

Receiving Holy Spirit

by Keith Hartsell

Keith Hartsell's sermon explores the diverse experiences of receiving the Holy Spirit and the importance of being open to His work in our lives.

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Scripture: Acts 2:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Receiving the Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

Keith Hartsell discusses the process of receiving the Holy Spirit, sharing his personal journey from a non-Christian background to a vibrant faith. He emphasizes the importance of being open to the Holy Spirit's work, highlighting various ways the Spirit manifests, including through prayer, laying on of hands, and the experience of spiritual gifts. Hartsell encourages believers to seek the Holy Spirit actively, addressing common barriers such as disbelief, intimidation, and fear that may hinder this process. He concludes by affirming that the experience of the Holy Spirit is unique for each individual, and that openness and prayer are key to receiving this gift.

Transcript

Great, so this is the final session of the retreat on how can I be filled with the Holy Spirit, or how do I receive the Holy Spirit? And the reason why this is a teaching I love to have predominantly on a retreat setting is because I grew up in a non-Christian home, and then I had the gospel shared with me by some wonderful folks in Alabama when I lived there who were Southern Baptists. And their first introduction, coming to our door, maybe the day we were moving in and our boxes were being unloaded off the truck, they came to the door, we opened the door, and they said, hi, are y'all Baptists? To which my mom, who loves to blend in everywhere we go, said, of course we are. And I heard the gospel from them as I began to go to the youth ministry as a 14-year-old at the Baptist church, the only church in town, and really began a vibrant relationship with God starting that year, I was baptized, and really felt like before that moment I did not understand the Bible every time I opened it, and then after that moment I felt like passages became clear.

It's the only way I know how to describe it, because I don't think there's that much developmentally changing between the 13-year-old and the 14-year-old in terms of comprehending the Bible. But it seemed like God was helping me understand the Bible. But by the end of my senior year in high school, I had already come up against several problems in my faith.

One being, we did a Bible study in the book of Acts, and a lot of things were going on in the book of Acts that I did not see going on in the church. Crazy things, spiritual practices, and particularly the different kinds of spiritual gifts that the New Testament describes that I was not seeing demonstrated in the church. And when I asked questions about it, the adults around me behaved strangely.

They behaved like I was asking wrong or inappropriate kinds of questions. And I was dating a girl whose mother admitted in the privacy of her home that she secretly spoke in tongues. And when I asked about speaking in tongues in particular, his wonderful son of Baptist said, that's something those crazy Pentecostals believe, and they believe that you're not a real, legitimate Christian unless you can speak in tongues.

And so that's just all faceless, so we don't believe in that. And so to find someone who actually claimed to speak in tongues, I was intrigued, and I wanted to know more. And I said, well, why don't you do it at the church? That's where it should be practiced, right? And she said, oh, I could never speak in tongues in the church, they would kick me out.

And I thought, what has the church come to, that this is what would happen? And so I asked all kinds of culture-challenging questions, but deeper than my struggle with understanding the gifts of the Spirit was my own growing sense and awareness of my own need for healing, and feeling like there wasn't a way for me to receive healing in the community of that Baptist church, because they didn't really know what to offer in terms of healing via the Holy Spirit. It was simply a read the Bible more and pray more kind of solution to struggles that I was having. So I learned that there was possibly more to the life of being a Christian than I was familiar with at the time.

And so when I got to college, I began visiting Church of the Resurrection and experiencing sort of Bob Weber's kind of description of church, being fully charismatic, fully evangelical, fully liturgical sacramental. And so one of the best ways that I have thought of, actually heard somebody share, to describe the work of the Holy Spirit is how many of you have lived in a home that had a boiler with radiant heat? You have? All right. Okay.

Is it the kind that has like a pilot light for the furnace, and then the gas comes on, and you hear this whoosh of flame, and all of a sudden, everywhere the house starts to get warmer. Is that the experience? With your voice? We can't hear it. We can't hear it? Okay.

We can hear it whoosh. Yeah. So the way that I've kind of understood the Holy Spirit is when you become a Christian, that pilot light gets lit, right? There's the gift of the Holy Spirit given to you as a believer.

But there are times in your life when you can experience this whoosh of the Holy Spirit, where the circumstances, or something that God desires to do, or some kind of petition on your own, praying and asking for help, God just breathes. Not in a sense that it wasn't there before, and now it is, but in a sense that there is a, just a whoosh of power, of warmth, of energy from the Lord into whatever situation or struggle is going on. And so, that's how I would initially describe my experience with the Holy Spirit when I started to go to college and experienced more than just an intellectual understanding of what the Bible described, particularly in these passages in Acts.

Now, when it comes to charismatic things, I do think it's really important to say that in the book of Acts, nothing happens the same way twice. And so it's really hard to take from Acts and then prescribe how we ought to do things in the church based on that. It seemed like Acts was just this wonderful season of

exploration and discovery with how God works in the church and how the church has started and grows and how people come to know Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

So none of these passages we're going to read are going to be particularly prescriptive. They're just going to be descriptive of what they observed happen. So, sometimes the experience with the Holy Spirit is dramatic, sometimes it's not dramatic.

So let's read, I'll just have you guys take turns reading the passages on the handout. So, it's just double-sided. So does everybody have one? I have an extra one here.

Great. So in Acts, the Holy Spirit came in several different ways. So, Acts 2. Travis, why don't you go ahead and read that for us.

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Great. So a couple of things to describe there. How would you describe this incident of the outpouring of the Spirit? Huh? Visual.

It's visual. Very good. I would say this would be one of the more dramatic ways, right? It's kind of drama-filled.

You've got the visual, you've also got the sound. Yeah, it's sensory as a whole. Yep.

Yeah, it's just really unfamiliar. Wind and fire are described here. So this would not be the quiet, receptive, peaceful method of receiving the Holy Spirit.

This would be the more dramatic. The second one. Julie, do you want to read Acts 8 on the worksheet? Oh, sorry.

Yeah. When the apostles and Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them. I'm sorry, I didn't do that right. Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them.

He had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Okay.

So we would describe this as the outpouring of the Spirit came with the laying on of hands after baptism. It's a little unusual. But as we go further, it will not always be in the same order.

How about you, Jeremiah, for the Acts 19? When Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They answered, no, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. So Paul asked, then what baptism did you receive? John's baptism, they replied.

Paul said, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Great, so there is evidence for them of the Holy Spirit being poured out vis-a-vis the speaking in tongues and the prophesying that happened also on the day of Pentecost in the first reading, Acts 2, with tongues and prophecy. And then the fourth one, Acts 10, Raymond, do you want to read that? While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.

Great, so before baptism. So it's kind of funny, the changing sequence for everyone, which leads you to the question of how then do we help people go through a process if we're at work trying to evangelize the city of Chicago and there are nine million or so people who don't go to church? How do we lead people through a process that will result in their conversion, receiving the Holy Spirit, being baptized, experiencing gifts of the Holy Spirit? What I concluded after this senior year study in the book of Acts is that the experience is different for everyone and the sequencing of events is different for everyone. And that the thing that seems to be common to all of these stories is simply an openness for the Holy Spirit to come.

And so most of these cases, people were praying for the Holy Spirit to come and pour out. But for others, it's the Holy Spirit pours out even as they're open and hearing the message preached by Peter. Acts 10 is literally like the climax of the book of Acts with everything rising up to it and everything falling away from it in terms of the Gentiles coming to faith in Jesus and having the unique evidence of the Holy Spirit upon them before they're baptized.

Because in this situation, they weren't even sure that they can baptize Gentiles. And so it was kind of important that they evidence signs of the Holy Spirit before baptism because the apostles, this is new territory altogether. They had never yet baptized or converted Gentiles to Christianity and this is the first instance.

So it's different for everyone. It leads people to asking this question, how do I know if it's happened for me? What are some of the ways that we experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? All right, Galatians 5, do you want to tackle that, Mitch? Galatians 5, yeah. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Great, so the fruit of the Spirit is one of the clear ways set apart by Paul for us to know that we are, if we're growing in any of these particular fruits, it's the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Also, Acts 10, which we already read, if you look at verse 46, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Speaking in tongues is certainly one of the ways, but praising God.

Paul talks about if you have the Spirit, you can't curse God, and if you bless God or praise God, that can only be possible by the Spirit's presence in your life. So these are ways, and then the speaking in tongues, obviously, the Pentecostal, were you a part of a Pentecostal tradition, Travis? Yes. Was your experience that they believed you had to speak in tongues to be a valid or legitimate Christian? More or less, I mean, I

don't think it would have been explicitly stated that way, but that's sort of the functional way that it seemed to show up.

So we recently had Assemblies of God Church come to us and ask if they could come into Greenhouse this summer, and they had left the Assemblies of God Church pretty much over this idea that this was the principal fruit over all other fruits, but as charismatic Christians, we would say it's one of the ways in which you can experience the work of the Holy Spirit in your life, but I have been with lots of wonderfully gifted, ordained individuals in the church, and at Resurrection, we had a clergy team of about eight, and roughly half of them spoke in tongues and the other half didn't, but there was no sense of these are more special clergy than these clergy. Everybody had their own unique gifts that were recognized, and so it wasn't really seen as a primary or principal gift, just one of the gifts, but a fairly obvious one. Whenever anyone speaks in gibberish, it's kind of hard not to notice.

When one of my friends was ordained to the diaconate, the bishop, you know, went a little crazy and started to pray in tongues over this ordination candidate, and her father was not a believer, and so, of course, the family came to the ordination ceremony, a little bit like a graduation rite, and he said after the service was over, it was so nice of that older man to pray for you in Greek or Hebrew. Which one was it? And she declined to really tell him exactly what had happened, but to him, it was just, oh, that's nice that you used the biblical language in praying for my daughter, who you ordained. So not all Christians speak in tongues.

Not all leaders in the church, gifted individuals, those who have experienced the life of the Spirit speak in tongues, so it's not necessarily a sign of being filled with the Spirit. It's also imitable, so I don't know if there was ever a point in your church with your experience that you were kind of uncertain whether this person was speaking in tongues legitimately or not. Yeah.

Did you ever have that? Yeah, or the whole thing where it's like, oh, you're not doing it? Oh, well, just say something, and then eventually, it'll turn, you know. Yeah, yeah. Just say anything, and eventually, it'll become speaking in tongues or something like that.

Yeah, so it could be a little imitable, so the only person who really knows if it's authentic or not is the person themselves, and with all of the different gifts, Paul says in one of the passages, I wish you all could speak in tongues, but more than that, I'd rather you exercise the gift of prophecy, because prophecy builds up the church. Yeah, absolutely. I have a question about this prophecy, because my father blessed someone who was 90, and the woman who came and visited him in the hospital, and she, I don't know what country she was from, but she was from some African tradition, and she said, oh, yes, and my father came in and prophesied for her, and I was like, I thought my dad blessed her.

Yeah. And that was the first time I heard someone talking about prophecy in a different way. Yeah, how would you define it, Nick, in all your seminary studies? How would you define the gift of prophecy? So prophets were people who, at least in the Old Testament tradition, spoke the word of God or the will of God.

It could mean a whole different series of things. It could be a person who saw literal visions. It could be a person who was a visionary.

It could be a person who prayed in an intercessory way. It might be what it was. So, I mean, in fact, in Hebrew, there's at least three different words, but yeah, so it encompasses a whole variety of, I think we

tend to associate the word prophecy with seeing the future.

Yeah. But, I mean, that certainly happened, but that was actually a pretty small portion of what biblical prophets actually did. More of it was communicating the will or the word of God, and thus says the Lord.

So, yeah. Yeah, does that make sense? Yeah, yeah, because he'd always pray the Aramat, you know, the Lord bless you, keep you, the Lord pray that, so. Yeah, so.

And they'd spend a time in sharing faith. So some folks will say something encouraging about another person, and others will call that prophecy. It's kind of, depending on where you're at, what environment you're in, what is the collective understanding of this word, it can vary from group to group.

But Nick's definition is absolutely right on, and biblical, well done. We just had a midterm the other day, and so it's all, it hasn't fallen out of my head yet, it's all still jammed in there. Oh, good, good, good.

But I'd never heard that intercessory, I always thought it was a scripturist in Isaiah. Yep. And it's actually really.

Rowet is the Hebrew word. What? Rowet. Rowet.

Rowet. Isn't that related to the Holy Spirit? That's an intercessory prophet. A nabi is the general term, and a horet is someone who sees either literal visions, or is a visionary.

Yeah. It's nice to be able to say that. Yeah, so I've loved, when I've taken classes, sort of working through what each of the different gifts of the Spirit are.

Like, what are they really? Because you get such diverse descriptions of them, sometimes it can be a little hard to know, am I operating in this gift or not? I don't know. If you have the spiritual gift of wisdom, what does that exactly look like for people today? Or discernment, or a gift of the word of knowledge, what does that even mean? And so to have these sort of unpacked for us, I think is really helpful. Because in the sort of non-charismatic world, I think a lot of Christians are exercising a lot of spiritual gifts without knowing it.

But I also reject the idea that spiritual gifts are only the sort of normal. Like, if you have tried to get a spiritual gift inventory, and tried to buy one online or something to take, there's a whole group of them that don't include any of the biblical charismatic gifts. So it's gifts of administration, and hospitality, and wisdom, the sort of like non, what would you call them? The non-supernatural gifts.

And I don't think we should exclude any of the gifts that are listed in the New Testament. When we think about what are we gifted with, and how do we use those gifts to grow and build up the church? So having Christians learn what their gifts are is important. And it requires a lot of people giving feedback to you.

But also, one of the things I think is important is to never impose what we think God is giving us, but rather to propose. So in some charismatic environments, folks will be like, I've got the gift of prophecy, and I want to proclaim over you that God has said blah, blah, blah, X, Y, or Z. And that can be kind of a word imposed upon you. If you disagree with me, you're not disagreeing with me, you're disagreeing with God.

And that's dangerous. And I had that happen to me, and I think the minister did have the person kind of go into some sort of remediation. It was frightening.

Yeah, you don't want to do that. We don't want folks to do that. We want to propose to them.

I don't know if the Lord is saying this or not, but it seems to me like he might be saying X, Y, or Z. How are you hearing that? Does that sound like that resonates with you? It's sort of communicating with humility that you might've gotten it wrong, and you're letting them sort of discern with you whether this is from the Lord or not, or for them or not. And that a lot of that thus saith the Lord imposition on people can be hurtful, especially if it's way off. Well, you want to have a witness.

You don't want to be cornered by someone alone. I've had this happen also in prayers, but there's one dear, well, this one friend is very spiritual, but she says prayers in the Holy Spirit, and then she says to me what she feels the Holy Spirit has told her, that if you decide to do this, it's okay, and if you decide to do that, it's okay. And I was like, whoa, I didn't think the Holy Spirit would talk to me.

I did say that. Yeah, well, even in the biblical tradition, the things that the prophets are saying are not terribly shocking. They're talking to Judah, or to the kingdom of Israel, who has completely just rejected the worship of God and is worshiping Baal, and they're saying, look, God says you're getting it wrong, and this is not shocking stuff.

If you're the people of God, and you're not worshiping God, and the prophet comes and tells you, hey, you're not worshiping God, maybe you ought to try it, nobody's shocked by this. It's not, you know, it's very, very rare that the prophet says something way out of the blue or that's not, that wouldn't be received by the people. It's like, oh, of course you're right, you know? It's evident on its face that they are correct, because you are obviously doing, usually, in the case of Israel, is not worshiping God.

Yeah. So one of the things that, when we did the fall festival, and we did that sermon series on prayer, and I talked about listening prayer, that book by Leanne Payne, she really encourages every Christian to be able to set a part time to listen for what the Lord would say, and sort of what she would characterize or describe as a lowercase P, prophetic listening. You're just listening for the word of the Lord, whether it comes through scripture or the Holy Spirit, but you're not gonna turn around and proclaim it over someone.

It's for you to connect with the Lord, to dialogue with the Lord. And so, I like the definition of sharing the word of God or the will of God with people, but also with humility and gentleness. I think that's really important and kind of forgotten in some environments.

What are the questions you guys have about the experience being different for everyone? How do I know if it's happened to me? So how do we guide people through receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit? How do I receive it? And this may be validating for many of you. So, the way that scripture encourages us that we can sort of extrapolate from all of these different sequences is Acts 2, let's see, is that Sherry at this point? You wanna read Acts 2 for us? Peter said, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, promises for you and your children and for all whom the Lord, our God, will talk.

Those who have accepted his message will be baptized in about 3,000 or uncompensated in all their days. So that's pretty self-explanatory in terms of where do you begin. We start with repenting and being baptized, but not just a baptism like we saw with the disciples who followed John, a baptism of repentance.

This was a, they had to be baptized for the first time in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the understanding of Jesus as Son of God, as divine. Nowadays, you have to be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son,

and the Holy Spirit because there are a handful of traditions that baptize in the name of Jesus that don't fully recognize Jesus as Son of God. And so now it's a little confusing to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

So the church has, for the last 1,500 years, said you have to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So it's to rule out any ambiguity or confusion of what kind of baptism you're being baptized into. So to be baptized in the name of Jesus, in the name of the Trinity, the Triune God, is a joining with Christ in that exchange of sin for righteousness moment that happens for people in a sacramental way at their baptisms.

It can happen in a prayer way before. And again, after baptism, we are always praying for God to wash the sins that we've committed away, kind of similar to the Jesus washing Peter's feet at the Last Supper. And Peter's saying, you cannot wash any part of me.

And he says, Jesus says to him, unless I wash you, you can have no part in the kingdom that I'm leading. And he says, well, then all of me, wash all of me. I didn't realize the stakes were so high.

Throw all my body in there. And he said, no, you've already been baptized. You just need your feet washed.

And that sort of, to me, speaks about the need for confessing our sins regularly and doing that sort of spiritual discipline of washing the sins that we've committed. Not a full baptism every time you sin. Throw me in the water again, but rather the washing of feet.

I don't know if you've ever been anywhere where like hurricane water would show up and stuff like that. You can't take a shower and all I can do is like wash your feet. You actually feel surprisingly clean.

You'd be amazed at the difference. Really? Yeah, yeah. There's like no water.

I grew up in the South, so we had a lot of hurricanes. I came through sometimes, we'd be like hard. So it's amazing like, I don't know, it's just this personal experience.

It's amazing how clean you feel from washing your feet when you can't actually take. Clean anything else. It's actually like when you're in the South, it's hot in here, but you're still hot.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. The opposite is also true. I've found in a lot of Sacramental liturgical churches where they practice foot washing, but because everybody's bathed nicely and wears socks, the foot washing water becomes lint filled, and then you feel like you're getting your feet dirty.

You know, it's sort of the opposite sensation. So you're saying the washing of feet is like another process. Confessing our, no, it's like confessing our sins and being forgiven on an ongoing basis as Christians.

Jesus says you don't need to be washed all over. You've already been baptized, but you just need your feet washed. So it's talking about the ongoing spiritual practice of confessing to sins one to another.

Is it being symbolic in any way? I think so. I think he was trying to symbolize several things. He was also symbolizing the servanthood role that he came on to take, that he wants us to do.

He also was communicating the humility in the kingdom rather than the being large and in charge. He was really combining a lot of things in that act that he did. So first is repent and be baptized.

The second one, Luke 11. I guess we're back to you, Travis. Oh, sure.

So I say to you, asking it will be given to you. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you.

For everyone who asks receives. The one who seeks finds. And to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? Now, this is one of the great passages that's repeated a lot in scripture, out of context. So ask and it will be given to you. So whatever it is that you want, I don't know, whatever Jeremiah's talking about these days, whether it's about a bigger paycheck or a nicer car or a bigger house, whatever you ask for in his name, he'll give to you.

It's often misused, but in this context, the very last verse tells you what this passage is about. And the last verse is about what? The Holy Spirit. Giving of the Holy Spirit.

It's talking specifically about asking for the Holy Spirit and receiving the Holy Spirit. And that God is like a father who doesn't want to give you bad things, he wants to give you good things, so he will always answer the prayer, Lord, I'm asking for the Holy Spirit. He will always answer it.

So the first thing you do is repent and be baptized. The second thing you do is you ask God for the Holy Spirit. And then third, you respond to what you think the Holy Spirit is doing.

So a lot of times people will ask for the Holy Spirit and then they'll get a nudge or an intuition about something and then immediately dismiss it, which is kind of funny because when we ask for the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit comes and suggests something to you, it sort of works against what we're hoping for to simply dismiss what it seems like we're being nudged to do. So the story of Philip, the evangelist, being teleported by the Holy Spirit from one part of town to the road where all of a sudden there's an Ethiopian eunuch in a carriage going by, reading from the book of Isaiah. And at each step of his sort of crazy story, he doesn't know what God wants him to do.

God only gives him a little instruction at a time, like, I want, I have to go back to the story, but instead of saying there's gonna be a guy who's gonna come by in a carriage, he just walks Philip through step-by-step without giving him any more detail. And Philip just has to trust and respond to these short instructions without knowing what the overall purpose is. And we tend to like to know everything that's expected of us before I say yes.

So if you hear the Spirit say to you or you ask for God to pour out the Spirit on you and you hear this thought, you should go down to Kipling Street and wait. You're like, for what? Tell me what I'm supposed to wait for or I'm not going. That doesn't make any sense.

How do I, I'm supposed to go with my wife somewhere. How am I supposed to explain to my wife that the Spirit told me to go stand at Kipling Street? So there's this like need to know the full purpose of everything that keeps us from really stepping out and following how the Lord would guide us. And so if we want to receive the Holy Spirit and respond, we have to actually step out on some of the things that we're feeling nudged to do.

Take a risk. Even if, I believe that when the Lord begins doing this in your life, the risks that he asks you to take are relatively small. They're like risks of slight embarrassment, risks of slight inconvenience, risks of losing a little bit of time from your day.

And that's all you're risking. But then like the asks get bigger and bigger as you learn to follow him and trust him. And so a lot of folks will pray for the Holy Spirit, receive a kind of nudge and then not respond to it and say, you know, the Lord didn't answer my prayer.

But we believe that he's always answering that particular prayer when you ask for the Holy Spirit. So there are several barriers to receiving and responding to the Holy Spirit. I just want to go through and then we'll pray through some of these in our closing time of worship and prayer.

I put on there, what did I put on there? Three, three barriers. Okay, I'm going to double that and make it six. Okay, six barriers.

Because as I was praying through this, I just felt like the Lord was giving me a few more that might be applicable to you all. The first barrier, disbelief. This one is expressed in a lot of different ways.

It can be just a micro disbelief. Like I just don't believe that God is speaking to me right now. And so I'm just going to reject the nudge or thought that I had.

But in a larger way, the theological position of dispensationalism or cessationism that espouses the view that God does not work today like he did in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit does not work the same way today as is described in the book of Acts is a system of disbelief about the Holy Spirit. And so if you subscribe to a dispensationalist theological view, you're going to struggle to see or experience the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Just because you've chosen to exclude the possibility of the Holy Spirit leading you from your realm of explanations for strange things going on in your life. My mom once visited a church after I came to college and she wanted to know that she was visiting an okay church. So she invited me, the seeming expert on churches to come and check it out.

And it seemed like a lovely church, Christian, non-denominational, Bible church. So I picked up the visitor's brochure because I know by being a pastor and designing visitor's brochures that they put what you really want to know in those things. So I picked one up and started to read through it.

Most of it sounded pretty good, except for one statement. And that one statement was enough for me to say to my mom, you don't want to go here. Do you want to know what the one statement was? Had to do with dispensationalism.

We don't believe in miracles for today. Even non-Christians believe in miracles for today. Are you kidding me? We don't believe in miracles for today.

So I said to my mom, if you ever want a miracle, you're probably not gonna get it here. Because of the ways in which Jesus would say about whole communities, you couldn't perform any miracles here because they had no faith or they didn't believe. Communities that espouse a system of disbelief have a really hard time receiving what God has for them.

Did you say the Holy Spirit not try to ask you that or that would have just been something she would have asked you? I don't know. She's never asked that before. So I don't know.

My mother and my father are both mysteries to me. So I don't know where they are with the Lord. But to have her ask, I was like, sure, I'll come and check it out for you.

So the second barrier, I would call the intimidation barrier. It's sort of thinking in a rather self-conscious way, what will others think of me if I respond in any way to what I'm feeling? Will others think I'm crazy? Will others think I'm non-intellectual? Will others think that I'm too experiential? The list goes on and on. What will others think of me? To be intimidated by any kind of movement or leaving of the Holy Spirit.

The third one is the perfection barrier. If you tackle any kind of charismatic worship the same way you would tackle academics. I have to get it right the first time with no mistakes.

My daughter and my wife both do not like to learn as they go. They want to figure it out and get it right the first time. It's a bit of a challenge whenever it comes to somebody wanting to come alongside you and teach.

So some people have a perfection barrier when it comes to these things. They don't wanna get it wrong. They don't wanna mess it up.

They don't even wanna have a small mistake. So then that will keep them from acting in a way to follow the leading of the Lord. They won't step out because they're afraid of getting it wrong.

The fourth barrier, I call this the fear barrier. And there's a lot of fears that people engage. Fear of emotions.

If people are particularly stoic and don't like feelings. I grew up in a military family. Boys did not express feelings in our family unless that feeling was anger or rage and then it was totally acceptable.

But we couldn't cry. We couldn't express emotions publicly. So there could be a fear of that.

There could be a fear just of losing control of yourself. Other people are doing things that make you uncomfortable. You're afraid that if you respond to the Holy Spirit that you yourself will do something that's kind of silly or out of control.

There's also the fear, I have this all the time when I'm leading any kind of healing prayer or prayer for a group. What if nothing happens? It's that like anticlimactic fear. What if I take a risk and nothing happens? Of course, there are millions of stories already in my 20 years of ministry where it looked like nothing happened but later I found out something crazy wonderful did.

So it's so hard to judge. Did something happen? Did nothing happen? But I'm always afraid when I go into beginning to lead prayer for a group of people or for one person like this guy from last week who's done everything to receive healing. I'm like, what do I have to offer this guy? I'm gonna start praying for him and he's gonna quickly realize I've got nothing new to offer him.

And he'll be like, why did I waste my time? But something happened for him. Fear of, I think this came out of the intimidation barrier, fear of what others think. The fifth one is the authority barrier.

If you have any issue with authority at all, this will probably be a challenge for you. It's the struggle to trust someone else to lead you. So the example of wanting to know everything that's expected of you before you commit to it, following the Holy Spirit is a lot like getting a little bit of the instruction at a time and taking the risk, trusting that sort of leading without knowing everything in advance.

So how well do you trust people or the Lord to guide you without giving you all the info? If your spouse or your roommate or your boss said, come with me, we're gonna go somewhere and do something important, how willing are you to go if you don't have all the details? You can be ambivalent about other people's authority or the Lord and the Holy Spirit, their authority in your life, but you can also be ambivalent with your own authority. Do I have the right to say anything if the Lord prompts me? You don't trust that God's given you something to do that is important or something to say that is important for another person, even just a word of encouragement. So any kind of struggle with authority, your own or others.

And the last one is, I see this a lot, is the receiving barrier. It's just that putting yourself in a posture of receiving is too vulnerable for you. It means lowering your defenses or your guard and opening yourself up to the possibility of disappointment.

Anybody who's been in a relationship and had their heart broken probably feels this. I'm afraid that if I open up, I'll be hurt or disappointed, or that I might hear the words that I've long suspected that I'm not good enough or the Lord really doesn't love me. There's a fear of that, I think, in every human being.

So what questions do you guys have about those six barriers? There are likely others. These are not grounded in the Pauline epistles anywhere. What questions do you have about these six? Awesome, has anybody had an experience with the Holy Spirit that changed the way you think about your walk with the Lord and that surprised you? I have one.

Share. So, this is where I was actually at a healing retreat. And so, they were doing the, like, we're gonna pray on you, and a lot of people fall back.

It's been a peaceful outing. It was, I don't know if you know Francis and Judith and Matt, but- I, of course, do. Yeah, so, I'm from Gettysburg, so I went to their things.

So everyone's praying, and the Lord doesn't like healing, and I'm expecting something. I'm like, okay. So I go up, and they're gonna pray for me, and I'm like, of course you're expecting something's gonna happen, or I'm gonna fall back, or something good's gonna happen.

And they're praying for me, and I was like, nothing's happening. So I just kind of continued in the line. And everyone's gathering together and getting prayer and doing different things, and I'm like, what? I don't really know what to do, because I don't feel any sense of anything.

So, and it's really quiet, there's no music going, no one's, it's not loud or anything. So I just went back to my seat, and I was like, I'll just sit here for a while, and I'll hang out. And I closed my eyes, and my seat actually happened to be over a skylight.

Under a skylight? Yeah, under a skylight, sorry, thank you. So- I don't know how the seating arrangements worked out. So I closed my eyes, and all of a sudden, all I can see is all this light.

And then I opened my eyes, and I looked around, and I was like, oh no, they didn't turn on the lights, because they turn off the lights. I was like, that's it. So I was like, oh, maybe the Lord's trying to sleep.

So I closed my eyes again, and I could see, I saw nothing but light, and I felt so peaceful and loved inside, and it was really amazing for me, because at that time, I've always had nightmares, I've always had dreams, I'm afraid of snakes, because I see snakes. And I'd never not seen darkness, ever. And so when they say the Lord is light, and there's no darkness in Him, like that was a very foreign thing to me, and so there was always this fear around that, like the darkness is always there.

And so after this experience, and it was cool, because other people could see that there was a light coming down on me, like other people saw it. It wasn't just like, I was crazy, if that makes any sense. So when I closed my eyes, there was just a shift.

I had never felt so peaceful, I had never felt so loved, and there was a shift in the understanding of God, because I'd never experienced the fact that darkness wasn't there, if that makes any sense. And so obviously since then, this was years ago, like you have struggles, but that knowledge that God is light and there's no darkness in Him, it just totally changed me, the way I saw God, if that makes any sense. Not, it's a process, so it's not all there, but it was a really major shift for me.

And it was the first time in my life that I really, because a lot of times, because I am visual, and one of the ways God speaks to me is through images. And so a lot of my images were always very dark, and they were always very scary. And even though I'd gotten images before where God, I could see myself in light, but the darkness was around me still, like I could still see both.

And so it was a really dramatic change. And after that, a lot of my images, I still can't always see both, if that makes any sense. And when I do, I feel like it's for a reason, and the Lord will tell me what that reason is.

And so there was a big aspect of fear. And it was, like no one said anything, it was just light everywhere. I couldn't see anything, but it was really cool, actually.

Yeah, thanks for sharing that. That's actually a really powerful example of the Holy Spirit ministering His specific word of God, in Him there is no darkness, to the heart and the imagination of the human person, in a way that begins to transform or change or shape. And so that was, I mean, that's, you can read the passage, meditate on the passage, have somebody preach on the passage, but it doesn't do the same transforming work as having the Holy Spirit do what He did in that moment.

It changes you. That's really, really powerful. Do any of you have anything you wanna share from your own experience? That's called a healing ministry prayer experience.

Yeah, well, it was like a conference to training prayer ministries. But while you're going through the training, you also receive it, because it's not like one way, it's like circular. So that was the context of why I was there.

Because that's their ministry. What years were you there? 2000, that's a good question. 2004 to 2007.

Okay. We have a friend here now. Leslie Royalty.

Yeah. Yeah, she's best friends with my best friends, but we don't have her, well, I mean, we're friends on Facebook, but yeah, she lived with all of my best friends. And she came right after me and Nick got married.

She moved to Jackson right before we got married. We moved soon after she came. Well, she got married to my best friend.

It's a small world. I know. So at the Equip to Heal conferences that we do in May, Leslie's on our team.

Oh, so that's you. Yeah. So.

Yeah, I came to that one. Yep, yeah. So Leslie is super, super awesome.

She also teaches my kids prayer. Oh, how nice. How nice.

I, I, this, I'm gonna call like a heat that I got prayed over, maybe I did, but after my mom died, my dad married pretty quickly afterwards. So maybe he had dated in high school. So they're both elderly.

And my sister and I, oh man, our hearts were just like angry, so angry, because she really excluded us and we lost connection with him. And it went downhill, downhill, downhill. And I've had to pick up a lot of the family needs.

And I was driving to Michigan. I'm like, God, I gotta stop hating. I gotta stop hating.

Help me. And I just kept praying that, please, I gotta stop hating, you know. And I just kept praying that, praying that.

So now my relationship with my stepmother, only once has she introduced me as this is my stepdaughter, only once. But now when I'm with her, it's like, it's calmed. It's just like, thank you, God.

So, and it was over a period of time. And that lifting of that hatred, I'm grateful for. So, I mean, that's just personal.

Well, friends of mine have prayed with me about it. So I think the power of where one or two are gathered together is critical. And maybe you're praying more than once or reporting back, it helps you overcome.

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, and also, if you confess your sins one to another, he is faithful and just and will heal you from those wounds. I believe in the power of that.

There's a way in which we can minister the healing and the forgiveness of God to one another where we struggle to receive it one on one, like on our own with the Lord. We're gonna minister that to us. Hey, hey.

We are dying over that incredible lunch. Oh, thank you. Holy moly.

Thank you. I'm sorry. So as soon as Ed and the kids don't need you anymore, you're coming to live at my house.

Sounds good. My first experience receiving any kind of prayer like this where somebody used their gifts was so unnerving for me. I was attending, I was exactly Raymond's age.

I was attending my Introduction to Christian Education class and I kept asking questions of the professor that drove her insane. Like real application of what you're teaching to how I live my life. And there were all kinds of things I was asking.

I probably didn't have decent boundaries, so I was giving away little hints that I had been abused as a kid growing up and had different kinds of struggles. And so finally she said, you really need to go to this man I know named John who works in the library on campus and you need to ask him to pray for you. And I was like, she said you need to get prayer from one of two guys.

She told me the two guys and I realized one of them was my prof for the next quad. And I didn't want my prof to pray for me and possibly have that affect my grade. So I went to the guy in the library whose name was John.

He's passed away since. He had brain cancer and he's just a precious man. But when I met with him in the library, he's a total stranger, a little effeminate, kind of like a sort of a music snob, just real hoity-toity.

He is this incredible character that has so much personality. But my first impressions of him were, he's this quirky guy in the library who works in this little cubicle. He's important in the library somehow.

I never knew what his role was. And he's the worship leader at this nearby church, the Church of the Resurrection that I have never gone to. And so I said, my prof is this woman.

She told me to get prayer from you. And he goes, let's go to a private room here in the library and I can listen. And I got nervous as he was leading me off into the dark sort of bowels of the library.

Just like, this guy's creepy. He gives me the creeps. And we're sitting in that room, two chairs about as close as Jeremiah and I are to each other, and he leans in and says, so are you abused? And I was like, whoa, whoa, whoa, I don't know you.

And so he's like, well, what do you want me to pray for? And I was like, is this guy like the abuse prayer guy? Like everybody who comes to him is abused? Like, what's the deal? Is that why my prof sent me to this person? So I share a few things. And he's like, great, great, great, let's pray. And so then he puts his hand on me.

I've never had anybody pray for me with laying on of hands. Totally creeped out by it. Like, what is he doing? Had his hand on my back or my shoulder.

He starts seeing pictures of things. Like, I see you with a sword piercing your chest. Does that mean anything to you? And I'm like, eh, a sword? No, I don't see a sword.

And he's like, I really think this is the sword of the masculine. Your father used it to hurt you. I think you should really use your hand and grab the hilt of that sword and pull it out of your chest.

And I'm like, I don't know what to do. What do I do? He's like, here, let me help you. And he takes my hand.

He guides my hands on the hilt and he's pulling my hands out. And I'm like, this is ridiculous. It's like, now, wield the sword.

Wield it. And another point, he asks, is it okay if I anoint you with oil? I had no knowledge of oil being used in prayer. Didn't know James anointed the sick with oil, whatever.

So he pulls out his oil and it smells really strong of lavender, but I don't know anything about essential oils. So I'm like, this is drugged oil. This guy is gonna use this oil on me.

What's gonna happen to me? I don't wanna lose consciousness. And so he starts to anoint my head and press on my forehead a little bit. And I'm like, oh, this is one of those guys that wants me to get slain in the spirit.

Well, I'm not gonna do it. And I push back against his hand, just stubbornly pushing back, like I'm not going over, I'm not going over. And then he says amen.

And he's like, thanks for coming in. If you want more prayer, you can come back in another week or two. And I remember thinking if I do fall over, it's because that oil has something in it that knocks people out.

And so then when he finishes the prayer, I'm like, huh, is that all? Like, is that it? He's like, yeah. So then I left the room, realizing that I felt incredibly disappointed. And why would I feel disappointed? Why would I feel disappointed? Why would I be disappointed? I mean, it seems like nothing happened.

It seems like nothing happened, which means I wanted- I didn't live up to your expectations. I wanted something to happen, right? I wanted something to happen. I realized by my disappointment that I was hoping that something incredible would happen, that I would have an experience of some kind, but I didn't.

But then through the rest of that day, I could smell that oil on my forehead. And it made me feel this incredible sense of peace, like I had been in the presence of the Lord. And that was my moment of really being converted to the charismatic gifts and their use.

Even though I didn't have this dramatic- I mean, John was dramatic. He was llama drama. There was just so much drama for that guy.

I received a lot of prayer, probably one of my most significant healings I received because of John and his willingness to do what would be embarrassing to do. When he felt like the Lord told him to hug someone, he would hug them and that person would pop a cork and start to wail. Like that's just the gift that John had.

And so for me, even though it wasn't dramatic, it was a way in which I at that moment began to open to the possibility of the Lord moving in my life in a way that I'd never been open to before. And that's when I would describe my healing journey really beginning. So, yeah.

Is that how you got into Roscoe? I think so. Or it was a conspiracy of those three, the two men that she named and the professor herself. They all went to rest.

And I think they might have all conspired to get me to go because I just so desperately needed what they had to offer. And they were absolutely right. My first time at res was also creepy because I had never been to an Anglican church, but there was something about it that I kept coming back to.

It's funny for me to think of being in a leadership position in the church that ministered so powerfully to me. So. So as we transition to our time, our closing time of worship and prayer, my hope is to be able to have one of our leaders pray for each one of you guys just ever so briefly, even just to pray for the Holy Spirit to

minister to you specifically.

We'll do that. I told them 310. So this is an opportunity to really hit the restroom, grab whatever else you'd like to eat or drink, fill out the forms.

Do any of you know if you are decided about being received as members on November 6th during the service? You are? You would? Okay, yeah. That's what I think. Yeah, yeah.

I missed a meeting. We're not Nazis about this process. I have a logistical question about, is there a meeting tomorrow and next week? At the last two? There are two more.

I think so. We were supposed to have our retreat next weekend, but Revive, the diocesan gathering, bumped us a week early in our process. So, yeah.

Only two more, Nick. There's only two left, Nick. You're almost there, Nick.

You can cross that bridge, Nick. Yeah. I won't even be here on the 6th because my brother's getting married, so just me and the baby, Nick will be there.

Okay. Do you want to be received when you're there, or do you want to be received in absentia? Is a decision for you to make. Okay.

Okay. All right, break. Bathroom, bathroom.

Who do we pay for the food? Danny. Danny. Okay, well, he doesn't live in the church.

Oh. Well, he doesn't live in the church.

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