

# Prayer, the Holy Spirit and Revival #1

by Richard P. Belcher

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*The Holy Spirit is a real person, God, who convicts of sin, offers the new birth, indwells the believer, fills the believer with his rightful heritage, and brings revival and reformation.*

**Duration:** 50:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 16:7-8, John 16:13-14, John 16:33

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by using a hypothetical scenario to illustrate the idea of taking credit for God's work. He emphasizes that it is not the preacher's well-planned sermon that brings conviction of sin, but rather the Holy Spirit. The speaker criticizes man-centered revival services and religious programs, urging them to focus on God's work instead. The sermon then transitions to the topic of prayer, the Holy Spirit, and revival, highlighting the importance of these subjects and their interconnectedness.

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## Transcript

Open in your Bibles with me tonight to the 16th chapter of the Gospel of John, John chapter 16. I read it as a text, not as the text, because I will also be referring to other passages, many passages, as we move through the message tonight. But John chapter 16, as we begin reading at verse 7. Jesus is speaking, speaking to his disciples, and he said, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away.

For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

Of sin, because they believe not on me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you see me no more. Of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak.

And he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. Let's bow our heads and hearts in just a moment of prayer.

Our Father, we pray this evening that you would glorify your name through this message, in whatever way it pleases you, as we pray and as we speak, in the name of Jesus. Amen. I think it would be the understatement of the year, maybe even the understatement of the decade, and perhaps the understatement of the century, to say tonight that this is an age of doctrinal unconcern and confusion.

Men don't want to hear doctrine preached. They don't want to read doctrine. They don't want to talk doctrine.

Men are in a state of doctrinal unconcern, and as a result, they're filled with doctrinal confusion. Maybe you heard the story about the little old lady that went out of her church one Sunday morning, and she took the preacher's hand, and as she went out, she shook it, and she said, That was a good sermon. It didn't have no doctrine.

There's nothing in it. Well, I've heard some sermons like that, I think. And perhaps in my earlier days, I may have preached some sermons like that.

But in light of the doctrinal ignorance and the doctrinal unconcern, it's always a joy when I have an opportunity to speak on a doctrinal subject. My subject these two sessions is to deal with prayer and the Holy Spirit and revival. Now, if you look at that subject, you'll see that I've got several subjects.

I could speak a long time, preach many messages on the doctrine of prayer. I could say a lot about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There's a lot in the Bible about the doctrine of revival.

You could even spend a long time talking about how prayer relates to revival, and how the Holy Spirit relates to revival, and how prayer relates to the Holy Spirit. I welcome you tonight to Mission Impossible. I'm going to deal in two nights, by God's help, with the subject of prayer, revival, and the Holy Spirit.

Now, where do you start in a subject like this? Well, being a good Calvinist, I'm going to start with God. I'm going to begin with talking to you tonight about who is the Holy Spirit. I will tie in the Holy Spirit with the work of revival at the end of the message, but I want to set forth this evening several propositions from the Scripture about the person and the work of the Holy Spirit.

First of all, I want us to understand that the Bible sets forth the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person. Now, if I wanted to be a little more emphatic, I could say the Holy Spirit is a real person. Some people, as they talk about the Holy Spirit, you get the idea that he's some kind of a weird and eerie influence that just floats around out there in space, and comes down every once in a while to swoop over his church and bring revival.

Some kind of weird and eerie influence that comes and goes in the life of the church. The way some people pray, you'd think the Holy Spirit was some thing or some it. Have you ever heard someone pray, Lord, we need the Holy Spirit in our midst tonight.

Send it down upon us. That's a rather common prayer that you'll hear. But I would set before you tonight the fact that the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, a real person.

Now, when I say that, I mean that he has the attributes of personality. He has the characteristics of personality. In 1 Corinthians 2, verse 11, we're told the Holy Spirit has a mind.

The Spirit of God knows the things of God. The things of God are known, not to man, but to the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God knows the things of God, therefore he has a mind.

Again, I read in 1 Corinthians 12, verse 11, that the Holy Spirit has a will. I read in that verse that the Holy Spirit divides the gifts severally as he will. So the Holy Spirit has personal characteristics.

The Bible makes this clear. But did you notice also that in the passage I read in John 16, that the Holy Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns all the way through that passage? If you'll read it in the Greek, it's even more emphatic. Some of those personal pronouns consist of masculine, the masculine gender.

And so we read, and it's proper, even though the word spirit is neuter, it's proper to read, I will send him unto you. When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. In verse 13, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth.

For he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that he shall speak. And he shall show you things to come. He shall glorify me.

For he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. Personal pronouns used in reference to the Holy Spirit. But again, as I study the Bible, I find the Holy Spirit is described personal acts.

Acts that only a person can perform. He works. He teaches.

He searches. He speaks. He testifies.

He reproves. He glorifies Christ. He directs men's lives.

Now those are works that only a person can perform. But again, as I read the Bible, I find the Holy Spirit referred to with treatment that only a person can receive. He can be tempted.

He can be lied to. He can be resisted. He can be grieved.

Now if I were to take an action, chop up this pulpit. This pulpit wouldn't feel a thing. It's impersonal.

I might grieve Dr. Nettles and Brother Ernie Griesinger. And I surely would probably grieve the people on this campus for chopping up one of their pulpits. But this pulpit would feel nothing.

Only a person can be grieved. And so the Holy Spirit, because he receives treatment that only a person can receive, is a person. He is a real person.

The Bible gives him personal attributes. Speaks of him with personal pronouns. Attributes to him personal acts.

And attributes to him treatment that can only be received by a person. The Holy Spirit is a real person. Not some weird and eerie influence that floats in space.

Not an it, not a thing. But the Holy Spirit is a real person to us. Second, the Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is God.

He is the third person of the Godhead. And as you study the Bible, you'll find that this person that we've just mentioned is a divine person because he possesses all the attributes of God. Hebrews 9.14 says he is eternal.

As it declares that Jesus offered himself through the eternal spirit. Acts, or rather Psalms 139 verse 7 through 10 teaches us he is omnipresent. The psalmist said, whether shall I go from thy presence, whether shall I flee from thy spirit.

And then he begins to name the places that he would go to try to get away from the presence of the Spirit of God. But everywhere he goes, the Spirit of God follows. The Spirit of God is omnipresent.

The Spirit of God is omniscient. John chapter 16 where he read, Jesus said the Holy Spirit will teach you all things. The verse we referred to in 1 Corinthians, we read that he searches and knows the deep things of God.

So he's omniscient. He possesses the attributes of God. So the Holy Spirit is God.

And if I wanted to be emphatic, I could say the Holy Spirit is completely God. He does the work of God. He took part in creation.

Genesis chapter 1 verse 2. He inspired the scriptures. 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21. And we go on and on and on.

Sometimes I think when we talk about the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Godhead, we picture the Holy Spirit in this fashion. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And we come away or leave the impression with people that the Holy Spirit is less God than is God the Father or God the Son.

When I speak of the Holy Spirit, I think I would rather speak in this manner. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And though it is proper to speak of him as the third person of the Trinity, he is just as completely God as is God the Father.

And he is just as completely God with all the deity and essence and attributes of the Godhead as is God the Son. He is completely God. So we've seen the Holy Spirit is a real person.

The Holy Spirit is completely God. But what does he do? Well, this leads me to my third point. The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts of sin.

When he comes, Jesus said, he will reprove, which means to lay bare. He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. He will lay bare the hearts of men before the Holy God.

Let me say clearly tonight that it is not the preacher with his well-planned, homiletically structured sermon that brings conviction of sin upon men. And I'm not calling for unstructured sermons. I've heard too many of those.

I'm not calling for hodgepodge, shoot-from-the-hip type sermons where you get up and no study and just say whatever's on your heart. You better watch out. Those kind of sermons will get you in trouble.

You preach your pet peeve. No, no. It's not the preacher, though, with his well-planned sermon.

I teach preaching. But it's not the preacher with his well-planned, homiletically structured sermon, the conviction of sin. The Holy Spirit of God must work through that preacher and through his sermon.

And if the Spirit of God is not resting upon that preacher, then that sermon will fall on deaf ears. Not the soul winner going door-to-door knocking with his various training in how to present the plan of salvation,

the conviction of sin. And I'm not against evangelism.

I seek to practice evangelism. I preach evangelistic messages. And yet it's not the soul winner with his evangelism explosion training that convicts men of sin.

The Spirit of God is the one who convicts of sin, working through that soul winner, that Christian, whatever you wish to call him, that witness, as he goes forth to share the gospel. And if the Spirit of God does not speak, there will be no conviction of sin. Not the logical argumentation of the earnest Christian apologist that convicts of sin.

I believe in apologetics. But yet all of the irrational arguments can never convince anybody of their sin. Until the Spirit of God opens the heart, there will be no understanding of sin.

There will be no conviction of sin. There will be no breaking of the heart before God, which leads to salvation. I think one of the mistakes we've made in this day and age is to think that we can convince and convict men of sin.

And by our means and by our methods to bring people to a decision without the presence of the Spirit's work of conviction. I'm fearful that we've picked much of our fruit when it was green. Before the conviction of sin ever came by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We were led to believe that to be a successful preacher, you've got to have decisions. You've got to have fruit. And if you'll just apply the right methods and do the right thing, then people will supposedly make a decision for the Lord Jesus.

And how many people have made a decision, supposedly, quote-unquote, decision, for the Lord Jesus without the presence of the Holy Spirit's conviction? And if there is not conviction of sin, there will not be salvation. I don't care how much you may will it, how much you may desire it, how much you may pray for it, if the Spirit of God does not convict of sin, there will be no salvation. He is the one who convicts of sin.

The fourth. The Holy Spirit is the one who offers the new birth. John chapter 3 says, men must be born again.

They must be born of the Spirit. John chapter 1, verse 12 and 13 says, men must be born not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Spirit of God is the one who offers the new birth.

It is not joining a church that brings the new birth. Baptism does not bring the new birth. The Lord's Supper does not bring the new birth.

Walking down an aisle does not bring the new birth. You can walk down every aisle between here and California and still be unborn into the family of God. Shaking a preacher's hand does not bring the new birth.

Even going through the process or ritual of saying the printer's prayer does not bring the new birth. Good works, good deeds, good intentions, good feelings do not bring the new birth. Religious ritual does not bring the new birth.

Positivity, possibility, thinking, and positive thinking do not bring the new birth. Neither, quote unquote, receiving Jesus into my heart brings the new birth. And let me add one more.

Neither will receiving John Calvin into your heart bring the new birth. And I say that for some of you here tonight. Some folks act like when you become a Calvinist, that's what brings the new birth.

The Holy Spirit is the one who brings the new birth. He blows where he wills, as he wills. I can't produce the new birth in me.

I may want to, I may desire to, but there is no power within me at all to bring to pass the new birth. In the hearts of unbelievers. That's his work.

But fifth, the Holy Spirit is the one who indwells the believer. The hour of salvation. Isn't that marvelous? There are some things that just boggle my mind.

When I stand outside and think in the night hours, I look at the stars and the infinity of space, my mind just gets boggled. When I think of the infinity of eternity, my mind just swims. And then when I think that God, in all of his person, in all of his attributes, in all of his power, came to live in me at the hour of my salvage.

God, in all of his person, God in all of his power, in the person of the Holy Spirit, lives in me! When I was first pastoring, I used to wish somehow that I could walk with my new converts as they went to work and face the ridicule of the world. I came to find out that God was way ahead of me. He had placed his Holy Spirit in every one of those young converts.

And when they went out and faced the critics, I found out they gave better answers than I could have given them. Because of the teaching and direction of the Holy Spirit working through them. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the hour of his conversion.

The Holy Spirit, sick, seals the believer. Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 30.

I've been sealed to the day of redemption. God has placed upon me his stamp of ownership! Not just for today! Not just for tomorrow! There were no other verses in the Bible except this one. It would assure me of the perseverance of the saints.

Because God has placed upon me his stamp of ownership! Unto the day of redemption. He sealed the believer at the hour of his birth. But seventh, the Holy Spirit fills the believer.

There's a lot of controversy about this point, and I surely can't solve all the controversy in one point of a nine-point message. But let me say very clearly this. The Bible commands the believer to be filled with the Spirit.

Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5, verse 18. And the Bible, I think, also makes it clear that the Holy Spirit fills us at the hour of our conversion.

Now, don't roll your eyeballs if you disagree with that. Don't make a lousy face at me. But I'm convinced that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is the believer's rightful heritage based upon what Jesus Christ did at Calvary's cross.

The Holy Spirit is not my claim because I have prayed all night for the Holy Spirit to fill me. The Holy Spirit is not my claim because I've surrendered everything up or because I've turned loose or hung on for a period of time. The Holy Spirit is not my claim.

His fullness is not my claim because of anything I have done. But the fullness of the Holy Spirit comes exactly the same way every other blessing of salvation comes because of what Christ did at Calvary. And when I become identified with Jesus Christ in His death and His burial and His resurrection and in submission to His Lordship at that hour of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes and fills my heart with my rightful heritage.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit. And when I read Galatians chapter 5, verses 22 and 23, and I read there that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness, kindness, temperance, and faith. And when I see that in a new convert, I know that new convert can't produce that.

And when I see a new convert, one who has just been saved out of the dregs of sin, filled with love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Filled with love for a lost world. Filled with love for His fellow Christians.

Filled with joy. Sometimes when I go into a church to preach, I kind of play a little game. I look out over the congregation while I'm getting ready and watch the people as they come in.

Some folks just come in and sit with a scowl on their face. Other people come in radiating Christ. I usually say, those are the new converts.

The Spirit of God is moving in their heart. Faith. You go into a church and you want to get it moving, and you ask the people to take a great step of faith, and the old members just sit back and say, we never did it that way before.

They sit back and say, it can't be done. But the new convert is filled with faith and says, we'll trust God for it. I don't know how, but we're not going to worry because we've got a great God.

Who is it that gives that young convert love, joy, faith, meekness, kindness, temperance? The fullness of the Spirit of God within his heart. The Holy Spirit comes and fills us. The hour of our salvation.

But eight, the Holy Spirit is the agent of God in sanctification in the believer's life. Romans 15, 16 says that we are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. And remember Galatians chapter 3, verse 3, where Paul writes and says, oh, you foolish Galatians, having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh? Which is to say, don't you realize that the Spirit of God began this work of salvation in you? And the Spirit of God is the one who must continue it as he works the work of sanctification.

He is the one who works our sanctification tonight. But ninth, and I'm going to dwell on this one for a few moments. The Holy Spirit as the one who is the worker of our sanctification is also the one who brings revival and reformation and refreshing to the church.

I say that again. As the Holy Spirit is the agent of sanctification then part of his work in applying the work of Jesus Christ to us part of his work in working his sanctification in us is to be God's agent of revival and renewal and refreshing in the church. In the Old Testament there are verses where the men of God cry out for revival.

Psalms 85, 6, Wilt thou not revive us again that thy people may rejoice? Or perhaps that one in the back that is so familiar, O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make known in wrath remember mercy. The Hebrew word here means to spiritually quicken.

It has other meanings. It's used in the Old Testament to speak of a refreshing or a reviving from sickness, from discouragement, from faintness, and even from death. In these passages it speaks of a spiritual quickening, a spiritual reviving, a spiritual refreshing.

And the prayer of these saints of God makes it clear that God is the one who must do the reviving. They don't pray, God give me a method whereby we can revive the church. They pray, O God, You revive the church.

And since the Holy Spirit is the one who is working in our sanctification, since He is that person of the Godhead who convicts of sin and applies the work of Christ and works our sanctification, then the Holy Spirit is the one also who is to quicken His church and refresh His church and reform His church and revive His church. I say again, as before, it's not the preacher with his weepy stories that revives God's church. And please understand me, it's not the church with its all-night prayer meetings even that revives the church.

It's not the sparing of human emotions that revives the church. It's not the employment of cause and effect methodology that will revive the church. How often men today try to manipulate the Holy Spirit into bringing revival into their midst by human schemes.

How often men today seek to harness the Holy Spirit by their human methods. How often men seek to dictate to the Holy Spirit what He ought to do because of their human desires. How often men try to negotiate with the Holy Spirit by their human persuasion.

Or they try to mechanize the Holy Spirit by their human efforts. Or they try to move the Holy Spirit by their spiritual gimmicks. Or they try to bargain with the Holy Spirit to do their own bidding.

Do you remember the day when maybe you did that? I remember a day when I just thought if I can just find the right method. If I can just find the right method, there's got to be a method to bring revival to the church. If I can just find the right method, then everywhere I go, I can apply that method and revival will come to that church.

And I will be a successful revivalist and evangelist. I didn't realize it, but that was the bottom line. So that I could be a successful revival preacher and evangelist.

Just find the right method. And then when I couldn't find the right method, I thought, well, if I just work hard enough, God will see my hard work and God will send me. I found that didn't work.

And I thought, well, if I'll just pray long enough, God will send revival. That didn't work. And then I thought, well, if I'll just be holy enough, God will send revival.

Have you ever gone through that? Am I the only one? No. You cannot manipulate the Holy Spirit by your human schemes. You cannot harness the Holy Spirit.

I tried. Some of you have. You cannot dictate to the Holy Spirit.

You cannot negotiate with the Holy Spirit over revival. You cannot mechanize the Holy Spirit by some human effort. You cannot move the Holy Spirit by your spiritual gimmicks and clownery in the pulpit.

You cannot bargain with the Holy Spirit to do your bidding. You know why? Because the Holy Spirit of God is sovereign even when it comes to sending revival. I think sometimes men are willing to admit that God is

sovereign in all things, but not in revival.

Surely that depends upon us. I think sometimes we're willing to say, yes, God is sovereign in salvation, but not in revival. That's up to us.

Or God is sovereign in election and reprobation, but God's not sovereign in revival. Surely that's up to us. God's sovereign in conviction of sin and regeneration and in granting the gift of repentance and faith.

And God is sovereign in ruling history, but somehow God's not sovereign in revival. That's up to us. And if we can just find the right method, find the right man, if I can just become a certain kind of person, then God will send revival to my church, or God will send revival through me.

And how prone we are today to make much of man and means. I'm not against means. I'm not against man.

I agree with what Brother Ernie Friedman said. And I'll balance this thing up on Thursday night. I'm giving you the divine side tonight.

I give you the human responsibility side on Thursday night. But how prone we are to make much of man and means. Man and his means must get the job done.

And if man and his means don't work, then God can't do it, is our idea. But I remind you tonight, the means and the man are nothing to God. They're nothing They're only the instrument.

And the instrument, the human instrument that God uses to do His work is nothing. And God is everything. And when you and I come to the place where we think that we're something that God needs us and that we can do this or that and we can manipulate God or we can harness God or we can negotiate with God, for God can't do anything without us, I would remind you tonight that God is everything and the human instrument is nothing.

If God could use a feeble woman, if God could use a left-handed man, no insult to left-handed people, if God could use a shepherd boy, if God could use a cake of barley, a broken pitcher, isn't that enough to convince us that the instrument is nothing, that God is everything? Let me illustrate it a little more fully for you, in case you're not getting my point. If God could use Suppose, just suppose tonight, that you wrote a book entitled The Five Points of Calvin. Now, just suppose you wrote a book, The Five Points of Calvin, and in the first year's time, that book sold eight million copies, and it is heralded everywhere as a masterpiece, a classic, a bestseller, and through that eight million copies, it required dozens and dozens of editions.

Then somewhere along the line, all of the religious periodicals begin to call you for an interview, because you, you think, are the author of an eight million copy book. And so you are quite impressed with the various publications that have called, and you line them up one by one to come and talk with you. Now please, I speak a little bit tongue-in-cheek tonight.

All of these publications that I will mention, I take and I read and I appreciate them. But the first one that comes is Muddy Monthly. Muddy Monthly asks for an appointment with you.

But when the reporter comes, he doesn't want to talk about you, the author. He asks the most insignificant question, at least to you. Can I see the pen which wrote that book? You say, you mean the pen I used to

write? May I see the pen that wrote that book? Well, yes.

I wrote that book with my paper mate. My paper mate, Pan, wrote the book. And so the reporter from Muddy Monthly sits there and researches hours and hours asking you all about your paper mate, Pan, that wrote that book.

And the next issue of Muddy Monthly has an article not about you, but about your pen telling in what factory it was made and when it was sold and what store and how many parts of ink it had in it to begin with. When you started writing the book and how many parts of ink it had when you finished writing the book, you think to yourself, there's something wrong here. My pen's only the instrument and they're recognizing and honoring my pen.

Next you notice that Christianity Tomorrow honors your pen by running a picture of it in their periodical. And they named your pen the author of the year. And you say, my pen didn't write it, I wrote that book.

And the rod of God writes a scathing article against your pen because it wrote a book on the five points of Calvinism. Now you realize I speak with tongue in cheek. And then the funny mental journal refuses to advertise your book, but they write an article on your pen, analyzing the qualities of your pen, trying to somehow create or dig out a method whereby their readers can take a pen and write a book just like yours that will sell eight million copies.

They're interested in the final result, millions of copies. And then the seminary journals, they begin publishing articles that ask the question, could any other pen have written such a book? Could a Pilot pen have written such a book instead of the paper mace? Could a Gripso pen have been used? Could a Pentel pen have been used? How about a Schaeffer? And then all of the received John Calvin into your heart journals debated the subject of the freedom or the non-freedom of the pen as it wrote the book. Now wouldn't you somewhere along the line stand up and say, this is silly.

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Surely you must understand that pen didn't write the book. I wrote the book! Could this not be the feeling of God at times? He looks down here upon this earth. He sees human, sinful, incapable, powerless creatures such as you and I taking credit for his work through our lives.

There are times in my heart I think it probably is the same with you and I see revival services so man-centered, television programs, religious programs so man-centered. I just cry out in my heart, Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Where's God in all of this? When I watch one certain television program, it's not very often, and they show what they have raised millions of dollars to build. My heart cries out, Stop it! Stop it! When it all centers on a man, even a woman, my heart cries out, Where's God? Where's God in all of this? Do these people not realize that they're only the instruments? Do you and I not realize that in doing the work of God we are only the instruments? I speak to instruments tonight and I ask very simply tonight, What is your motive when you get into the pulpit? Do you realize that when you get into the pulpit that the Spirit of God must do the work if it's to be done? When you get into the pulpit do you preach and proclaim the Word of God for His glory? Or do you get into the pulpit that you might exalt yourself, that people might pat you on the back, tell you what a great preacher you are, that your church might grow? Lately when I'm getting ready to preach and I pray, Lord, may the Holy Spirit rest upon me and anoint me and grant me power.

The thought has been coming to my mind, What's your motive? What's your motive? And I have to search my heart and I have to reply, God, my motive is that you might be glorified. And then the thought comes to

my mind, What if it will glorify God for you to get in the pulpit and stumble all over yourself and make a fool out of yourself? And people would say, What a terrible preacher. What would happen if you get in the pulpit and just stumble and stutter and fall all over yourself and yet that would somehow glorify God? Would you pray, Lord, do whatever you wish to do in this pulpit tonight that would glorify you even if it's my stumbling, even if it's my failure, even if it's my weakness, so that men would see God and not the instrument.

I'm afraid that many, many, many, many spend their lives trying to manipulate God. Let me tell you, you cannot manipulate the Holy Spirit. He is a divine person.

He's completely God. He convicts of sin. He offers the new birth.

He indwells the believer at the hour of his salvation. He seals the believer at the hour of his salvation. He fills the believer at the hour of his salvation.

And he does all of this according to God's sovereign purpose from eternity past. He's also the agent of sanctification. And part of his work in sanctification is to send revival to his people.

And he does all of this, as tough as it is for us to admit it sometimes, he does all of this in accordance with his divine purpose and will from eternity past. Some people spend all their lives trying to manipulate the Holy Spirit to do their thing, their work, trying to harness him, dictate to him, negotiate with him, trying to mechanize him, so the Spirit of God will get moved by their spiritual gimmicks. You cannot, you cannot manipulate, you cannot control the Holy Spirit.

You can only come to the end of yourself from the flatness of your faith. Cry out, O Spirit of God, thou art sovereign. May I not try to manipulate or control you, but Spirit of God, bring my heart and mind in union with your purpose and your will and accomplish your will through me, not Holy Spirit, you accomplish my will.

Whatever it is, even if it's apparent failure in the eyes of man, if it will glorify God, Spirit of God, accomplish your work, will we recognize you as sovereign? Even if you say that doesn't leave any room for prayer, you wait until Thursday night, because there's always the balance, human responsibility. And we'll balance it up, the Lord willing, Thursday night. Let's pray.

Precious Holy Spirit, forgive us for our rebellion, for our manipulative ways and means, for our seeking to harness you. Instead of bowing to you, we want you to bow to us. Instead of listening to your voice, we want to dictate to you, oh, what worms we are, to think that we could negotiate with you, oh Holy Spirit, that we could somehow mechanize you because of our hard work or our long prayers, to think that we could accomplish your work by human gimmicks.

Oh God, give us that assurance of faith whereby we might know that you are at work in this world, that you're calling out a people, and you're applying the work of the Son to that people. Those people who were called from the foundation of the world, elected according to the divine sovereignty of our God. Give us that assurance.

You are calling out a people. You are at work in your church. You're at work not to perform our will.

God, help us to be finished with our desires, our will for you, blessed Holy Spirit. But may we tonight bow to whatever you, Holy Spirit, want to do in our lives, in our church, through us. Even if it means loss of

reputation, even if it means financial suffering, may we be bowing to our sovereign Holy Spirit of God who is working the will and purpose of the Father.

May we, Father, take our place as instruments in the hands of your Holy Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/2/SID2970.mp3>

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