

# Contention, Contending, & Worldliness

by Shane Idleman

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of contending for the faith, seeking godly counsel, and being in the world but not of it, while avoiding being contentious and worldly.*

**Duration:** 47:34

**Scripture:** Acts 10:44

**Topics:** "Contention vs. Contending", "Engaging with the World"

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## Description

Shane Idleman discusses the themes of contention, contending, and worldliness in the context of Acts chapter 10, where Peter shares the gospel with Cornelius, a Gentile. He emphasizes the difference between being contentious and contending for the faith, highlighting the importance of a loving and humble approach when addressing issues within the church. Idleman encourages believers to be discerning in their interactions with the world, advocating for a balance between engaging with sinners and maintaining one's faith. He stresses the necessity of prayer, godly counsel, and the pursuit of love as foundational to effective ministry and spiritual growth.

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## Transcript

Acts chapter 10. We finished last week, but let me just get us up to speed here. Cornelius was a God-fearing man who was fasting, and God sent Peter to him to present the gospel to him, to present the good news.

So Cornelius feared God, but he didn't know about Jesus Christ. So Peter was sent to him, and in verse 44 of chapter 10, it said, while Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who heard the word and they were baptized. Now it's almost as if he's preaching the gospel at their house, he's laying out the plan of salvation, who Jesus was, and as he's speaking, the Holy Spirit descends upon them and overshadows them and comes upon them in a powerful way as he's presenting the gospel.

So it's not like a person has to get through the whole presentation. I've had this happen many times. You know, you think 10 minutes or 15 minutes or 20 minutes.

I mean, they were ready at five minutes into it. They were ready to receive as soon as their heart opened up. There wasn't a special prayer prayed.

As soon as their heart was opened up to the things that God wants to do in their life, the Holy Spirit descended upon them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. So now we get to verse 11. The title of the message is biblical thoughts on contention, contending, and worldliness.

I'm trying to tie all that into this. So now we fast forward to chapter 11. Now the Apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had received the Word of God.

So the Jews just heard that the Gentiles had received the Word of God, and when Peter came to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, mainly meaning those Jews contended with Peter. Now contention is different from contending. They contended with him.

They asked him, why are you going into the house of Gentiles? Why are you doing that? You went in into uncircumcised men, and you ate with them. So for a Jew, a true follower of Yahweh, to go into a Gentile's house and fellowship with them, and because really more so back then than now, but fellowship and food were a tight-knit group. You didn't fellowship and break bread with someone who wasn't your friend and didn't share the same things.

So they're challenging him, Peter why did you do that? But let me stop here for a minute on the difference between contentious and contending, because some people use this scripture to berate others and to beat people up and to be contentious. See, they were questioning Peter. Well, good contention, I'm going to go back and forth on the words here.

These Jews who were believers were contending for the faith. They were curious, why did you do this? And also, it's a good time to point this out, in a healthy church sparks will fly a little bit. See, sometimes we want to walk around, no sparks, nothing, just let us do whatever we want, but iron sharpens iron.

So it's okay to ask questions, why are we doing these things? Why did this happen? Don't you see this? And one of the areas sometimes I work with, and we talk with Brandt, is on the worship songs, and the lyrics that people, you know, sometimes they come out with, and looking at the lyrics, and well, we might not want to say that theologically, and iron is sharpening iron, people come to leadership, or leadership goes to people, and we contend, and that's healthy if the attitude is right. That's the difference maker. If a loving, spirit-filled believer wants to offer advice, I go like this, please tell me, but if I have a contentious, angry, nasty person, all they want to do is be critical, I do this, and you have to be able to spot those who truly, because those who are truly concerned for you, and want the best for the church, you have to listen to their advice, because in the multitude of counsel, there's wisdom, there's safety there.

So we have to be careful in this area of contending, and being contentious. Here's a couple questions, were these people being contentious, and critical, or were they simply contending for the faith? Ask yourself this question, do you want to guard others, or do you want to expose them? If we just go around wanting to expose others, have you seen, have you heard, and we want to expose everything, and point out their flaws, and go around sin-sniffing, right? We can be contentious, because that's a critical, contentious heart. Now, if you are truly wanting to guard others, and not expose them, love and humility is guiding your decision more often than this person, because the New Testament encourages us, it actually, here's, this is, you can test this out on your own, go through the New Testament, it actually encourages us to err on the side of grace.

If you're going to err, you err on the side of grace, not on the side of judgment. Now, for all those type A people in the room, that like to contend for the faith, I know it's kind of, what about this, and what about

this, and what about that, what about, yes, I didn't say that we, we, we guard, and we actually sweep sin under the doormat, let me lift it, hurry, quick, get under there, hide it, we're not talking about hiding sin, and we're not talking about, well, don't, you know, just don't ever, but, but the immediate, the immediate reaction in your heart, is it to pound that gavel, and cast a judgment, or is it to protect, and say, you know what, let me hear the other side, I don't want to do that, I don't want to hurt this person, and, and it's, it's really the, the heart, because it's, it's good to expose things when they need to be exposed, but the heart behind it has to be right, that's the difference, and I've seen, this is one of the issues with Bible believing, conservative churches that, that want to deal with sin, that want to be true to God's Word, one of our flaws, if you will, is not having the right heart, because we want to point out sin so much, that sometimes we can hurt the other person. Now, this is coming from somebody who likes to point out sin, and likes to preach on it, and likes to warn people, but I also want to come up, and be gracious, you hit my car, and you left, so wonderful, that was my first response, was not to go find them, and be nice, was it? Well, you don't know, but I'm telling you, it wasn't.

Ten minutes before the baseball game is gonna start, and my wife tells me, and I'm like, oh, that's wonderful, they hit it, and ran, so I'm thinking, okay, who was this, we're gonna put out Facebook, and then God's kind of, come on Shane, this, I could be using this for a different reason, and it's working in my heart, so my, my first response was not to guard them, it was to expose them, get them on Facebook, we know the license plate number, let's go get them, but it's it's God working in the heart, so just think about that, do we want to guard others, or expose them, so when sin comes to the, to the church, or when you hear about this person's doing this, and doing this, are you like, yeah, let's go get them right now, you grab the pitchfork, and I'll grab the, the, the, whatever, you

know, pitchfork, and a, and a, and a sword, and we'll go get them, or as a heart of, oh man, this is sad, how can we come alongside, and help them, but eventually sin comes out, eventually you have to talk about things, so it's really an issue of the heart, number two, these are convicting, because I was convicted, are you quick to find faults, and are you looking for them, see we're talking, there's not a lot of AMN's at this service, it's just like stone-cold, oh no, he's going down my, he's calling me out on this one, well, yes and no, it's good to call these types of people out, I've been one, and I can go in this side real quick, so calling myself out, because what this does, when I'm called out in certain areas, it should soften my heart, and I should say, God, I don't want to be

that way, God help me in this area, that's repentant, and then change can take place, but if all we're doing is this, and we're not receiving this loving rebuke, then change doesn't take place, so are we quick to find faults, are we looking for faults, have you ever met those people, that's all they do, is they, yeah, but this, and this, and this, and I mean, there's people who can tear churches apart, I get emails from them, and I can tell, I can go into a church, and I can tear it up, somehow, if you're going there to find faults, so we, so when we're talking about being contentious, a critical heart, or contending for the faith, there is a big difference, then the third question on this, do you only see the negative, do you only see the negative, and it's okay to question, if you're

truly open to hear the answer, these people, I believe we're truly open to hear the answer from Peter, so one who constantly questions, is often contentious, that's what the whole point I was getting at, if we're constantly questioning this, and we're constantly questioning that, we have to look at our heart, are we contentious, is there something, now you can go from humble, and broken, to being contentious, it's a process sometimes, you get, you get, kind of get bitter, you get upset, or you're tired, I'm tired of this person pushing me around, I'm tired of this, and we develop a critical heart, so here's, here's that first

point, either pray for boldness, if you're not contending for the faith, or pray for balance, if you're contending too much, and you've developed a critical heart,

Lord help me in this area, that's the whole point of bringing these things out, is for God to help us, so that's the contention aspect, and then we see here, I don't want to, I don't want to rush ahead, because I think there's a lot here, what about worldliness, how do we reach sinners, if we always avoid them, Peter was in the world, but not of the world, now this could be a whole sermon, I'll just tell you up front, but the point was, they said, why did you go into their house, to minister to them, or to eat with them, why did you, that's not, you're not supposed to be doing that, you shouldn't identify with that group, now this is an interesting topic, especially now, with the media, Facebook, YouTube, conferences, who do we align ourselves with, and who don't we, we have to be

careful, who we say, share the stage with, and who don't we, who do we go to events with, and who, it's, so it's a very interesting concept, I wish I had time to fully unpack it, but I think there's some principles that can help, and I think we have to understand that God works in somebody's heart, maybe a little different than he's working in your heart, and there are gray areas, for example, I remember, I think it was John MacArthur, who passed up an opportunity to speak at the large Mormon tabernacle at their headquarters, but Ravi Zacharias took the opportunity to speak about the true Christ, at their conference, and I had to process that one for a while, oh I see his side, I see, man, I see John MacArthur's side, because he would, he's like, oh see, he's validating it, he's

validating, he sees, is he becoming a Mormon, and I can't identify, I can't do that, and then you see this other side, like, you can walk in, thousands upon thousands of people will hear about the real gospel, from an apologist, one of the best, wow, and you could, boy, Facebook, I Facebook, but the media lit up, and this thing, so you have to be careful, because God does work differently with different people, and how involved do you get?

How involved in the world do you get to minister to people? You know, how, it's an interesting thing, being in the world and not of it, but I'm gonna share some points that I hope help you. Are you the light, or is the light fading? So when you go to an event, or when you get involved in the life of a person who doesn't know Christ, are you the light, or is the light fading? In other words, are you in that setting, and you're the light, you're calling the shots, people are looking to you, or is your light fading, and you're just being drawn into what they're doing?

And put a different way, do you persuade them, or do they persuade you? Basically, who is the influencer? Who is the influencer? For example, it'd probably not be a good idea for me to go to Lake Havasu with a group of my high school buddies, where there's just beer all weekend long. It's just not, probably, probably not gonna want to listen to Shane right then, are they? But if that same person calls me on Sunday, hungover and sick, and he's direction for his life, let me meet you down where you live, I'll drive there.

See, now you're on my turf, now you're in my ballpark, now I can influence you, and I'm not being influenced. So that's how you're in the world of it. There are some places I believe Christians should avoid.

It's hard to, well Jesus was among sinners, absolutely, we should be too, but he also wasn't in the brothel. He wasn't, you want me to get a little bit more technical here? He wasn't engaging, he wasn't in those places that all this stuff was taking place. He was selective, he was the light, he was the influence.

He ate with them, he talked with them. So that's one way to be in it, not of it. Are you being conformed into the image of Christ, or are you being conformed into the world's image? Now a lot of this might not apply to you, but it applies big time to young adults, because this is what they're struggling with.

As they're being the influence in their college campuses, or around their friends, are they being conformed into the image of Christ? They're holding on to their faith, they're leading people to the Lord, they struggle, they fall, understand? But they're being strengthened, or are they being conformed into the image of the world? And that light is fading, and they're being drawn away. Then they are of the world, and the world has infected them. Are you being selective, cautious, and using wisdom? Selective, cautious, and using wisdom.

Seek godly counsel. I wish I could do a sermon just on this. Here's a little note about godly counsel.

I have rarely seen a person go wrong by seeking godly counsel and waiting on God. Now ask the right people, of course, but the right people can say, you know, from my perspective, knowing you, knowing your situation, you get godly counsel to look at you, because they don't look at you biasly, like we look at ourselves, right? We usually say, Lord, here's what I'm doing, bless my plans. And our flesh gets in there, I want this, I think this would make me look better, I think this would bring in more money, I think this thing, and we're, because of sin, because of sin, we don't have always pure motives.

We don't see clearly, we see through it mere dimly, Paul even said right now. So others can come alongside and say, I don't think that's healthy, I don't see you doing that, I don't think that's a good idea. And if you've got three or four strong Christians offering something and you go against that, I have seen nine times out of ten where that didn't work out for the person.

Because in the multitude of their counsel, there are safety. Now, of course, you have to be careful who you ask, right? You don't want to ask the lady at the nail salon who just got back from Lake Havasu and Laughlin, and what do you, you should leave that man, you should get rid of him, you should walk out today. No, that's the wrong counsel, that's not godly counsel, that's worldly counsel, and they will tell you different things.

I see I'm very careful who I go to for counsel. I'm very careful because I know, I know there's, there's, there's, there's, there's, there's flesh in there, right? A sad fact, I'll just tell you, I don't know if I should, if it's a bad idea that I won't do it at 11 a.m., but when we were thinking of stopping the 11th of the Saturday night service, right, I wasn't probably going to go ask pastors in Lancaster what I should do. Yes, stop it, get Shane out of Dodge, right? Get him out, yes, stop it, stop it for sure, stop it, stop it, right? Because ulterior motives.

There is competition in churches, let's just be honest, we have to fight that, just like anyone else, there's competition in business, everybody's going to that church, why is nobody going to mine? And you have to fight that because it's a work of the flesh. And then when you get to, I surrender all before the message, you give it all to God and let him, let him figure out the results. That's one of the hardest parts, the hardest time sometimes for many pastors is the Sunday after Easter, because attendance goes, boom, and they rate it by attendance.

But I learned a long time ago, if you've ever heard the story, when God dropped the church down to 50 some people, and I went home going, Lord, I don't know what to do, I'm just going to preach, and if you're 50 or 500, or you bring 5,000, it doesn't matter, I've got to do what you called me to do. But he used that

time to prune away things, because when we start measuring it by man's standard, we can run into trouble. So again, be careful who you ask, I was careful on who I asked in regard to that decision, and we actually left it up to leadership team, a big leadership team seeking godly counsel, brought in children's ministry and worship and ushering and deacons and elders.

What do you guys think? What are you sensing? What do you, what do you, and you seek that counsel, God, it's a wonderful way to get direction. Number five, is everything you do bathed in prayer, and are you waiting on God? Now before this is in one ear and out the next, think about this. There's two key words here, bathed in prayer.

This isn't driving to work, oh Lord help that business decision, I'm thinking I'm doing the right thing, thanks. That's, that's not bathed in, bathed in prayer, you know what bathes, right? Bath. Your prayer, it's on a daily basis, Lord I'm needing direction here, God show me, bring insight, bring insight God, and I'm waiting on you, I'm not gonna rush, I'm waiting on you, I'm waiting on you.

You ever met those people like everything they touch turns to gold? Have you ever met those people, Christians? Well guess what, here's a little secret probably, they're praying for weeks or months, and they're waiting on God, and they're waiting, and they're waiting, so when God touches it, it's confirmation, they already know they're not moving ahead of God, so it's not them touching everything they touch it works out, it's they're waiting on God, praying, and moving patiently, and slowly, God you've got to show me, I'm not gonna move ahead until you show me. Do you think God says, well you really blew it there, I wish you would have just rushed ahead, and got ahead of me. He's looking for the heart, he's looking for the prayer that says, God I'm going to wait on you.

I don't know what that looks like, and if you haven't heard that song from Fireproof, while I'm waiting, go on YouTube, go on YouTube and listen to that song, while I'm waiting. I wish every person going through marriage problems could listen to that song, while I'm waiting God, I will serve you, while I'm waiting, I will wait upon you, I'm not gonna argue, I'm not gonna bicker, I'm not gonna bait, I'm not gonna go to the nightclub, and try to find plan B. I'm gonna wait on you God, while I'm waiting, you will move, while I'm waiting, you will see me through, while I'm waiting, you will change the heart of my spouse, while I'm waiting God. It's powerful, you can't go wrong waiting on God, and bathing it in prayer.

That's why I mentioned microwave Christianity, we've got this form of microwave Christianity, God you've got four minutes this morning, and you better move, and if you don't move by Monday afternoon, I'm on it myself. Who told us that God was in a hurry? You know what happens is the world's mindset, right? We get back to the, and I don't know if you've realized it or not, but with the television, with media, you, I just remember, I even remember it, my grandparents, I don't know now, 40 years ago, I mean sitting on the back porch making ice cream with those things, and nobody's in a hurry, and the meat, but now you got, you know, two-minute commercials and, or one minute, or 30, and you got to draw them in, our attention span, our attention span. See Shane, things are just attention, changing our attention span.

No, it's because the influence of the world. Gotta go quick, gotta go quick, don't like your car after 20,000 miles, go get a new one. Don't like In-N-Out Burger, go to Carl's Jr., they'll be, if your meal's not ready in three minutes, and now the unicorn drinks at Starbucks, don't get me started on that.

All I had to see was 80 grams of sugar, 4 grams to a teaspoon, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 teaspoons. I just, I read back to this because that'll be a whole sermon on, on what we're putting in our bodies is not a good thing, and I'm more, I'm more convicted of that. Every hospital

home I go to, every, a lot of the sickness I see, a lot of that is self-created.

We are not taking care of this incredible gift that God has given us. I want you to try this, go watch NASCAR, and you go tell one of the drivers, you've got this cheap fuel, but you'll give them to him for a good price. Who's going to put that in their car? I'll tell you, no one, no one.

What's the difference? What's the difference between what we put in here? We're too tired, we're too lazy, we're too lethargic, we can't do anything for God, and everything has to fit our schedule, and it's this lazy mentality that I can fall into too. Preaching to myself, let me come sit down there, I'll just look up here at myself preaching. I can fall into that too, folks, and it lines up the, what does this have to do with the world? I'm glad you asked, because it's the world's influence.

Think about this, many times nothing, nothing that they're advertising is good for you. Nothing. A car you can't afford, a house you sure can't afford, food you shouldn't be eating, and now all these billboards around town, big oops on it.

Have you seen it? Oops, with the wedding ring, oops, I made a mistake, quick divorce, call this number. So we see oops, we see this, we see this, it's no wonder we look like the world, we have no power of the Holy Spirit. So again, don't say, Lord, here's what I'm going to do, please bless it, because that rarely works.

Now you can say, Lord, I've been praying about this, I think you're calling me to do this, I've got to take a step here shortly, court date, education, schooling, you've got to make a decision at some point, then that's stepping out in faith. Saying, God, you know my situation, you know I have to make a decision. God, please bless this, please show me, and that's different.

But you know those people here, I'm making my plans and God, you bless it. Doesn't matter what I'm doing, God, you bless it. Also, in regard to in the world but not of it, is there conviction? Is there conviction in a lack of peace about what you're doing? Is there conviction in a lack of peace about what you're doing? Then that's often God's way of getting us out of the situation, folks.

A believer cannot stay in a wrong, whatever you call it, situation, or a wrong event, or a wrong thing without conviction and having peace. They won't have those. A friend of mine, actually I told you, he's got a large church in Bakersfield, and we've been going back and forth, they actually send a team to minister inside of a pornography conference in LA.

And so I'm trying to get a hold of him, just like, how does that work? Like, is it hopefully just women? I mean, and they're called of God to do that because that's not a good environment for most people to go into and bring the gospel. But is it an environment you never touch? I don't know about that. Sometimes in the sex slave industry, if you heard some of the testimonies and how you have to get those women out, I think God calls people to certain areas, but you have to be ready.

You have to know what he's called you to do. For example, he has not called me to do that. I know that.

But other people say, how do you speak? And there's atheists there, there's a satanic group, there's all, how do you do? I couldn't, I would be, no, he's called me to do that. But he hasn't called me to do what you, see, he gives us different giftings. Chapter 12 of 1st Corinthians.

Same spirit, but different gifts. So is there conviction? Let's talk about this for a minute. Is there conviction that you shouldn't be doing it and a lack of peace, but we do it anyway? Here's what most people say, but it pays the bills, brother.

But it pays the bills. What you shouldn't be doing, yeah, but it pays the bills. I know people in jobs that they shouldn't be in.

Working in places they should not be. Compromising and all these, but it pays the bills. So so that goes above God's will.

Yes, it's risky to step out in things. I mean, when I remember Morgan, I remember, actually it's my daughter's birthday today, so tell Aubrey happy birthday when you see her. But yeah, it was probably 12 years ago, we had this conversation where she was working, I was working, and for her to stop working, because I believe, you know, stop working and with the home, and it wasn't gonna happen.

It was just impossible with the bill. You look at the bills, we just bought a house in Lancaster over by the prison. Great location, right? And and it's just not gonna work.

We said that for a week, it's not gonna work. It's impossible to do it. Well, can her mom watch it? Well, we decided, well, you know what, let's just pray.

God, we think this is the heart of God. We think this is obviously what's best, and we're stepping out in faith. Lord, we're gonna trust you in this.

And after that, no problem at all. To me, I could go back in a lot of different things. What he did within construction, and I was allowed to buy my own heavy equipment.

Construction was booming, and I was busier than I'd ever imagined to be. But God honoring those types of things. Now, we haven't made perfect decisions all the way through.

I don't want people to be left with that impression, because pastor's not supposed to be the hero of every story, right? I never do anything wrong. It's the opposite. I've learned many times, and I want to share those things with you.

So be careful if it's just about paying the bills. I've seen people trapped in the wrong job, or in the wrong situation for years, sometimes their whole life, because it's about the money, or it's about this, and not what God's Word says. And it's often not until we trust God's Word that he begins to move.

Because we want it without faith, don't we? Oh, I just, my aunt in Nebraska died. Nebraska. My aunt in Nebraska died.

Didn't know I had an aunt. She left me \$400,000. Oh, thank you.

Now I can make the right decision. That's not faith. That's not, that has nothing to do with faith.

That's just a good open door, right? Or a good, that's a God may be open. Faith is saying, Lord, your Word says this. I need to start obeying your Word.

Regardless of this, I'm going to honor you. I'm gonna have faith, and I'm gonna trust you. Your Word says, will I not open up heaven for you? Will I not show you great things if you trust me? So I'm gonna trust you.

Yes, it might be difficult for a day, or a week, or a month, but you're living with that peace, that you know you made the right decision. So again, it has to do with in the world, not of the world. Finally, is there fruit? And yes, I turned an expositional sermon to a topical sermon, in case you're wondering.

Is there fruit? Is there fruit in what you're doing in the world, but not of the world? If you're involved in the things of the world, like most of us are, right? I'm coaching baseball, and many of those people are not Christians. And it's a very difficult environment. I hope I'm being the light.

I'm hoping I'm not being influenced. And is there fruit? Yes, we see fruit, hopefully, at some point, you know. And so, is there fruit in what you're doing? Is there fruit? Or are we just using that as an excuse? But Shane, but Shane, I'm witnessing to them.

I've had, I've known pastors my age that will sit in yard house, and have a couple pints of Yale and ale beer, and tell me they're witnessing to the waitress. She went to church yet? No, but I'm trying. It's not gonna happen.

It's not gonna happen, folks. You see, the message and the messenger go together. The message of the gospel and the messenger have to be together.

What would you guys think if I went and got a big Mickey Mouse sticker, and put, fill this whole thing with a Mickey Mouse sticker? And then Barney next to it? And then what's all the stuff now? Frozen next to it? Look, isn't this cool? The kids can relate now. You'd be going, what is wrong with Shane? The messenger and the message. See, they go together.

I've seen the way that they have, the dangers of pornography are terrible, and we all know that. But sometimes the way they promote these conferences, I can't go into details. I did in one of my books.

I can't tell you what they do, but it's ridiculous how they promote these things. Trying to reach the world, and we'll leave it at that. Ask me, I'll tell you afterwards.

But the message and the messenger go together. The messenger and the message go together. They're married.

So when you're, are you affecting the world, or is the world infecting you? So that was all tied into Peter. He went in what we would call, you can't go into that place. Don't do that as a Christian.

He walked into that place, and God moved in a powerful way. So here's the shift we see. Let's, well let's shift it for a minute.

Are you teachable? Were these people teachable? So when Peter said this, did they get contentious and angry, and try to put him down? Or were they teachable? Because Proverbs says, always hear both sides. That might be, that might be something for somebody this morning. That has helped me more times than I can tell you.

You hear this side right, and you're like, I'm gonna go get him. And you hear this side, and you're like, what? Wait a minute here. What happened? Because the truth is often in the middle.

Because we tell things from our perspective. Right? We'll build this up, but we'll leave this out. We'll say this, but not that.

And Proverbs encouraged us to go to both sides. So let's see how these men reacted. Verse 14, I'm sorry verse 4 in chapter 11.

Now we see contending. They're contending for the faith. But Peter explained the dream to them.

The dream he had of God showing him basically that it's not wrong to go with these Gentiles. And as Peter began to speak, as I began to speak, Peter's talking, the Holy Spirit fell upon them as upon us at the beginning. Then I remember the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Well it's a controversial chapter, isn't it? Baptizing the Holy Spirit. By the way, they spoke in tongues. Uh-oh.

Here we go, right? I mean, the book of Acts is, the book of Acts is recording church history. Then I remember the word of Lord, John will baptize you with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. What was happening is John the Baptist was baptizing people into the Jordan River.

Baptism into repentance. Baptism into repentance. Get your life right with God.

Baptizing into repentance. But Jesus said, when I'm gone, the Holy Spirit's going to come, and he's going to baptize you with fire. That's the difference.

People in the Old Testament, they're being baptized, okay, I come out, I'm right with God because I baptized, no big deal. But when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were radically changed. They became new people, basically.

Dead to the things of God, now alive to the things of God. If therefore God gave them the same gift as he gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God. So Peter's preaching the gospel, the Holy Spirit falls upon this family, Cornelius' whole house, the Holy Spirit falls.

It's probably like, have you ever tried to witness even to young adults? They're like, whatever, you know, or they're listening, and people, you can tell when they're bored, right? They're not really paying attention. Well, Peter's, who knows, if they're standing, they're sitting, the Holy Spirit comes upon them, and they are just hit with the awesomeness of God. They are baptized in the Holy Spirit, they are anointed, there's anointing there, and this whole family's changed.

As a result, don't get mad at me, the Bible says, I'm just reading the Bible, it says they spoke in tongues. That's what the Bible says. See, the problem with people who don't believe that is, you got to go and cut out chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians, while you're at it, cut out chapter 13 on love, and while you're at it, because he's using love to say, they're talking about the gifts, and then chapter 14, he's talking about more of this.

Go cut out all three of those chapters. We just don't see that. So when they heard these things, they became silent.

In other words, the Jews heard Peter talking about Cornelius' family receiving the Holy Spirit, and they were all, they all began to glorify God. So these people didn't say, nope, that didn't happen, because here's what a critical person will do, Peter, I don't care what happened, that's not right. You shouldn't have went in their house.

I don't care if the Holy Spirit fell upon them, and they were speaking in tongues and preaching. I don't care. You shouldn't have done that.

You know who that reminds me of? The Pharisees. Jesus, you shouldn't have healed on Sunday. Why'd you heal that man on Sunday? So it showed me their hearts were like, hey, we're contending, why did you go into the house of unbelievers? Oh, God fell upon them and saved them? Surely, surely we cannot cast the first stone and be judgmental.

That's what they said, and they glorified God, saying, then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life. It wasn't just for the Jews. So again, don't rush to judgment.

Hear both sides. Now this is interesting too, the fruit was unmistakable. See, it wasn't, he was, Peter was preaching to Cornelius, and Cornelius believed, right? And Peter says, so you believe? And Cornelius is like, yeah, I believe.

Really? Yeah, I guess so, I'll believe it. I mean, okay, well, how do you know, right? I mean, they take their word for it, but he saw the fruit of it. A whole family, I don't know if you've experienced this before, and I of course want to be careful, because I'm not into experience-oriented things, but I'm also know that I want to experience God.

And if you've ever seen the Holy Spirit fall upon a place, it is absolutely amazing. It's a life-changer. I've spoke about it before, a couple times that come to mind.

Hope Chapel happened many years, three years ago, and it's hard to even explain. I was speaking at a men's conference, and the worship was just, it's like the air feels thick. I couldn't even go up and preach.

The guy's, you know, he's like, hey brother, you know, you got, and I'm just there weeping in my chair, and the guys next to me began weeping, and the guys, 300 guys in a men's conference, and they're on their knees, and they're weeping, and they're crying out to God, and you just can't, well, oh, that's emotionalism, you know, hogwash. It's because you never experienced it. That's why you don't like it.

And people say, oh, but that, when God actually does that, it's amazing. It's not weird, and it's not out there. It's God breaking His people.

God, wilt thou not revive us again, that we may rejoice in you? And that's my prayer. It doesn't happen often. I don't know why.

You can't turn on the switch, and turn on that switch. I don't know why. I just know that even, and I can take you to revivals in the 1700s, to the Welsh revivals, the father Methodist fathers of Wales.

They write biographies on the 1700s. Men like Griffin Jones, Hal Davis, Daniel Rowlands, all these men that D. Martin Lloyd Jones talks about. Many good guys I talk about.

A great American awakening in America in 1906, and off the islands of Scotland, and all these things. God visits it in a powerful way, exactly what we're reading to hear, reading today, and that's why it's hard for us, is because many people read that, and they go, I don't know what that's talking about. I don't know.

So maybe it doesn't happen anymore. That's how we get out of it, right? That doesn't happen anymore. But I believe it can happen.

I believe God is waiting for an empty, not an empty altar, but an altar of sacrifice. Ourselves, living sacrifices. But the fruit was unmistakable.

The Holy Spirit came down upon them, and the fruit was unmistakable. Well, let's revisit some fruit. Do you have this fruit? And yes, I talk about this a lot, and I probably will until the day I die, so if you don't like it, fire me.

I love worship. I want more of God. I'm not in a hurry.

The Bible comes alive. I'm more conscious of sin. Did you know that? The more I feel the Spirit, the more conscious I am of sin.

Even the little things. I shouldn't have pulled out in front of that person. I shouldn't.

Lord, you're more conscious of sin. However, I desire God's grace more. God, thank you for your grace.

So you're close to sin and seeing it, but you're close to grace and mercy. You're filled with the Spirit of God. I want to restore what I've broken.

Here's a true sign of somebody filled with the Spirit who is truly repentant. They want to fix what they broke. They want to seek forgiveness.

They want to repair any damage that I have done. I want to repair that. That's why when you see a man who is truly broken and repentant, he will come home weeping and say, I want to fix what I have broken.

I want to rebuild my life with the children. I want to help. I want to fix it because God is working in my heart.

If you don't want to fix anything and you're just doing things to pacify, the Holy Spirit's not working in your heart. Something else is. That's fruit.

That's genuine fruit. While we're on this topic, why does the Holy Spirit get a bad reputation? Have you ever thought about this? Well, maybe before I was younger. Some of you remember the 1940s, 1950s.

Would it be okay to say I'm throwing a gay party? What did gay mean 50 years ago? Happy. I actually remember when a fundamentalist was a word. Pastors wanted to be called fundamentalists.

Now, oh, right? The modern day ISIS is in America. Those fundamentalists blowing up abortion clinics and putting Trump in office and all the fundamentalists and this bad term, you know. It's like, but don't let this happen with the Holy Spirit.

Don't let tongues are coming upon. Don't let that happen here. The true meaning was vital.

It's still vital for us today. You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Is there boldness? Is there boldness? That's like there's a baptism of the Holy Spirit or a filling of the Holy Spirit or an unction.

Is the Holy Spirit in you? And I remember too, I've talked about this before, I think in Lancaster, but it's interesting. When I read books, usually a hundred years old or so, when they would call a pastor to a church vacancy, they very rarely, did they say, does he have a PhD in church history? What, does he have this? Does he have that? Does he have this a master's? And those are good things, but the one question was, has he received his baptism of fire? Has he received his baptism of fire? In other words, can he preach through the power of the Holy Spirit? Or is he just a talking head going through theological

doctrines that will miss everybody because he's over their head? That's the difference maker. And then he said, God gave them the same gift as he gave us.

Now commentaries are divided on this. God gave the Gentiles the same gift that he gave the Jews. Was that gift the Holy Spirit or was that gift the speaking of tongues? Now I'll let you research that, but let's talk about that for a minute.

On this issue of tongues, I just want to teach it because we're here. Paul uses 1st Corinthians 12, 1st Corinthians 13, 1st Corinthians 14, 1st Corinthians 12, he talks about the one spirit, different gifts. Verse 13 is on love, verse 14 is how to use the gifts.

So in the New Testament, it was evident in the lives of many people who were filled with the Holy Spirit. According to 1st Corinthians 12 29, it was a gift. Paul said, are all apostles? Are all prophets? There's two controversial words again.

I just threw out two more for you. There you go. Right? Somebody says, I'm an apostle.

You're like, oh goodness. I'm a prophet. Oh Lord, please help us.

One reason is because people don't, it shouldn't be self-proclaimed anything. An apostle was just somebody who would plant a church. A prophet is somebody who would speak boldly God's Word.

And they were given titles, not by themselves, but the people would say, oh that person's an apostle. That person's a prophet. The people would identify who they were.

So Paul said, are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret, but earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet, I will show you a more excellent way. And then finally, for those who are curious, it did have a purpose.

Speaking in this language had a purpose. Paul said in 1st Corinthians 14, pursue love, desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. What is prophesying? What I'm doing now.

Preaching. It's not going, oh in four years, this, you know, that's foretelling. Some people have that gift of looking and speaking, and hey, warning people.

We're gonna see this in the next chapter. That people can speak and warn people because of this gift. For he who speaks in tongues does not speak to men, but to God.

For no one understands him, however in the Spirit he speaks mysteries. But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation to comfort men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the entire church.

So Paul was showing how this gift would be used. Now, this is a good reminder to remind, a good time to remind you as well, what you're filled with eventually comes out. What you are filled with eventually comes out.

But I want to, I almost changed the whole sermon with this last sentence here. That he said, earnestly desire the best gifts, and yet I show you a more excellent way. So he's telling the Corinth, the church in Corinth, they're called Corinthians, to desire spiritual gifts.

Desire that the Holy Spirit use you in a way to, gifts of this, gifts of that. But I'm gonna show you a more excellent way. Then he goes right into chapter 13 and he says, though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, but I have not love that prophets mean nothing.

I'm like a sound clanging brass or a clanging cymbal. It prophets, oh stop that, stop that. So you can be eloquent, you can be exhorting, but if you have not love it profits you nothing.

And then he says, or I can have great faith to understand all mysteries. Great faith, this person is great faith, but they have not love. Paul said it profits me nothing.

I can give up my things and be burned at the stake. And Paul says it profits me nothing. For love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it's not rude, it's not proud, it's not self-seeking, it doesn't get, it doesn't keep track of wrong done against it.

It forgives, it perseveres. So the church was obviously looking at all these gifts and they lacked the most important thing, love. And actually the cure for contention that we talked about earlier is love.

The cure for contending is love. If you don't contend for the faith, if you don't, if you don't have that boldness, the more you love God and the more you love others, that will come out of you. And it's also the cure for worldliness, the more you love the things of God.

The thing about love though is this, it does not come naturally. It has to be fought for, it has to be defended, and it has to be constantly nurtured.

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