a lot of questions for a lot of our lives.

Number one, why sometimes we're so sad and why sometimes we're so weak. The first command is found, I want to give you, and these are commands way deeper. This is way deeper to don't steal or don't lie because these are the commands that understand how the whole new covenant Christian thing works in us.

Look at the first one in Ephesians chapter 4. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. That's that down payment. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander along with every form of malice.

Malice is hatred, evil. So let's look at that again. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Get rid of all bitterness. Why? Because that grieves the Holy Spirit. Get rid of all rage and anger and brawling and slander along with every form of malice and hatred against somebody else.

Resentment, bitterness, unforgiveness. Now, don't grieve the Holy Spirit. This brings out two wonderful truths, brothers and sisters, ladies and gentlemen.

Number one, the Holy Spirit is a person. He's not a gas. He's as much a person as the Father and the Son.

He has feelings that can be hurt. The Bible says of Jesus and looking around at the crowd, he was grieved in his heart at their hardness and their attitude. The Holy Spirit now who lives inside of us, who represents Christ to us, he can be grieved.

That word means don't make him sad. Don't vex him. Don't hurt his feelings.

Why? Because when you and I do that, we deaden the impulses and we lose the power and joy and peace that God has promised. You can't have the Holy Spirit's work going on in us in strength at the same time that you're making him sad. This is how Christians, haven't we all experienced this? How many have ever just flopped and sinned as a Christian and you feel this deep sadness in you? Lift your hand up.

Part of that is not just conscience. Part of that is the Spirit of God living inside of us. So grieved.

Remember the Bible says in 2 Corinthians, he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with the Lord. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with the Lord.

The Holy Spirit lives within my spirit. He dwells somehow in a way I can't understand within me. And when I make him sad, oh do we feel it sometimes.

So tonight this command comes to us in this way. Is there anything we're doing? Is there anything we're saying? Is there anything we keep falling back into that grieves the Holy Spirit? Because when we grieve the Holy Spirit, we're grieving the only one who can give us power to live the Christian life. How can I be more like Jesus when the Holy Spirit is the only one who can make me that way and I'm making him sad every day because I'm unforgiving with somebody and I just curse them behind their back or I use terrible language or I'm doing something that constantly is grieving and hurting the Holy Spirit.

How can he be producing love, joy, peace, meekness, kindness and all of that at the same time that I'm hurting his feelings? It can't happen. And this is a command that obviously as a younger Christian, I never thought about that. I didn't even know what it meant.

Don't grieve the Spirit. So tonight, wouldn't it be good if we would all pray and say, God take out of my life all the things that grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't let me say anything, do anything that would hurt him.

You know, if you love someone and you're with that person, you are very on guard that anyone might say or do something to hurt that one that you love. When I'm with my mom, I'm conscious of that. Anybody comes near, begins to talk, anybody approaches her, I want to make sure for her safety and her protection.

I don't want anyone making my mom sad. I don't want anybody hurting my grandchildren. I don't want anyone making my wife or my children sad.

I don't want anybody doing that. Why? Because when you love someone, you don't want to see them sad. How many want to stop making, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit sad? Just lift up your hand.

We just don't want to do those things. This is, by the way, the proper motivation for a holy life. One of the motivations for a holy life is that we don't hurt the one who can make us holy.

His name is Holy Spirit. He's the only one who can make me what I should be. Otherwise, I'm left with Jim Simba.

He is a mess. How many have found that you are a mess without the Holy Spirit? Lift up both your hands. We are a mess without the Holy Spirit.

Oh, but Pastor, I want more joy. The Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is joy. The fruit of the Spirit is peace.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control. The fruit of the Spirit, all these things. So we have to ask God, God, help us now, Lord, by your grace, to not do those things that grieve the Holy Spirit.

We want to be careful. We want to tiptoe around Him, not say anything to hurt His feelings. Here's another command that's very, very deep.

Look at it. It's in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 19, one of the smallest verses in the Bible. Do not quench the Spirit.

The new updated NIV has something really better, because quench is not a word we use except mostly for quenching our thirst. It has nothing to do with that. What it means is this.

Don't put out the Spirit's fire. Don't put out the Spirit's fire. Don't grieve Him and make Him sad.

Now the image is of a fire burning within us. If you feed it and you give it the right stuff, my son-in-law, Pastor Petri, he's excellent at starting a fire. I once lived in a house with a fireplace, and he was the best, could get a fire going.

He just knew how to do that. But he would feed it. He knew how to get the small flame, get it growing bigger and bigger.

The worst thing you can do is put the wood in the wrong way, because then you actually snuff out the flame. So God is saying to us, look, the Holy Spirit lives within you. He wants to work in you.

Don't put out His fire. Don't quench Him. When you feel these stirrings, when you feel these longings, obey them.

When He says, call someone, call them. When He calls you to the Word, go to the Word and read the Word. When He calls you to pray, no matter where you are, even if you have to just look up and not even say anything out loud, just pray.

But don't put out His fire. When He's working in you, don't pour water on it. Don't pour stuff on it that'll put out that fire.

So there's two wonderful commands. Don't grieve the Holy Spirit. Don't hurt His feelings.

Brothers and sisters, can I just say something as the pastor of this church to you? As I walk around and live and listen to people and watch people in the street and hear them talk, let's never be mean. There's so much meanness in the world. Don't talk nasty to people.

Don't be negative. Don't criticize everyone. Don't do that.

It not only grieves the Holy Spirit. Much of the grieving, notice, has to do with the lips and the tongue. You can really grieve the Holy Spirit with your mouth.

Let's not do that. Let's be known as people who are loving and kind and positive. Do I get a witness here? If you're here today and you grew up in a house, and, you know, our environment affects us.

If you grew up in a house where there's a lot of nasty talk and everyone gave their opinion and they criticize everyone behind their back, don't do that. Break the curse. Through the name of Jesus Christ, break that curse, that curse of following after, I mean, what you saw growing up, and say, no.

My dad was an alcoholic. I don't want to be an alcoholic. I don't want to do that.

I don't want my children or my children's children to touch that stuff. I saw what it does. How about it for all of us and just say, God, make me kind.

I just was looking at the back of my Bible here when I opened it. I opened the wrong place and I just, it comes to me here. I opened it in the wrong place and written, I don't know what year I wrote this, but Samuel, I guess Chadwick SC must mean that.

I wrote in my fly leaf back here. A believer is not very holy if he or she is not very kind. You can't be holy.

You can't be like Christ if you're not kind. Because Jesus was the kindest person who ever walked on the planet earth. How many want to be more kind, more kind? Unkindness grieves the Holy Spirit.

Just put away all of that stuff. Let's ask God, God, we don't want to grieve you. And we don't want to put your fire out.

Put your fire out. You know, I had a couple of times in my life when I was driving a car and the spirit of God would come upon me. I was driving alone.

I would be singing and praying and the spirit would come so powerfully over. I knew I either was going to drive or I have to pull off the road. I would pull off the road and just let it all out because the spirit was calling me to praise and worship and prayer.

And when the spirit calls you, do it. Don't put out his fire. Because if you put out his fire, then you don't, you become insensitive to the next little leading and prompting.

Say, God, I'm not going to help me to learn not to put out your fire. It must mean something in churches and in our lives. Don't put out the spirit's fire.

That's the word of God to us. Don't put out his fire. He'll burn in you.

Feed him. Give him more fuel so that he can burn brightly in your life. Don't grieve him.

Don't make him sad. Well, what's the way, of course, to succeed in both those commands, which sound negative. They're both negatives in the sense of don't grieve.

Don't put out his fire. Well, here's the best one of all. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.

Instead, say it with me. Be filled with the spirit. Speaking to one another with psalms and hymns and songs from the spirit.

Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. Now, notice, I just noticed that today as I was meditating on this, it's not only that spirit filledness leads to singing and speaking to one another, but that's the way to really open up and be constantly refilled with the Holy Spirit. Let him take fresh control of your life.

Speak to one another. Sing. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Open up your heart and make melody to God. And as you're doing it, the Holy Spirit will be drawn as you're worshipping God, and he'll take that fresh control of your life, and you'll be filled with the Holy Spirit. So that's the best way for me not to grieve the spirit.

That's the best way for me not to put out his fire, is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I've learned a lesson, and very painfully. Whenever I make someone or something else my reference point, I get in trouble.

But when God is my reference point, when I'm conscious of the Holy Spirit, not hurting him, listening to his voice, asking for his control, then life just works out in some wonderful ways. So these are deep words for us. When you hear this message, you hear these thoughts about the spirit, it makes us all think, God, do I have attitudes in me today that grieve the Holy Spirit? Do I have some vendetta against somebody? Do I have some habits, some practice? Do I have some secret thing that is grieving the Holy Spirit? God, root it out of my life.

Forgive me for it. Forgive me for it. God, am I in the habit of quenching and putting out the spirit's fire? When you begin to work in me, do I have this bad habit of just like turning to something else and then forgetting that and getting involved in nonsense? When the spirit is calling me, the spirit is calling me.

Spirit is calling me. Oh, to obey the Holy Spirit. If you're here tonight and the Holy Spirit's been whispering something to you, don't put it out in the back, put it on the front.

And say, Spirit of God, I'm going to obey you. And God, this is for all of us, keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, there are people who don't believe in the continuous inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Much of the so-called evangelical church today, many of the teachers today that dominate Christianity, they do not believe in the constant need of inspiration and power from the Holy Spirit. They do not believe in it. But what am I left with? If the spirit isn't always helping me, then what will come out of me if it's not the spirit? I know there's nothing good in me.

I know there's nothing good in the world, the flesh, the devil. So if the spirit isn't helping me all the time, then what will be helping me? See, people who don't really depend on the Holy Spirit are really saying, listen, I just need help in certain areas of my life. I'm not just, I'm not a basket case.

I don't need like God 24-7. I mean, come on, I just need a little teaching and I can get through this. No, no.

Jesus said, without me, you can do zero, nothing, not a thing. No, no, I can do some things. I just need God in some areas.

If you believe that God will let you get into a place where he'll teach you, you need him 24 hours of every single day. Can we say amen to that? And without that passionate desire and helplessness, I came down here with a lot of things on my mind and my heart, my own need in my own life. God knows it.

But I wanted to go to the altar and pray and I couldn't because there was a long line going back almost to the door of people wanting to be prayed for and all the deacons and prayer band people were praying. So I said, I got to help. And just the first three, four, five that I prayed for, as I stood there and they told me their problem, how helpless we are without the Holy Spirit.

You can't love anyone without the Holy Spirit. You can't be free from a complex without the Holy Spirit. You can't break a sinful habit without the Holy Spirit.

You can't have peace without the Holy Spirit. You can't have joy without the Holy Spirit. You can't pray without the Holy Spirit.

You can't read the Bible and really understand it without the Holy Spirit. What can you do without the Holy Spirit? Nothing, nothing. Pastor Simba, that's so radical.

That's like, that's primitive. Yeah, exactly. I don't know about you.

I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. To cast out darkness in your life, you don't curse the darkness, just light a match and the light throws the darkness away. A lot of us are fighting with darkness when we should just be letting the light of the fire of the Holy Spirit just illuminate everything.

Yeah, there's meetings like this where we need to just let God search our hearts. Close your eyes with me. Lord, I pray that you would, by your grace, deliver us from things in our life that grieve the Holy Spirit.

Some of us like to go by just laws that we pick and choose, but you go much deeper than that, don't you? You say, don't grieve the Holy Spirit. God, I have grieved your spirit so many times, but today we all come to a place of helplessness and we say, give us the grace, the strength, not to hurt the one who lives in us. We ask you to give us wisdom so that we won't put out his fire when he's stirring something in us, a calling to step out in ministry, to talk to someone, to pray great prayers, to believe for a miracle.

When he's stirring, help us not to put out his fire by carnal, worldly things that just deaden our senses to the Spirit. Lord, above all things, I don't care how this building looks, I don't care about the choir, I don't care about how well I preach, make us a spirit-filled church, Lord. Let the prayer band be filled with the Spirit so they pray spirit-filled prayers.

Make every pastor a spirit-filled counselor, filled with wisdom and insight and discernment that comes supernaturally from God. God, we're gonna try to learn everything we can from your Word and we'll learn everything we can that's true, but in the end, we remember your Word. Without me, you can do nothing and we do need you.

If you're here tonight and this message, little homily, exhortation, touched you in some way, and you say, Pastor, I wanna come to the front where you're sitting because God's put his finger on something in my life where I'm grieving the Holy Spirit. There's just things in my life, things I do, say, feelings I have. Just get out of your seat and come up here and kneel.

If you don't wanna kneel, you can stand. If you don't wanna stand, you can sit in the front row if there's a seat, but I prefer you come and kneel. If some of you say, no, I was convicted when you said, don't put out the Spirit's fire when you read that verse because the Spirit's trying to work in me and I keep getting distracted.

I put out his fire, I quench him. You don't have to make a lot of noise when you pray. Hannah got a baby from God.

God was heard by Hannah in the Old Testament, and the Bible says she prayed so deep that her lips moved, but no sound was heard. And if there's anyone here who just say, pastor, I need to be filled, controlled 24-7 by the Holy Spirit. We love you tonight, Jesus, and we thank you for your mercy to us.

Every day, mercies are new. Keep us close to you. Continually fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Make us the men and women you want us to be. Help us to love one another, and in the name of Jesus Christ, we put away all bad attitudes, bad talking, bad grumpy speech, negative complaining, and everyone who sinned against us, we let them go. We set them free because by setting them free, we set ourselves free through you, Lord.

We're the one that's captive when we hold things on people. Let our conversation be sweet. Let our saying farewell to one another or greeting one another tonight as we leave, let it be sweet in your sight.

God, as we live the day out tomorrow, should you give us another day, help us to send, bring cheer and love and kindness wherever we are. Never let us be unkind, but let your spirit of kindness flow through us. And as I hit the pillow tonight, remind me one more time to just give you a praise and a worship, Lord, and everyone with me here.

We thank you for this sweet service that you've given us in Jesus' name. And everyone said.

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