

Matthew 3 - the Holy Spirit and Fire

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman explores the significance of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life, emphasizing the need for unity, theological understanding, and the transformative power of being filled with the Spirit.

Duration: 58:00

Scripture: Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5, Galatians 5:22, Ephesians 4:30

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Revival"

Description

This sermon delves into the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit and fire, emphasizing the need to remove preconceived notions and focus on what the Bible says about this crucial topic. The speaker highlights the historical impact of the Holy Spirit in church splits and unity among believers, contrasting the spirit of unity with the prevalent disunity in today's church. The sermon stresses the essential nature of the Spirit-filled life, the power of God's Spirit in transforming individuals, and the distinct characteristics of a life filled with the Spirit, urging listeners to seek the unction and power of the Holy Spirit for true revival and impactful ministry.

Transcript

Are you ready for another controversial topic? Yeah? I wasn't expecting that response, but that'll do. Anytime we talk about the Holy Spirit and you start putting in their words, baptism of the Holy Spirit, fire of the Holy Spirit, people either get excited or, oh, I don't know where this guy is going with this one. Where's that uncomfortable feeling coming from? You know, so what I want to ask you tonight is just remove all preconceived notions about what you've heard or how you were raised.

Let's just look at what the Bible says. What does the Bible say about this very important topic of the Holy Spirit and fire? And actually, we're in Matthew 3. I'm not going to spend a lot of time in Matthew 3 because this is more going to be topical. And what I'm going to do is springboard off of some words that Jesus said.

And the reason I'm doing this is because this topic, did you know that this topic has been the cause of many church splits? I've seen a church split over this issue many years ago. It will divide Christians. They'll have conferences saying one thing and conferences saying the other.

And I'm often amazed because the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of unity. It's the spirit of truth, the spirit of unity. He is the spirit of unity, the only thing that truly unites believers.

Think about that. The only thing that really unites believers is the spirit within me and the spirit within you uniting. That's where the and when I'm reading in the New Testament, especially in the book of Acts, Christians would die for each other.

They would sell things and give to each other. Now we're upset if somebody looks at us wrong. We didn't say hi to me.

You took my parking spot. You know, we address something in love and people get upset and they bail out. There's no there's so much disunity.

And I'm just reading as you're reading the Bible, it doesn't make a lot of sense because the spirit is the spirit of unity, the spirit of truth, the spirit of bringing us together. That's why we come to worship most of us, is it not? The spirit crying Abba Father. Now I know this is a controversial topic and I've read on both sides.

I have no friends on both sides. And what I want to do is try to just bring it all together. You know, because the Bible speaks volumes about the spirit filled life.

And I don't think it's anything to be afraid of. It should be welcomed. Paul talks about being filled with the spirit of God.

Do not quench or grieve the spirit of God. Peter being filled with the spirit of God preached Paul being filled with the spirit of God preached. Do you know what else is absolutely amazing? We're going to get to this probably next week is when Jesus Christ himself was baptized.

The spirit fell from heaven. We don't know what that looked like. It's Matthew trying to say what this looked like.

The spirit descended from heaven. The father spoke and then Jesus after that went out into the wilderness. The Bible says filled with the spirit.

Isn't he part of the triune nature of God? Why would he need to be filled with the spirit? Well, it's not real hard to fathom other than the fact that somehow he needed in his in his in his coming in his in the form of a man, even though he is fully God and fully man, he needed the Spirit's empowerment to begin his ministry. If you think about that, it just it really brings it home to us where we're trying to do all this stuff in our own flesh. That's where all these arguments break out.

If you have two spirit filled believers, they'll work through something. But when carnality gets in there and lukewarm living and jealousy and envy, that's what comes in. Paul says those are works of the flesh for the works of the spirit are evident.

Love, joy, peace, contentment, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness, self-control. Would you like to have those characteristics in your life? If somebody is filled with the Spirit of God, the Bible said that they are filled with love and joy and peace and gentleness and kindness and goodness and long-suffering and patience and self-control, self-control. Yeah, you can't control yourself.

That's a fruit of the Spirit. And what I wanted to do is I want to recap. I think Fred will put it up here.

The mission statement. And this is not a mission statement for the church. This is a mission statement for Matthew, because I know I'm going to be a Matthew quite a while, maybe a year and a half, two years, I'm

not sure.

So I want to, I was praying one day, I said, Lord, what, what this whole series in Matthew, what am I, I need some, some kind of, well, that's the point of a mission statement. You get your thoughts all captured and you bring them together and you, in a few sentences, this is what I'm trying to do. And this is exactly what I'm trying to do, to bring centrality and relevance to Jesus's words, to understand theology in a deep yet impacting way, and to compare and contrast biblical truth with error, to allow the power of the gospel to truly shape and challenge hearts, so the deep meaningful change takes place.

So with that in mind, that's how I prepared this message. Going, I'm going to go topical and try to have these things impact theology in a deep impacting way. And I want to compare and I want to contrast, but at the heart of it all, I want hearts to change.

That's, that's the purpose here. And let me read something from Ephesians 4. Paul's saying to the church in Ephesus, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And that word endeavoring there is unique.

It's, it's, it's almost like you have to strive to do it because it's not going to happen on its own. You have to endeavor, endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, one Spirit, just as you were called, and one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, here's that word, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is above all and through all and in you all.

So before I dig into this, let me, let me set the stage a little bit. My, let me tell you a little bit about my story. It'll help to give you a little background.

But I've studied probably this topic more than any other topic. And it's what theologians call pneumatology. And it's where we get our word pneumatic, pneumatic tools.

You have pneumatic tools, they're air tools, right? And so the study of the Holy Spirit is pneumatology. The study of salvation is soteriology, the study of end times is eschatology. And they put all these big words to just really, you know, make it more complicated.

But I love this topic. Because to me, this is where real meaningful change takes place. This is where you truly are transformed by the power of God, you're actually filled with the Spirit of God.

I mean, if you just think about that, the God of the universe is going to fill us with His Spirit. And from that, that's how we're going to minister. That's how we're going to witness.

That's how we're going to be a living witness, a living sacrifice. And it's vitally important because all of the biographies that I've read, I love reading church history and biographies. All of the great men and women of God who did something for God were men and women filled with the Spirit of God.

You don't read a lot about carnal Christians in church history. There's nothing there. They were carnal before they were filled with the Spirit of God.

But why is that? It's because it's that Spirit-filled life. That's not something to be feared. I think it's something to be embraced.

And this is part of my struggle, and I'll just be transparent tonight, is I'm caught in the middle of two camps. And I've talked about this before. I actually talked about this two years ago when the church first started.

I talked about the Holy Spirit and His role. I think the title of the series was The Forgotten God with Francis Chen's book, and I kind of went off of that. So I've been kind of waiting for two years to speak about this again, and that's why I'm not really in a hurry.

I want to take my time. But I'm caught in the middle, and here's what I'm caught in. Some of you are caught here, and some of you are caught on the other side.

Some of you don't know where you're caught, but I'm trying to catch you somewhere. On one side, I have this deep passion for the truth of God's Word. The truth has changed my life.

I love to study systematic theology. I ask my wife, I'll go into bed early, give me a book on systematic theology, I'll fall asleep an hour later, and do it the same night, the same night, until I get through this volume of systematic theology. I just love reading about the nature of God, to have theology.

That's what it is. It's a study of God. Because when you have truth, when you understand the true nature of God, that's powerful.

So I love theology. We should be students of the Word of God. However, I love to experience the power of God.

And He radically changed my life. I'll never forget 1999. I mean, I was broken beyond, I mean, this is about as broke as you can get.

You know when God sometimes has to bring you to rock bottom, and then finally, okay, you can have all of my life. I understand the plan. I'm not God.

You are. And as He began to break me, and just, I mean, I was just, I mean, it's not, I was raised, and my brother's here, he'll know, with my dad, you just, men don't cry. You just don't cry.

At all. Right? It's tough. You're a man.

You don't cry. And I couldn't stop crying. I mean, I was just bawling over my sin, my sinful condition, and I believe it's what the Bible talks about, being radically filled with the Spirit of God.

Worship changed. Now all I can do is worship God. I have to.

I just want to worship. Get country music television off. Get all these BET off.

It just makes me sick to my stomach. I have this passion now that I've never felt before. I have this love, and this joy, and this peace, and I just, I'm just filled with the Spirit of God.

I have to tell everybody about Jesus. I can't believe what God has done in my life. Half the people thought I was just a religious nutcase.

Oh, that shame. He'll get over it. So I experience God in a mighty way.

I love those times of worship, where sometimes I'll sit down to read the Bible, and instead I'll put on worship, and I just can't. An hour and a half goes by, and I'm worshipping God, and He's breaking me. I'm

weeping, and I'm just putting the sermons together.

I love experiencing the power of God. So you see how I'm caught in the middle? Because a lot of times in the church, we have one or the other. Either it's all emotion.

If it's odd, it's God. Anything goes. You can act any way you want to do.

You can cackle like a whatever, bark like a dog, quack like a duck, do all these different things in the name of the Holy Spirit. Just put the Holy Spirit stamp on it, and you're good. That's a little scary, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

Paul himself would say, let all things be done decently and in order, as much as it's up to you. Now, being a fan of revivals and reading the Welsh revivals, the American Great Awakenings, it was not always just sitting in your comfortable pews looking up. We didn't look up at PowerPoints, but hymnals.

People would fall down in the presence of God. They would be convicted and just sit there and weep, and men would begin weeping there, and that person, all night prayer meetings, God would touch them mightily. So I'm not discounting any of that.

So see, I love to experience God, but I also love the other side, where I love theology. We've got to bring the theological aspect into this. What is God's nature? What does he say? Who told us to check our discernment at the door? We're not supposed to check our discernment at the door.

We're actually supposed to use discernment. And when I use discernment, this group says, well, you're just quenching and grieving the Spirit of God, brother. You can't do that.

You just got to let the Holy Spirit reign, and there's some truth to that. You can't put God in a box and we're going to start at this time, we're going to do this, we're going to do this. I got it.

But if what I'm experiencing in my life, the worship, the studying, the preaching, the loving God's word, the witnessing all the time, if that's quenching and grieving the Spirit of God, then you must redefine your definition, because I think you're absolutely incorrect. These people don't even open the Word of God, rarely. So my advice to them is, read your Bible.

And I often ask them, have you ever read the Bible through at all, the whole Bible? No, I haven't. Well, see, you need that balance. But the other side needs to experience the Bible they're reading.

You see the dilemma? You can have sound doctrine. You can be straight as a gun barrel theologically, but be just as empty. There's no round in the chamber.

There's nothing. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had their theological positions down. They knew it.

They had the letter of the law, but not the Spirit of the law. So biblical Christianity is theology meets the power of the Holy Spirit. Actually, that's what preaching is, theology on fire.

That's all. That's all preaching is. You're taking theology and you're impacting with the Spirit of God.

You're giving it life. That's the Spirit-filled life. So that side needs to read the Bible.

This side needs to experience the Bible that they're reading. And what does this side call me? Oh, you're just emotional. Let me, I wrote down some exact terms.

Unstable, easily led astray. Really? I'm anchored to the same foundation of truth you are. I'm not unstable.

The Holy Spirit, when he fills you, actually makes you very committed, not wavering. You're solid, not fanatical. So that's been my challenge throughout.

I mean, I'll go speak at some places and they're all emotional. And I'm like, guys, I don't think that is a good idea. That's not, oh man, I can't be part of this group.

Come on, brother. If it's odd, it's God. Anything goes.

The Holy Spirit's there. Well, how do you act when you leave there? Do you treat your wife better? No. You forget all about Christ when you leave that event.

You don't get into the Word of God. There's no hunger and passion for him. There's not a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

It was all experience and that can be dangerous. But the other side, you're preaching about fire as if you're sitting on an iceberg. You see the dilemma? I mean, they're just, and Jesus said, if you believe on me, as the scriptures say, out of your belly will flow rivers of living water.

Now in the Greek, that's a past participle of deeper dimensions here. And let's take the present tense of that word. And if we work it back throughout here, the sentence is seeing this structure and here's how it would apply in the nuances and the preposition here.

It's like, do you know what Jesus said? If you believe on me, as the scriptures say, out of your belly is going to flow rivers of living water. Have you experienced that rivers of living water? Yes, I understand you have a PhD in church history, but do you know anything about the risen Christ? Are you filled with the Spirit of God? Because it's sure not coming out in your preaching. So see, that's my, I'm just being transparent.

That's, I've had to walk this fence all the time. I love the experience. God, please more.

Oh, that's not quite where I want to go. And yes, I love theology, but that's as dead as a doornail. We might as well just close this place up and call it a cemetery.

So you have the circus and you have the cemetery. And God's word says, would you please come to the middle? There's nothing wrong with experiencing God. We should, we should experience him in a mighty way, heal people, deliver people, break people, shape them, mold them, fill them mightily.

And sometimes that's not pretty. I understand that. I've prayed with people where they couldn't stand up.

They were going to fall down under the, just the conviction of their heart. At men's conferences, they would be, I'd be preaching. I'm like, should I just stop now? Because these guys are sobbing.

This row's about ready to just fall on the floor. These guys want to, they're just, they're just, they're weeping. What's going on here? Because God's Spirit's breaking people.

That's good. That's a good thing. And I remember one conference I was at, I was up here and there's a lot of guys just up front and they're, they're, they're, they're, they're weeping or they're in their chairs.

And it was a hard message. I'll be honest with you. It wasn't a, it was a, you know, it was a hard message for men.

And somebody said, oh pastor, we need to stop and pray for these guys. I said, uh-uh. Let God break them right now.

They need to go to Him. We don't need somebody to come over there, how are you doing sir? You okay? Oh yeah, I'm fine. We need God to break them.

We need to, would be to God that everybody would be up here for the next two hours crying out. Then they'll come out better husbands, better fathers. They'll go home weeping instead of yelling.

They'll just, they'll be, they'll, porn will abhorred them, not be addicted to it. That's what the Spirit-filled life does. So you see, I live in this world.

It's difficult because you want to have strong doctrine. You want to have strong theology. You're leading a church, so you want to use discernment.

You want to use wisdom. You know, but on the other hand, you know, you want people to experience God. So that's why I say, Lord, it's your church, what do you want to do? And we also have to respect differences.

The way that God has shaped a person, how they'll, how they'll have their church services. Obviously He's, we do it a little bit differently, but it's not wrong with the church down the street or this church tomorrow morning. It's a lot different than how we do it.

A lot different. Well, who's, who's right? Well, there's different, different ministries. First Corinthians 12, there are different, the different ministries in, I don't want to try to find it, but he says there's, some he's called this, and some he's called this.

Some have different giftings, and it's all for the edifying of the body of Christ. So that, I just want to share that with you because that's where I live. I live wanting to balance the truth of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, because you'll see throughout, throughout the Bible as well, the Spirit falls upon truth.

He, you don't, he's not falling upon air, and Simon, the sorcerer, was filled with the Spirit of God. No, he wasn't. Peter was filled with the Spirit of God and denounced him.

The young woman who brought her master's great gain by divination was filled with the Spirit of God. No, she wasn't. And then what you have in the Old Testament, just a quick history here, the Old Testament, people actually weren't like we are now.

They weren't, as believers, filled with the Spirit of God on a continual basis. God would come upon Samson. God would come upon Elisha.

God would come upon Elisha, and they would prophesy mightily. God even came upon Saul. God came, God's Spirit came upon these guys for, for feats of, of, of extraordinary things, prayer, miracles.

But now, now you understand Jesus's words when they said, Jesus, don't leave us. He said, oh, I have to go, because if I don't go, the Comforter will not come, the Paracletus will not come. What does he mean? Better than Jesus? Yeah, because now he resides in us.

And that's what the, in the New Testament, uses the word Paracletus, to come alongside of us. And then the Holy Spirit indwells us, he's in us. And then there's another preposition, epi, E-P-I, in the Greek, and that is upon us.

So that's how the Holy Spirit, it's not a weird thing, oh, I need to wear the Holy Spirit. No, Holy Spirit is welcome here. I mean, fill this place, fill us with your glory, fill us with your presence.

If, if God truly filled this place with his glory tonight, there would not be a dry eye in this room. You wouldn't leave here till after midnight. You would be so awed and struck by the power of God, that it wouldn't care what's for dinner, you wouldn't care what's on TV, you would be transpired, and inspired, and encouraged to worship God.

That's what the Spirit-filled life is. So with that said, it's nothing to fear, it's nothing to cherish, it's something to cherish. And now you'll, you'll understand better Jesus's words.

These people draw near to me with their lips, and honor me with their words, but their hearts are far from me. See, it's very easy to say, I'm a Christian, or it's very easy to quote Scripture, but really, it's a condition of the heart. Now let's pick up where we left off.

Matthew, chapter 3, verse 7, and this is John the Baptist baptizing. Remember when all the, the people are coming down to John the Baptist in the Jordan River? I talked last week about the truth about repentance, so if you weren't here, go back and watch that video, because it, it kind of builds the scene into where we are now. Now John the Baptist is baptizing people, and he sees the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the religious leaders coming down to be baptized.

So he says, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and don't say to us that Abraham is our father, for God is able to raise up sons of Abraham from these very stones. So he's challenging them, listen, there's false security you have, and even now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Now here's where we left off, and here's where it's going to get controversial.

I indeed baptize you with, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, that's what John the Baptist was doing, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry, and here's the very controversial term out there, watch it, here we go, and he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. See to me I don't get scared at that verse, I leap for joy at that verse, but what is he talking about? Well let me finish real quick, his winnowing fan is in his hand and he will thoroughly clean out his threshing floor and gather his weed into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Well in a nutshell the winnowing fan, they would throw this wheat or whatever it was up in the air, the chaff would blow away and all the good stuff would fall to the ground.

What Jesus is saying, he's saying the chaff will blow away, that stuff is destructive, that's set for the fire, that's people who are not right in relationship with God. John the Baptist is saying the good and the bad will be judged basically, there's coming a time of judgment and Jesus is going to be the judge of that. That's why he says here his winnowing fan is in his hand, he will separate these people and he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Why don't we hear that much in the church? We hear about the turn the other cheek, love your neighbor Jesus, but not the Jesus that's going to burn with and send people to hell and eternity separate from God. We can say that because Jesus said it, Jesus Christ himself said it, so we don't need to be scared of these things. That brings me back to the point, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Okay, hold your thought there. Now let's fast forward to Acts chapter 1 verse 5. By this time Jesus has been crucified, he's getting ready to ascend and be with his father, but he's still here talking to his disciples. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

So why is that such a controversial term? The reason is a lot of people have used that baptizing the Spirit to excuse a lot of weird behavior. That's just the bottom line. Baptizing the Holy Spirit and then anything goes, no matter what you do you can act as if you're in church and you act very odd, if you put the Holy Spirit tag on it you're good.

So that's why we watch Christian TV, I've been to events, it's like the Holy Spirit's not here, this is weirdness. So that's why we have to be careful and that's why this term has gained a lot of bad press, even though it's a very good term. Jesus said you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Now this is a highly emotional topic because it challenges comfortable and it disturbs the normal. Let me say that again, this topic challenges the comfortable and it disturbs the normal. Comfortable normal Christians do not like to talk about this topic because it inspires change, it talks about the Spirit-filled life.

I like what Leonard Ravenhill said, we need to close every church in the land for one Sunday and cease listening to a man so we can hear the groan of the Spirit which we in our lush pews have forgotten. I mean that's a sermon in itself, I could just come up and quoted that and gave and Chelsea continue, we need to close every church in the land for one Sunday and cease listening to a man so we can hear the groan of the Spirit which we in our lush pews have forgotten. I will tell you right now that most people are afraid of the Spirit-filled life.

I mean when I first heard those terms a long time ago, it's weird, wacko, Pentecostal, crazy, Jesus freaks, Jesus nuts. But until the Spirit of God fills you and changes you and you say, now I'm one of them, uh-oh, now I'm a better husband, I'm a better father, now I can preach God's Word. I mean I have videos back 20 years ago in my early 20s, I was at a conference talking, not even preaching at a fitness conference.

I couldn't even just read something, I had to sit down real quick. I hated public speaking, I hated it. So for God to do that, it shows me it's His work.

He's filling me with His Spirit. He's leading me, He's guiding me. As I empty myself, He fills me with His Spirit.

It's not a bad thing. So I want to just open your hearts to that. Don't be afraid of this, but we need to define it.

Now there's division over this as well. I actually took this week and read this book again, What Great Evangelicals Believed About the Holy Spirit in the 1800s and 1900s. For anybody from Spurgeon to D.L. Moody to Adonai Judson to Hudson Taylor to Oswald Chambers, what did they believe about the Holy Spirit? It's a very condensed version, so I want to tie that and get this in my, I had to go like 40 or 50 pages a day to get through it.

And not only their thoughts, but biblically, the doctrine. What I get from the baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs here, but it also occurs when Paul's talking about the church. And to me, when we become believers, we are baptized into the body of Christ.

That's what that, theologically, I don't really dispute. These aren't hills to die on for me on the terms. If somebody says, man, you need a baptism of the Holy Spirit, fine with me.

But there's other people who, you dare not say that. Theologically, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is when a person becomes a believer, they are baptized into the body of Christ. That's what it is.

So he's saying, you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit, you'll be baptized into the body of Christ, and you'll receive that fire, that unction, that anointing, that Spirit-filled life. And then we read, Paul says, be filled with the Spirit, don't quench the Spirit, don't grieve the Spirit. There are subsequent feelings of the Holy Spirit.

So it's not like just, well, I'm a believer and that's it. You can surrender to the work of the Spirit and be filled mightily for His work. And there are times you'll be filled, you'll feel like a spiritual high.

There's times in here sometimes I'll preach and I just go to bed on a spiritual high. I wake up on a spiritual high. And you guys can feel it.

You feel the difference. Other times I'm like, oh Lord, help me get through this. What happened? I fasted all day.

Well, the wind blows where it wants. I can't tell the Holy Spirit to do this, okay, you're going to do this, you're going to do this. It's His vessel, it's His job.

And there's other times where I'd go travel and speak, I didn't get much sleep. I'd say, I've had a headache in the morning, oh, this is going to be difficult. And then, pow, something happens in that place.

A one and a half hour speaking engagement turns to four hours. My wife texts me, are you on the road yet? Not yet. And it's interesting, sometimes she'll ask, how did it go? And I just say, it went good, I'll tell you about it later.

Or if I say one thing, she knows it went really well. I say, fire fell. And she knows that the Holy Spirit infused the words more than normal and filled me mightily and people were changed left and right and God filled it.

So I'm not worried about this word. But if you want the theological correct definition, baptized in the Holy Spirit is when we become part of the body of Christ. And then we're filled with the Spirit later on, filled with the Spirit, Peter being filled with the Spirit, Paul being filled with the Spirit.

But I like what R. A. Torrey said many years ago, I'd rather have the power of the Holy Spirit and not quite get the term right, than get the term right and miss the power of the Spirit. So see, and that's really where the divide's been. Even reading this book, you know, people will say, some will say baptized in the Holy Spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit.

To me, we're kind of saying the same thing. Because baptized in the Greek is baptismo, overwhelmed. You're overwhelmed with the Spirit of God.

That sounds pretty similar to filled with the Spirit of God. It's one and the same. That's what it is, you're filled with the Spirit of God.

And here's what, and you might say, well, what is the Spirit of God? Well, it's a mystery that we're not going to know on this side of heaven, that's for sure. But we have the triune nature of God in the Bible. You know what the triune nature is? The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

There is one God, we only worship one God. We don't, people accuse us of worshiping three different gods. We worship one God, here Israel, I, the Lord, your God, am one.

It is one God. But then, even in the Hebrew, you'll see God being used as El, Ella, and Elohim. Singular, dual, and plural nature of God.

Let us create man in our image. What? Create man in our image? What are you talking about? So throughout the Bible, you see a triune nature there. And you can't really describe, you can say three persons, but are they really persons? No, because the Father is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth.

So there's the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, that's God. And God, the Holy Spirit comes as a believer, and He resides in the believer. I mean, that's heaven's atmosphere in the life of the believer.

That's the Spirit-filled life. If you want a quick definition, heaven's atmosphere is in the life of the believer. I still have this sinful, fallen body that gets sick, that gets jealous, that gets bitter, that gets upset, but then the Spirit-filled life, as I surrender to that Spirit-filled life, that flesh has to take a back seat.

So see, that's what the Spirit-filled life is, bringing down heaven's atmosphere to here. So what the Holy Spirit does, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit regenerates. Nobody can come to the Son unless His Father draws Him, draws Him by the Spirit.

So the Spirit regenerates, then the Spirit indwells us, baptized in the body of Christ. He now indwells us, we're baptized, and then He fills us. Or, if He doesn't fill you, guess what you're doing to Him? You're quenching and grieving the Spirit of God within you.

And I was trying to think of an analogy. I'll probably bring one next week, because I'm going to have to do part two. But I thought, okay, Lord, help me understand this thing.

And it came to me the other day, my wife and kids were at my in-law's house, and they were swimming. Actually, they just had their feet in the pool, sitting on the steps, just their feet in the pool. And I was thinking, my wife says, oh, we're swimming.

I said, you're not swimming. Your feet are in the pool. The kids are swimming.

You see the difference? They come out wet. Their hair is wet. Everything about them, they're immersed.

They're baptized in the pool. That's swimming in the pool. You're just sitting by with your feet in it.

That's not swimming. But hold it. How many people are like this? How many Christians are like this? Just, there we go.

There we go. I get this. I'm good.

I'm good. I don't want too much of the Holy Spirit stuff. I don't want to be swimming in that stuff.

That's the difference, really. That's the difference between somebody who's not filled with the Spirit of God and somebody who's filled with the Spirit of God. Somebody filled with the Spirit of God says, I'm jumping, I'm diving, I'm leaping.

You're surrendering all to gain all. You're emptying yourself so you can be filled with the Spirit of God. How that looks like is, Lord, this is your church.

What do you want to do with it? You show me. My finances, guess who they are now? You. Lord, where do you want me to live? Lord, how do you want me to treat my wife and family and raise them? Lord, show me.

Would you guide me? Would you show me? I'm emptying myself, my agendas, my relationships that are pulling me down, all this junk I'm putting in my mind. I'm focusing on you and I'm surrendering it all to you. Would you fill me with your Spirit? And that's all the Spirit-filled life is.

It's coming upon an obedient Christian. And now you're filled mightily with the Spirit of God. And most people don't even know what I'm talking about.

They want it, but do they really? They want it, but do they really? I don't be a nutcase like that guy. So this, and so Jesus. You'll be whatever God created you to be.

You prefer walking around desperate, I'm sorry, depressed and anxious and half-hearted and lukewarm. The Bible is boring. I haven't read this in a year, church.

I guess I'll try if I don't find any other excuses why I can't come. That's better? That's better than the Spirit-filled life? It's impossible. It's not.

So anyways, that's why I'm saying the Spirit regenerates, He indwells, baptize, He fills us continually. I think there's, because when Paul says be filled with the Spirit, he's really saying be being filled, be being filled. It's a continual, it's an act of an obedience to be filled with the Spirit of God.

If I say, well, forget it. I'm going to look at porn this week. I'm going to backbite.

I'm going to gossip. I'm going to manipulate. You think I'm going to have some type of preaching like this up here? What's the difference? Quenching and grieving the Spirit of God.

You see the difference? As you submit to that work of the Spirit, now you're filled with the Spirit of God. Talk about wanting to know God's will. It becomes a lot clearer when you fill with the Spirit of God, because when you fill with the Spirit of God, you're not worried, should I do this? Should I do this? Should I manipulate? God, you're not doing it.

You're taking too long. Should I try? You're just walking. You're waiting upon the Lord.

Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount of wings like eagles. They shall run and not grow weary.

They shall walk and not faint. I'm walking, Lord. You open the doors.

You close them. Where do you want me to go? It makes God's will so much more easier when you fill with the Spirit of God. And the final thing, what I like is the Holy Spirit is given to us as a guarantee, and then He seals us.

In Ephesians, that's the role of the Holy Spirit. That's one of the reasons where I lean, and I don't make this a hill to die on. I don't argue with people, but once a person has the Holy Spirit as a guarantee and the Holy Spirit seals them, I don't think they can lose that.

I don't think they can, oh, now I'm saved. Now I'm not. This week I'm saved.

Now I'm not. Once you're a child of God and it begins to be His work, He draws you. He seals you.

He's given to guarantee the Holy Spirit. He who's begun a good work in you might complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. If you remain faithful, He will complete it.

You're a child of God. So personally, I don't know how you can undo that. Now, I have changed my thought.

I used to think that you could lose your salvation. I was raised in that teaching, and I don't argue about it. I haven't talked about this in months, probably since last year.

But because of the role of the Spirit, how He seals, He guides, He directs, He fills us, then He guarantees, then God puts a seal on us, then we're sealed with the Spirit of God, and we're one of Christ. I don't know how we can undo that and unravel that, because it was God's work to get us there in the first place. But if somebody says, well, I think you can lose, oh, that's fine.

There's a lot of scriptures that warn you better keep abiding. You better not wander from the truth. You better not backslide.

You better stay consistent. You better stay in the branch. You better stay in the vine.

Absolutely, there's a lot of warnings there, too. But we'll know at some point when we die, right? That's why unity is the Spirit. We don't argue over these things.

We have our opinions, and in a nutshell, we are baptized into the body of Christ, and we are filled continually for service. That's how those terms should be used. Now, how do you know if a vessel is full? Exactly.

So if somebody is full of the Spirit of God, what do you think is going to be coming out of them? Gossip, slander, cursing, manipulating, yelling. Those things might happen from time to time, but the overflowing of the Spirit is love, and joy, and peace, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and kindness, and self-control. So it begs the question tonight, if that fruit, not fruits, it's the fruit of the Spirit.

You can't have love and joy, but not be patient and gentle. It's together. It's everything.

If those things are missing in your life, are you truly filled with the Spirit of God? Because the Bible is crystal clear on this. A person filled with the Spirit of God will have this fruit. It doesn't say, maybe someday, later as it matures.

It's evident. It's real. I like what Lewis Sperry Chaffer said.

I like a lot of these guys because he's one of these guys that he's on the side of the camp where the role of the Holy Spirit isn't relevant as much today. The gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased. But I want to read and learn.

I want to learn from both of these sides. And I like what he said, though. I love this quote about the Spirit-filled life.

This sums it up. When one has found, now put your name in the middle here, or put your name in the blank. When one has found peace, power, and blessing through a definite yielding to God and reliance on his strength alone, the Bible clearly assigns the cause to be a larger manifestation of his presence and the power of the Spirit.

Such a person is filled with the Spirit. Now, how many of you have heard of Hudson Taylor? It's a pretty safe name. On this side of the camp, theologically, they're not going to say anything bad about him.

He started the China Inland Missions Fund, and it was a huge success in China. Planted church in China many years ago. This side, the emotional side, they'll like him, too.

They respect what he's done. The interesting thing is, as I was reading, is for 15 years, ministry was a drudgery. He was going nowhere, ready to quit, doing things in his own flesh, arguing, backbiting, complaining, bickering.

What happened? What happened? Everything changed. That's why a lot of these guys will use the word baptism of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit. Something definite changed in their life.

I remember when D.O. Moody, we hear of him now, but he was preaching little church. He was frustrated. He realized he was doing the ministry in his own flesh, and finally, he surrendered everything to God, and God began to pour in his spirit.

He had to find a place to go and just cry out to God. He said, Lord, stay your hand. I can't handle it anymore.

Before he went in there, nobody knew of D.O. Moody. Now the world knows of him. Why? It's these defining moments in the Christian life.

Oswald Chambers, it wasn't until he was filled with the Spirit of God that he began to write this material that we use as devotionals. So it's a definite work that I think we should be seeking. Now here's where I'm probably getting to the end too quick, and let me just read this first, and then we'll get there in a minute.

Fifteen years after his conversion, this question was presented to him. Many said that your new experience completely changed your disposition. What was so noticeable? And Hudson Taylor said, simply, everything changed.

My co-worker said that I was now a joyous, bright, happy Christian. Before, I was hard and rigid and hard to work with. I had been a toiling, burdened person before without much rest of soul.

Sound familiar in this room? I was resting in Jesus now and letting him do the work. That makes all the difference. Whenever I spoke in meetings, I was told that a new power seemed to possess me and flow through me.

Troubles did not worry me as before, and in practical things of life, I had new peace. I cast everything on God in a new way, and I gave more time to prayer. Instead of working late at night, I began to go to bed early, rising at five in the morning and doing Bible studying prayer.

Thus, my own soul was fed, and the living waters of God's power could flow through me to others. It was an abiding fullness of Jesus that has not ceased. Where did that come from? See, that's the spirit-filled life.

That's why people get passionate about this topic, because that's the difference between bored and passionate. That's the difference between theologically sound but dead as a doornail. That's the difference.

Everything, everything has to do with being filled with the Spirit of God. You'll see a place transform. Worship changes, and when a person's filled mightily with the Spirit of God, they're not concerned what he's thinking, what she's thinking.

They're not concerned with this. Where's my phone? What time are we going to dinner? God, I hope Shane doesn't have six songs on tonight. I just really need to get out of here early, and I hope he doesn't talk about anything that's going to upset me.

Well, that's not the spirit-filled life. The spirit-filled life enjoys praising God and worshipping God. So all that I'm saying now, if it's convicting, it's ultimately meant to help.

It's not meant to point fingers, because had not God filled me with His Spirit and needs to continually do it all the time, why does He need to continually do it? Because I like what D.L. Moody said, we are leaky vessels, and we have to stand under the fountain all the time. I stand under the fountain because we are leaky vessels that leaks out. I mean, you get out of God's Word for a week out of worship, I'll start getting pulled right into carnality and lasciviousness.

All these words are weird, but King James is how he's raised. I kind of learned those words. But all this lifestyle, and you start getting dry.

You start getting to the things of the world. I can tell if a pastor or preacher is filled with the Spirit of God within five minutes of listening. I can tell you.

Oh, they're just... What's that program I like to make fun of? Duck Dynasty. They're just full of these things, and they're watching all these things all week. So what happens is, who a person is all week is who they are when they step to the pulpit.

See, what you're hearing now is just a byproduct of how much I've submitted to God throughout the week. This isn't you come up here and just, oh, let me say this, and let me put this together. This is God crushing, and working, and molding, and shaping, and you get up here as a result of... And that's what really power in preaching is.

Unction, and it's another word that deals with the Holy Spirit. Unction comes upon preparation. So if a person has been preparing their life, preparing, God's Spirit comes upon that, comes upon that obedience.

And many people make the mistake, I'm not filling anything. Well, then it must not be happening. I need to just quit this.

No, no, no. Feelings often don't come first. Often obedience comes first.

It's hard to hold your tongue, and not watch that, and not go there, and not say that. But then the filling, and the fruit of the Spirit later, that love, joy, peace, contentment comes later after the difficult decisions were made. Think about that.

It's not until after you do what's right that you begin to be filled with the Spirit of God. One of the hardest things I did back at that time, even though I wasn't perfect, was giving up alcohol, giving up relationships that were pulling me down, giving up all the country music I liked, from George Strait to Tracee Atkins, all just love country music, still do. But that stuff was pulling me in the wrong direction.

Do you realize that? It was just pulling me in the wrong direction, so it hurt. It was very difficult to cut my ties and just, Lord, I don't know. I just know I need to seek you.

This is not edifying. This is not building me up. And as I gave up those things, the Spirit of God began to fill me with this Spirit.

It wasn't easy. So that's what my point was. It comes upon obedience.

And again, I'm not pointing fingers. I'm just as guilty. I love to still put an old George Jones song in there.

I'm not getting legalistic, but I'm saying if these things pull you away from God, you're not filled with the Spirit of God. That's why most Christians are carnal. Do you know the Bible talks about unbelievers, right? There's one type of believer, unbeliever.

But there's two types of believers that Paul talks about consistently, the spiritual and the mature and the carnal. What's the difference? What's the difference between a carnal Christian and a mature Christian, filled with the Spirit of God? They live differently. They're filled with the Spirit of God.

They act differently. That's the difference. Carnal.

Paul says you're carnal. You're doing all these things. You're lust of the flesh.

The flesh is rising up. You're carnal. But you who are spiritually mature, strengthen those, convict those, draw them back.

That's the defining moment. That's the difference in the Christian faith. The next thing I want to say is even though we look at Christianity as a cross, it's also a tongue of fire.

Christianity throughout the ages has had not only the cross, but preaching and people being filled with the Spirit of God. That's a mark of Christianity is a Spirit-filled life. And what's funny, what I found as I was studying for this, what was the normal? What was the normal today is the abnormal.

I think if Paul could come into the churches in America today, what would he say? Oh my Lord, we've got some work to do. Where's this, where's this, why is all this carnality and jockeying for position and going to church only when you feel like it and maybe every excuse in the book and you know all this stuff. Paul would address these issues.

The normal, the normal Spirit-filled life is now the abnormal. So because it's the abnormal, you'll call Jesus freak, weird, out there, extreme, holy roller. But that's normal.

Don't you understand? And I'm not talking about being weird. I'm just talking about being filled with the Spirit of God. That's powerful.

That's what Paul talks about. Let me read this from Duncan Campbell, his book, *The Price and the Power of Revival*. Make no mistake about it.

Revival in your own heart to be filled with the Spirit of God comes with a price. It comes with a price. You don't say, oh yes, I want that great.

It comes with a price. It's the travail of your soul, the old devotional writers would say. It's crucifixion to the world.

It's basically, it's crucifying sin. It's preparing yourself for the Holy Spirit, this vessel of God. And Gabe said this earlier.

Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in this holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart and who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor has he sworn deceitfully. That's who may see the hand, that's who may dwell in the presence of God, those who are filled mightily with the Spirit of God. And we think, sometimes I think we think that the Holy Spirit will make us do things.

Well, if God wanted to fill me, he would just do it. No, he wouldn't. He says, here it is.

Take of this living water. Jesus says, whoever wants to come, come and take of this living water. You'll never thirst again, he told the woman at the well.

Come, take of it. You've got to take of it. He who believes on me as the scriptures say, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.

Come to me all your weak and heavy laden and I will give you rest. He just asked, but we have to do it. That's what sanctification is and being filled with the Spirit of God is.

We obey what we know to be true. But our flesh says, don't you dare do what that guy's saying. Why is that? Let me read this, *The Price and Power of Revival*, another good book on revival from Duncan Campbell.

And let's just think about this. Let's be honest. Can we be honest? How is it that while we make such great claims for the power of the gospel, we see so little of the supernatural in operation? Let's be honest.

The gospel is so powerful. When was the last time you saw somebody come to Christ, break and come to Christ? Months? Years? When was the last time you witnessed? I've talked to some people, they haven't witnessed in years. They don't want to witness.

Why? Because there's no witness inside them. All witnessing is saying, all witnessing is, is I'm filled with the Spirit of God. I've got to get this out.

I've got to preach. I've got to tell you about Jesus. So if there's no witnessing going on, there's something wrong in the heart.

Because it has to flow out. It has to flow out. They're going to pass the same, you know, all these laws where Christians can't say, it has to flow out somehow.

It has to flow out. You can't, you can't hold back the Nile River. When those rivers of living water come gushing out, that's a byproduct of the Spirit-filled life.

And the very thing I'm talking about is the very thing that many people in this room need. That's, that's what I'm trying to get you to realize, is Spirit-filled life. So he says, how is it that while we make such great claims for the power of the Gospel, we see so little of the supernatural in operation? I don't see anybody getting healed.

I don't see anybody getting delivered. I don't see any miracles taking place. I don't see any of the power of the Gospel.

I don't see lives being radically changed. Most churches, we see a lukewarm form of Christianity that bears no resemblance to the New Testament church. Think about it.

I don't know how many people, it's pretty packed tonight. Are we going to see anybody come to Christ, anybody healed, anybody delivered, anything, anything? And I'm just going to go home and go, Lord, I gave it. I just let them have it.

What you put in my heart, I did it. What you've called me to do. Now, is there fruit that'll be there? Absolutely.

But I'm trying to make a point is, where's the supernatural power of God that was crystal clear in the book of Acts and throughout the New Testament? Is there any reason why the church today cannot everywhere equal the church at Pentecost? I feel that this question we ought to face with an open mind and an honest heart. What did the early church have that we do not possess today? Nothing but the Holy Spirit, nothing but the power of God. Here, I would suggest that one of the main secrets of success in the early church lay in the fact that the early believers believed in unction from on high, not entertainment for men.

How did the early church get the people? By publicity projects, by bills, by posters, by parades, by pictures, by Facebook, by good marketing slogans, by all these things, by mail outs. No, people were arrested and drawn together because of voice and sounds from heaven of God calling his people. In his words, the people were arrested and drawn together and brought into vital relationship with God, not by the sounds from men, but by the sounds from heaven.

The early church cried out for unction and not for entertainment. Unction is the dire and desperate need of the ministry today. And you might say, what is unction? Unction is power.

It's dynamite, dunamis. Dunamis, power, the unction, the power, the filling, the baptism, the fire of the Holy Spirit. That's what he does.

He's a refining fire. He consumes and he crushes, he devours and he warms and he comforts. That's what we see with fire.

That's the power of the Holy Spirit. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Jesus said this.

So the Holy Spirit and fire are inseparable. Fire is a byproduct of something. You realize that? Fire is the byproduct of the spirit-filled life.

The funny thing is, a while back, I bought a whole bunch of matches to light a barbecue, the big ones. My kids had no idea what they were breaking and playing with and make things. I said, watch this, watch this.

Somebody started that fire. So fire is just a byproduct of what something is being done. When God fills you mightily with his Holy Spirit, that's the fire of God.

That's the all-consuming fire of God that devours sin, it devours carnality, it devours everything, the fire of God, the passion of God. God is saying, how bad do you want it, church? How bad do you want it? Do you want it bad enough to give up these things and surrender all? Nope, I don't want it that bad. Do you want it bad enough to, and right now people are getting convicted.

They're getting convicted right now on things that they know that are hindering their walk with God. And many of these people in this book, I would recommend this book. Another great book is They Found the Secret.

It talks about all these famous Christian men and women of God who are filled mightily with the Spirit of God. I'm not afraid of that term because that's exactly what the church needs today. One of the consistent themes throughout this book and this book is that the dire need in the church today is not more entertainment, not more committees, not more group studies, not more men's breakfasts, not more nights out.

The church needs power from God, bottom line. That's one of the reasons I just focus on worship, the word, and prayer, the dynamite. We can't get all, let's go do this and do this, and that's good, but that's not necessarily God.

You see the difference? We should do all these things and fellowship, but if we use these things to replace the power of the Holy Spirit, we're on dangerous ground. Because all the church had was prayer meetings. All the church had was reading Paul's words.

All the church had was reading Psalms. They didn't have all the Facebook and all this other stuff. How did these guys, 12 guys, radically change the world? Then they went and waited until upper room.

Jesus said, you've been with me. You know all about me. Don't go minister.

Don't go preach. He told the people, go wait. Go wait in a room.

You died. We need to spread the message. Jesus said, no, go wait until you've been endued with power on high.

In other words, don't go do anything without the filling of the Holy Spirit, because you'll fall flat on your face. That's why I often say when people used to say, you're starting a church, don't you know that 80% of church plants fail? So those 80% probably weren't filled with the Spirit of God, or God was teaching them, and instructing them, and changing them, and challenging them. He does that to the refining work of the Holy Spirit as we go through challenges and different things.

People always say, well, your Saturday night's not going to work. I heard that a lot. I said, well, if God's Spirit's in it, you don't have to worry about it.

It's going to work. That's the Spirit-filled life. I'm not even halfway through my notes on what fire is, and bring in historical context of that.

But what I'm going to do, I'm just going to pray, and I'm going to probably have to do part two, but I want to have Gabe and Chelsea come up as I'm praying. I'll close on this, but Lord, I pray right now as we honor

you. Lord, as we look to you, Lord, those people here that you know who they are, I pray that they are filled mightily with the Spirit of God.

Lord, I pray for those who have been quenching and grieving your Spirit. Lord, I pray for those who knew you, knew you passionately, Lord, but they've left their first love, Lord, and you're calling them back to you. Lord, I pray tonight that these people would be infused again, be rejuvenated.

Lord, fill them with your presence. Lord, fill this place with your Spirit. Lord, we want you to show us what the Spirit-filled life looks like, Lord.

So I pray right now for those people who might be convicted or challenged, Lord, that you would begin to open their hearts. I pray for those people who are pushing this off, Lord, that you begin to show them that this is their only hope to truly know you. Lord, those who are so desperate that they've walked so far away from you, Lord, there's no hope for them.

I pray that you would draw them right now by your Spirit. Lord, even those who don't know you tonight, Lord, would you convict them and draw them by your Spirit, Lord? You don't need me. You don't need worship.

All we need is your Spirit drawing the unbeliever to you, Lord. We ask that you do this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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