

A Firm Grip on the Christian Life ■ The Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire, seeking to live a life where sin no longer rules over us. It highlights the need to cleanse ourselves thoroughly from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of sin and transform us into the likeness of Christ. The speaker encourages a deep thirst for the rivers of living water promised by Jesus, urging believers to seek this spiritual inheritance with faith and a willingness to pay any price for it.

Duration: 1:00:52

Scripture: Matthew 3:11, 2 Corinthians 7:1, John 7:37, Luke 11:13

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Transformation in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Among Christians, there are two different opinions about, as I mentioned the other day about enduring till the end. There are, okay, among Christians there are two different opinions as to whether believers who have accepted Christ will endure till the end or not. There are some who teach that once you receive Christ, no matter what you do, you're going to endure till the end whether you like it or not.

And there are others who believe that we have to hold on. Now the truth is that in Scripture, both these truths are found. And Christians have a tendency to choose one over the other.

I would never be able to endure till the end if God's grace did not keep supporting me and helping me. Impossible. It's more realistic to say that Jesus keeps me from falling than to say I got victory over sin.

Maybe the same thing, but there's a subtle difference. On the other hand, God will never force a person to do anything. The Bible speaks about demon possession and spirit filling.

You never read about the spirit possessing people or demons filling people. I've seen numerous demon possessed people in India and they have no control over what they do or say. They say things they don't want to say, they do things they don't want to do because demons possess them.

They do all types of silly stupid things. That's a result of possession. But once they are freed from the demons and the demons are cast out, then they become normal people.

Now the Holy Spirit never possesses people like that. Never. That's the difference between God and demons and Satan.

Satan likes to control us so totally that we lose our own free will, freedom of choice. Whereas when the Holy Spirit fills, he still gives us freedom of choice. When we are born again, we're still free.

He promises to keep us in his hand and no one will pluck us out of his hand. But we have the choice to jump out if we want. If you want to jump out, he's not going to grab you like the devil does and say you can't jump out.

So we need to understand this fundamental difference between God and Satan. Satan drives you, possesses you, wants you to, when he tells you to do something, he says do it immediately, do it immediately. There's a harshness about him, whereas the Holy Spirit is very gentle.

If you hear a voice saying, come on, you've got to do this immediately, you've got to do this immediately, it's pretty certain it's the devil. God always gives you time to think, to be sure, to wait. It says by the renewal of our mind, we understand the perfect will of God.

So the Holy Spirit, through the word of God, changes our mind so that we begin to understand God's way of thinking and very often that takes time. So there's nothing wrong in waiting. So don't ever listen to a voice which says, you've got to do this immediately.

God always gives us time to think. So in enduring until the end, we don't have to worry about God's part, he'll do his part. We've got to do ours.

You remember Jesus said, take my yoke and learn from me. Now in countries where you don't see oxen, bullocks plowing the field, you don't know what a yoke is, because now most people use tractors, but most of the villages in India we still have oxen plowing the field, just like in Jesus' time. And there's a yoke put on the neck of the two oxen, which makes sure that they go together.

We can't separate as long as the yoke is on the neck. They have to go at the same pace, in the same direction. And when a bullock dies and they're training a junior bullock, junior ox, to plow a straight furrow, it's put with a yoke onto a senior ox, who's experienced.

And that, just by going at the same pace in the same direction as the senior ox, the junior ox learns how to plow a straight furrow. So that's what Jesus meant when he said, take my yoke upon you, and learn from me. And you will learn to walk absolutely straight in your life.

But he doesn't catch us by the neck and say, you've got to do it. I've got freedom. If I want to stall, and if I want to stay there where I want, he'll just leave me and let me go.

So we need to think about, what is the part we have to do in order for us to endure till the end? The sad thing we see in so many Christians is that many young people, they start so well. It's like people who run a

marathon race and they're way ahead in the beginning for the first mile or so, but by the time they come to the 26th miles, they've dropped out. A lot of people in the Christian life are like that.

They don't have a solid grip on the Christian life. So the things which I've been saying from the very first session on Friday have been related to getting a solid grip on the Christian life. That's what I long that all of you young people will have, a grip on the Christian life.

And the first thing I mentioned was to understand what the blood of Jesus Christ has done for us. It's like five fingers. You can hold something with two fingers.

You can hold it with three, you can hold it with four, or you can hold it with five. It makes a lot of difference if you have all five. The grip is much stronger.

Someone can't take something out of your hand if you're holding something with five fingers. But if you hold it with just two, maybe somebody can pull it out of your hand. Something like this.

So what I want to speak about in these remaining three sessions is the other three fingers. I spoke about the blood of Christ and the word of God. We need to know, just to briefly recap, first of all, what the blood of Christ has done for us.

The blood of Christ cleanses those who walk in the light. Those who are honest about their sin, those who don't blame other people, who take the blame completely for their sin, and don't try to justify themselves. Jesus told the Pharisees, you are those who justify yourselves before men.

Then such people never get saved. If you want to stop being a Pharisee, one of the first things you've got to do is stop justifying yourself, certainly before God. Don't say because of this, because of that, because then your sin will never be forgiven.

And call sin, let me give you a little bit of advice, call sin by the dirtiest, filthiest name you can call it. If you, for example, if you get angry with somebody and you call it sort of some super spiritual name like righteous indignation, you'll never get free from it for the rest of your life. You'll live with righteous indignation all your life.

But if you say, Lord, you said that anger was murder, Matthew 5, verse 21, 22, 23, he said it's murder. Call it murder. Lord, I murdered that person with my words just now.

I'm a murderer. You'd get deliverance pretty quickly. When you lust with your eyes, call it adultery.

Lord, I committed adultery for the 50th time. I'm a filthy, rotten, lustful adulterer. Don't say I was just admiring God's creation or something like that.

You'll never get delivered that way. If you don't call sin by the filthiest possible name you can think of, you'll live defeated all your life. Call it sin.

If you call it by some other name, remember the blood of Jesus only cleanses sin. You don't call it sin, it won't be cleansed. Say, Lord, this is a sin and I'm responsible for it.

And don't blame anybody else. The blood of Jesus will cleanse you, not only cleanse you, the Bible says we are justified by his blood in Romans 5. Justified means declared righteous. God promises something that is not promised in the Old Testament.

I will never remember your sins anymore. You know, there are songs we sing which are not truly scriptural. There's a song which says, I'm covered by the blood.

I'm under the blood. That's an Old Testament concept. We've got to understand, I'm not under the blood, I'll tell you that.

I'm not covered by the blood. You don't find such expressions in the New Testament. Most Christians don't read the New Testament carefully and so they've got all these wrong ideas, I'm under the blood.

Under the blood was for the Israelites in Egypt. They were, that blood was on top of that door so the angel of death didn't come and they were under the blood. Well, I'm not an Egyptian, I'm not an Israelite and I'm not in Egypt.

I was a sinner and it was not the blood of lambs that delivered me, it was the blood of Jesus Christ. And the blood of Jesus doesn't put me under it, it doesn't cover me, it cleanses me. So I need to understand that.

Get rid of all these wrong concepts that we get from hymn writers who didn't have their theology right. I'm not under the blood, I'm not covered by the blood. In the Old Testament they were, blessed is the man whose sin is covered, it says in Psalm 32.

That's like if all your sins are there and you put a sheet over it, it's covered. But they're there, you lift up the sheet, it's there. But in the New Testament the blood of Jesus cleanses it, it's gone, you can't find it.

It's like if you write all your sins on a blackboard and put a sheet over it, somebody can lift the sheet and still see it. But if it's wiped out, it's gone. We need to understand what a thorough work the blood of Christ has done that I don't have to feel guilty about something in the past.

In Revelation 12 and verse 11 it says they overcame Satan's accusations by the blood of the Lamb. Satan is called there the deceiver of the whole world, Revelation 12 verse 9. But then as far as believers are concerned in Revelation 12 10 he's called the accuser of the brethren. He's the deceiver of the world and the accuser of the brethren.

Of course because we're in the world he tries to deceive us too. But he doesn't particularly accuse the unbeliever because they're already in his hands. He's accusing the believer.

And the voices of accusation that you hear are all from the devil trying to condemn you, making you feel unworthy, rejected, and especially when he reminds you of sins that you've already confessed. Haven't you seen how some terrible sin that maybe you committed 10 years ago, the devil keeps reminding you, he says, but don't forget you did that. And you confess it a 10th time, and a 50th time, and a 500th time, and he wants you to always feel guilty about that thing.

But God's got good hearing, I'll tell you that. You don't have to tell him a 10th time what you've already confessed. If you have not honestly confessed it, if you've blamed somebody else for it, then you probably need to keep confessing 5,000 times till you take the blame for it completely.

But once you've taken the blame for it completely, you need to confess it only once. Remember that. If we confess our sins properly once, that means you take the blame for it.

You don't blame anybody else. He is faithful, 1 John 1.9, to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, not cover, cleanse. Very important difference between the blood of bulls and goats in the Old Testament that covered sin, and the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses, removes completely, there's no memory of it.

I will not remember their sins anymore, justified, declared righteous, by the blood of Jesus Christ. I stand before God as if I'd never sinned in my whole life, and even more wonderful, clothed with the righteousness of Christ, so that it's as if I don't even have a sinful nature. See, otherwise we couldn't possibly stand before God.

We need to understand this. I mentioned the other day how the seraphs in heaven, they cover their faces, cover their feet, because they cannot look at a holy God, even though they've never sinned. How could we ever come before Him, even when our sins are all forgiven? I can't still stand before a holy God, because we've got a sinful nature, which the Bible calls the flesh.

That would prevent us from standing before God. That's why God has to do something more than forgiving us. He's got to justify us.

Many Christians don't understand the difference between forgiveness and justification. Forgiveness is the blotting out of our past completely. Justification is, I'm clothed with the righteousness of Christ, so that I don't stand before God with my sinful nature.

It's still there, but God's put the righteousness of Christ to my account, and I stand before God as if I've never sinned, as if I don't have a sinful nature. Even though the truth is I have sinned, the truth is I still have this flesh. This is the wonderful truth about forgiveness and justification.

Once you're sure about this, that you shall know the truth, he said, the truth will set you free. All condemnation, particularly among young believers, is because they have not taken pains to study the truth of what cleansing is and what justification is. I want you to be very clear on that.

We are cleansed by the blood, 1 John 1.7. We are justified by the blood, Romans 5.9. Therefore we have access into God's presence freely. We don't have to come with fear and wonder whether he's going to accept me or not. No.

Because when we come with that type of uncertainty, we are dishonoring the blood of Christ. We are dishonoring what God says, I put his righteousness to your account. It's not pride to say that I stand before God accepted.

It's faith. It's not humility. It's not humility to say, well, I'm not so sure whether God's accepted me.

That's not humility. That is unbelief. Now let me tell you that unbelief is like slapping God on the face and saying, I don't believe you.

If my dad says to me that I put \$500 into your bank account and I say, well, dad, I'm not going to believe it until I go and check in the bank whether it's there or not. It's like slapping him in the face. If you really trust your dad, you say, well, dad, I believe you.

I don't have to go and check anything. You said it's there. It's there.

I believe it. So you see, when God says something in his word and you say, well, I'm not so sure, you're slapping God in the face and saying, I don't believe you. And that's the reason for all of our problems.

Just start believing from today and say, Lord, I believe your word. Well, next question that very clever people will ask is, how do you know this is the Bible is God's word? Well, initially you don't know. But as you begin to prove it out, it's like a machine you got at home, a new machine that you bought.

It could be a washing machine or anything. And you say, how do you know it works? I say, I don't know whether it works. But if I've used it for a few years, I say, hey, it does work.

I don't know how to prove it. I don't know how it works inside, but it works. So it's like that.

The more you claim the promises of scripture, this is how I know scripture is God's word. If people ask me, how do you know the Bible is God's word? Some people try to prove saying they dug up, some archaeologists dug up some manuscripts out in Israel. I couldn't care less for that.

I say, I've proved in my life over 50 years that God's word is God's. It's God's word because I've proved it, I've claimed it. And that's what your testimony should be and become stronger and stronger as every year goes by.

The blood of Christ. The second thing I mentioned was the importance of God's word. That's the second finger.

With God's word, we get the understanding of God's mind. And if I allow the Holy Spirit to give me God's word every day as I read it and He speaks to my heart and I trust those promises and I obey the commandments and believe the facts that are mentioned there, gradually my mind begins to think like God thinks. If I come in humility, humility is very important because Jesus said that scripture is revealed.

You don't find in the Bible the word explanation or understanding the Bible. It speaks about understanding God. The New Testament word is revelation.

That means the Holy Spirit makes something real to you all of a sudden from scripture. As if suddenly the light was turned on and you could understand that verse. That's the way we should understand scripture.

That's why I said yesterday, it's more important that the Bible goes through us once in our lifetime than we go through the Bible many times in our lifetime. I've seen people who boast about having read the scriptures 20, 30 times right through, but they don't seem to have any revelation on the simple things which are in His word because they've not sought for revelation. They've been trying to get into some Guinness Book of Records that I went through the Bible so many times in my life.

Well, I'm not in that competition. I want to make sure the Bible goes through me. One of the prayers I prayed to God many times is, Lord, before I leave this earth, before I leave this earth, I want to obey every single command you have for man given in this book.

And I want to claim every single promise that you've given for man in this book. It may take time, but before I leave this earth, I want to experience every promise and obey every commandment before I leave. Make that your prayer.

And that's what I mean by letting the Bible go through us. And if we dilly-dally and waste time in obedience, then you're not going to get, that's not going to be fulfilled because you're just wasting a lot of time. That's why once you're clear that the Bible says something, say, Lord, give me grace to do it.

It may find it difficult to do it, but God will give you grace. Every word of scripture is a word of His grace. We read, that's one of the titles given to the Bible in Acts chapter 20.

The word of His grace, I think it's verse 27. The word of His grace means every word has grace attached to it, help. And if I ask for that grace, I'll be able to keep it.

I remember somebody reading through the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, a young fellow, and he said to me, Brother Zach, it's so difficult to keep these commandments in Matthew 5 to 7. And I said, they're not difficult, they're impossible. As long as you think it's difficult, you'll keep trying. The day you realize it's impossible, you give up.

And you say, Lord, it's impossible for me to keep these commandments, but give me grace and I'll do it. That's the point. Like someone said, there are three stages in the way a man experiences God's working in his life.

First of all, he thinks God's commandments are difficult, and he never gets anywhere. Then he comes to the place where he realizes these are impossible. Then he has to lean upon God, and then it's done.

So it's difficult, impossible, done. That's God's way of doing everything. When Abraham was 75, it was difficult for him to have a son.

By the time he was 100, it was impossible, and he got it. So when you realize that these commands are not just difficult, that you struggle a little bit and somehow one day you'll make it. But when you realize it's impossible, it's impossible for you to stop lusting with your eyes permanently forever from today onwards.

It's not difficult, it's impossible. It's impossible for you to say, I will never get angry again for the rest of my life. Not just a difficult thing.

When Jesus said, your yes must be yes, you must be absolutely honest, it's not just difficult, it's impossible. When he said, I'm just talking about the Sermon on the Mount, when he says, you must not seek honor from people for your giving or your praying or your fasting, it's not just difficult, it's impossible. Don't judge others unless you've been judged yourself.

That's not a difficult command, that's an impossible command. When you say, Lord, it's impossible, but you've told me to do it, that means I must seek for the power of the Holy Spirit to do it. I'm going to trust you to do it for me, it'll be done.

Now the commandments in the Old Testament were not impossible. Thou shalt not murder, there are millions of unbelievers who can keep it. Thou shalt not commit adultery, physically, there are millions of unbelievers who never commit adultery.

You don't need the power of the Holy Spirit for that, you don't even need to know Jesus Christ to keep most of those commandments. The only commandment you need Christ's help for is the last, the tenth one, that's impossible. You shall not even desire in your heart your neighbor's wife or your neighbor's daughter or anyone, that's impossible.

But God kept that last one to show that that's what his standards were. But the other nine commandments you can keep, definitely you can keep it. So this is one of the big differences.

The Old Testament commandments all could be kept without the power of the Holy Spirit. They didn't need the Holy Spirit's power to keep any of those commandments given in the Old Testament, except the tenth one. But when it comes to the New Testament, right from the beginning, the very first one, if you look at Matthew 5, 6, and 7 as replacing the ten commandments, you can't keep any of them if you really understand it.

You know, for example, a simple thing like forgiving others. You may say, well, I can forgive others, I've forgiven everybody, but probably that's because you haven't experienced something really evil from somebody else. Imagine if somebody raped your daughter and murdered her.

I think you'd find it a little difficult to forgive that person. You haven't experienced that, so you've experienced small things and somebody said something bad about you and you forgive. There are difficulties many people face, much worse than what we have faced in our life.

And I can really understand when somebody says to me, Brother Zag, I find it almost impossible to forgive that guy for what he did to me or to my family or to my daughter. I can never forgive. I say, I realize it's impossible.

You've got to ask God for grace, then it can be done. There is no commandment in Scripture which God has given, which is impossible of fulfillment with the grace of God. One of the great things I discovered, I want to speak about the Holy Spirit today.

That's the third thing I want to talk about. The Holy Spirit. The blood of Christ, the word of God, and the Holy Spirit.

There's a title given to the Holy Spirit in Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 29. It's called the Spirit of Grace. That's a beautiful title.

The last part of Hebrews 10, 29, the Spirit of Grace. Grace is a New Testament word. It says in John 1, 17, grace came through Jesus Christ.

There was no grace in the world until Christ came. There's no grace in the Old Testament. Even the word grace when found in the Old Testament in the King James Version is not really grace.

It's favor. Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. Grace is very clear in John 1, 17, came only through Jesus Christ.

There was no grace in the world until Christ came. Grace does not mean the unmerited favor of God, because everybody in the world gets God's unmerited favor. That atheist who is healthy, he's got unmerited favor, but it's not grace.

Grace is God's power and help to help us to overcome sin, to help us to fulfill His commandments, to help us to please Him, to transform us into the likeness of Christ. That's what grace is. And here the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Grace or the Spirit that communicates grace.

And it says in Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 9, in the middle of that verse, it's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace. Just think of these two verses I just quoted. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Grace and it's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace.

In other words, when the Holy Spirit comes, He doesn't primarily come into our mind. He comes into our heart to give us strength. The power of the Holy Spirit is a power that strengthens us with grace.

Now what happens when you're strengthened by grace? It's like supernatural strength. Can you think of Samson? Samson didn't have strength in his heart, but he had strength in his body. But it's a good picture to look at.

When the Holy Spirit came upon Samson, He was only on the outside, but He gave him such tremendous power that He could kill 300 of Israel's enemies just with the jawbone of an ass. He could tear a lion to pieces. Imagine lions being scared of Samson.

The lions telling each other, watch out, that guy's coming, we better run. And that's a picture of the devil and the lusts of our flesh coming against us and getting scared because now we've got the power of the Holy Spirit. Isn't it wonderful to be so strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit that the devil is scared and runs from you? I want to live like that.

In the olden days, I ran from the devil, but it's not going to be like that now. I'm not going to run from this lion. Samson did not run away when he saw a lion.

The lions ran when they saw him, once the word got around who Samson was. And that's the position. That's what happens inwardly to us.

The heart strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit. That was possible only after Jesus came. And what happens through this grace? It says in Romans 6.14, that when we come under this grace, sin will not be able to rule over you, Romans 6.14. Sin that can rule us, sin that is our master, stops being our master because we come under the power of the Holy Spirit.

You know, it's very easy to find out who's your master. Supposing there's a man standing here, and there are two fellows, A and B, both saying, that's my slave. Well, I say, it's pretty easy to find out who's slave he is.

I ask Mr. A, tell him to sit down. He says, sit down. The guy says, no, I'm not going to sit down.

No, he's not your slave. I tell B, I tell B, tell him to sit down. He says, sit down.

The guy sits down. I say, I don't know who's slave he is. It's very easy to find out whether you're a slave of sin or righteousness.

When you're standing there, sin says, get angry and get angry. You know who's slave you are. The Holy Spirit at the same time says, don't get angry, keep your mouth shut.

You keep your mouth shut. You know you're the slave of the Holy Spirit. You can find out.

In a provocative situation, sin says, come on, lust after that girl, and you do it. Or click on that internet pornographic site, and you do it. You're a slave of sin.

The Holy Spirit says, don't. Get away from there. Don't look at that picture.

Turn away from there, and turn your eyes away. And you listen to the Holy Spirit, you know you're his slave. So when it says, sin will no longer be your master, what a wonderful promise.

To me, it's one of the most fantastic promises in the New Testament. I think I've quoted that verse more than anything else in my preaching. Sin shall not rule over you.

It's the distinctive feature of the New Testament, that sin, which has ruled me all my life. Imagine, like the Israelites hearing one day from Moses, Pharaoh will not rule you anymore. And these guys have been slaves for 430 years.

They've never known anything but slavery. They go to work at 6 o'clock in the morning, and the whip of the taskmaster, that's all they experience until 10 o'clock at night when they come home. Day after day after day after day.

Imagine a 60-year-old man saying, I've experienced the whip of the taskmaster for 45 years. Moses, are you telling me that I won't have to face it anymore? Moses says, yeah, that's right. God's come to deliver you.

That would be the best piece of news you ever heard. It's almost impossible to believe. And it's like that with many Christians.

When they hear the word of God, which says sin shall not rule over you, it's almost impossible to believe. You mean I need never get angry again? That's right. You mean I never need to get depressed and discouraged and gloomy again? Right.

You mean I won't have any more bad moods in my home? Right. You mean I'll never lose my temper at my wife again? That's right. You mean I'll never in my life go to an internet pornographic site? Right.

Boy, are you interested in that? Or you want to live under the whiplash of Pharaoh's taskmasters forever? It's good news for those who want to be free. Sin shall not rule over you. And all it requires is to be under grace.

The Holy Spirit has come primarily for that. To give me that grace that will strengthen me to do what's impossible for me to do otherwise. Now you take these bulbs which shine with such bright light.

Now if you were to ask that bulb, can you produce that light on your own, it's impossible. But can you produce a bright light if I send electricity into you? Oh sure, easy. What is impossible for it by itself becomes the easiest thing in the world when electricity comes in.

It's something like that. As long as that bulb's trying to look inside and look inside and see if I can somehow produce some light, it'll never produce light. It needs an external power coming inside and then it just continues.

Think of these fans that are rotating effortlessly. Life under the law is not like this. In the olden days in India, before they had electricity, they had these little kings who ruled over little kingdoms in different parts of India.

And they would have slaves who had a string with which they would rotate a type of fan. Well they couldn't do it for long. You can't keep turning a fan with your hand.

You've got to keep doing it in shifts. You get tired after an hour or so. I find that living under the law is something like that.

People hear a commandment in scripture, and like those old slaves who had to rotate that fan by hand, after some time you get tired and you give up. And the fan stops. And you sin.

You can hang on for a little while and say, okay, I managed to live one day or two days without it. But after some time you give up. Many people, when they come for a conference like this, what they hear is the equivalent of a pep talk.

You know, like the coaches give to before a football game or a basketball game or something like that. A pep talk. Get everybody worked up.

And it lasts for the length of the game. Once the game is over, the next game comes tomorrow, they need another pep talk. And it's something like that.

Many people listening to sermons. The sermon stirred them up, and for a little while it lost the effect of it. And they think they're holy.

But once the effect of the pep talk is over, they're back into their old sinful life. And that's why they need to keep coming back to conferences. Keep listening to these pep talks to live a holy life.

And they feel that, oh, I like to listen to this person preach. Because I'm protected. I keep listening to a CD or from the internet or something.

But what if you were locked up in prisons, like in some lands, in communist lands, Christians are locked up for ten years, no internet, no sermon, nothing, no Bible even. What would happen? You'd just become a sinner. No, there's something even better that we have in the New Covenant.

It's the Holy Spirit that'll come and live within us. They can, people who persecute me can take away my Bible, take away everything, prevent me from going to meetings. They cannot take the Holy Spirit from me.

They cannot take grace from my heart. It's a wonderful thing that Jesus has come to give, power to be a witness for Christ. In Zechariah in the Old Testament, there's a wonderful prophecy, which is fulfilled in the day of Pentecost.

In Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 10, and I want to apply this in a New Testament way, Zechariah 12 and verse 10. I'll pour out, Jerusalem in the New Testament, by the way, is the church, it's you and me, the inhabitants of this New Testament church. I will pour out on the people in this church the spirit of grace.

It's one of the only occasions in the Old Testament where that word grace comes, and it's a prophecy about the future. The spirit of grace, the Holy Spirit that communicates grace. I will pour it out upon my people.

I've claimed that promise so many times. The spirit of supplication, the spirit that makes me cry out saying, Father, help me. The spirit makes me cry out because I know His commandments are impossible to keep.

They're not difficult, they're impossible. It's the spirit of grace and supplication that makes me get more grace from God. And when I receive this grace, it says here, they will look upon me whom they have pierced.

The spirit always points me to Jesus. I'll stop seeing men, I'll see Jesus. I'll stop being scared of the devil, I'll stop seeing my lust, I'll see Jesus.

They look on me whom they have pierced. I will see that it was my sin that pierced Jesus on the cross. The Holy Spirit will show me that.

This sin, which you are sort of coddling and playing around with, is what crucified your Savior. And the Holy Spirit will show me that. They will look on me whom they have pierced.

And when I see that it is my sin that pierced Jesus on the cross, it says, I will mourn. I'll mourn so bitterly like a father losing his only son. And you think of a father who's got only one child or a mother who's got only one child and that child dies, boy, how those parents will weep.

Imagine the Holy Spirit producing in you and me such a weeping for sin. Yeah, the Spirit does that. I know times in my life when I wept on my pillow at night for a small, small teeny weeny, which other people wouldn't even call a sin, a teeny weeny unlikeness to Christ.

The Spirit does that, I'll tell you. To me it's more important to experience that ministry of the Holy Spirit than speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues doesn't make people holy, but I'll tell you mourning for your sin certainly does.

And it says the Spirit of grace will fall upon us, will fill us, and will make us see Jesus whom he appears and our mourning for our sin will be like the mourning of parents who have lost their only child. Can you think of that? Can you think of a time when you wept for some sin the way parents mourn when they lost their only child? We haven't taken sin seriously. No wonder we don't get rid of it.

Most Christians just playing the fool with sin and saying, yeah, it'd be a good thing if I get victory. I don't know if I'll ever get it. They're not particularly keen on getting it either.

They've got other things to do in life. I can tell you right in the beginning, such people will never get it. They won't get it in a hundred years.

They won't get it in a thousand years if they live on this earth. But ask the Holy Spirit to show you. Pray.

It says I'll pour out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication and they will look on me whom they have pierced and ask the Holy Spirit to show you Jesus. How did you feel when we sang that song? The one who lives to be my king once died to be my savior. There were tears in my eyes when I sang that.

I can never sing songs about Jesus dying for me without weeping, inwardly anyway. It's one of the things I prayed to God even though I was born again 50 years ago. I said, Lord, let me never ever come to the place where Calvary is an old truth for me.

The truth that Jesus died for my sins. Let it never become stale. You know, it says in Revelation chapter 5, they sing a new song.

And you know what the new song is? You wonder, what is the new song? I've never heard it before. And the song is, thou wast slain. New song? I've known that from childhood.

How is it a new song? That's one of the wonderful things about heaven, where the Holy Spirit's presence is all over. Pervades every part of heaven. That every time they think of the lamb that was slain, it's as if they're hearing it for the first time.

And I prayed that prayer. I said, Lord, whenever I sing about Jesus dying for my sins, I want it to be as if a wretched sinner like me was on my way to hell, hopeless, is hearing for the first time, hey, you don't have to go to hell. Somebody paid the price for you.

Jesus died for your sins. I said, Lord, every single time I sing or talk about it, I want it to be as if I've heard it for the first time. To me, that's one of the marks of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

He shows me the one I pierced, and I mourn for my sin. I've stopped mourning when people treat me badly. I finish with all that.

You know that song, I Stand Amazed in the Presence of Jesus the Nazarene? One of my favorite lines in that is, he had no tears for his own griefs, the Gethsemane, but sweat drops of blood for mine. He had no tears for his own griefs, and he had plenty, but he had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for my griefs. And every time I sing that song, I don't just think about Jesus.

The Lord says, if you want to be like me, you've got to be like that, that you never shed one tear for your own sorrows and griefs, not even one tear. I decided that long ago, that I would never seek sympathy from a human being for any problems I have. I have no problems.

God makes everything work for my good, Romans 8, 20. Even the things, evil things that other people do to me, they work for my good. Where are the problems? I have no tears for my own griefs, because God makes those things work for my good.

But I must have tears for the griefs of others. I must have tears for my own sin, not for the way other people treat me, or somebody called me a bad name, or somebody did something to spread a scandal about my children. It makes no difference to me.

I say, forget it. These are nothing. I'm not even going to think about it.

But that I sinned, they shall weep, it says here, bitterly, verse 10, last part, Zechariah 12, 10. They will weep bitterly over Jesus, like the bitter weeping over a firstborn son that's died. Can you think of someone who wept bitterly in the New Testament? Peter.

After he denied the Lord, it says he went out and he wept bitterly. Can you think of a grown man, tough fisherman, weeping bitterly? That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And when you allow the Holy Spirit to show you Jesus, who was pierced by your sin, and the Spirit of God sees that you respond to that, and you weep bitterly for those little wrong attitudes that you have, the little conceit that you have, the little things that you said to hurt somebody, or the little things that you said to show that you were better than somebody else, or where you made someone feel a bit inferior to you by the way you presented yourself, or manifested yourself, or spoke to that person, or dealt with that person, and you did not deal with him as a fellow sinner saved by grace, and the Holy Spirit shows you these little, little things, or the selfishness with which you live your Christian life, thinking only of I, me, and my family, and you're not willing to sacrifice like Jesus did for the sake of others.

The Holy Spirit shows you all these things. You know, we're not talking about grievous sins, which even people are convicted of without the Holy Spirit, like worldly people. We're talking about the little, little un-Christ-likenesses, and you see, Lord, this is what crucified you on the cross.

The Holy Spirit gives us grace. He gives us grace to overcome. He makes us hate sin.

Why is it so many Christians are depressed often? I used to be like that for 16 years after I was born again. I was frequently depressed and discouraged, wondering what the future held, and things like that. But once I understood what it is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, I'll tell you, there is such a thing as being filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's the second promise in the New Testament. The first promise in the New Testament is Matthew 121. Jesus will save His people from their sins.

Wonderful promise. Not I will save myself from my sin by struggling. Even our weeping.

Don't think you're going to get victory by your weeping. No. Jesus is to save you from your sins.

Your weeping is just a sorrow that comes because you've hurt the Lord so much. But that's not going to bring victory. Jesus saves you from sin.

That's the first promise in the New Testament. Isn't it sad that a whole lot of people call themselves Christians and they haven't even experienced the first promise in the New Testament? It's like children sitting 20 years in school and not learning ABC. It's pretty sad.

And they're trying to study physics and chemistry without having learned ABC. That's exactly how I see Christians today. They're talking all this wonderful stuff and they haven't learned the first promise in the New Testament.

They haven't experienced it. Jesus will save His people from their sins. Not just forgive them.

Forgiveness was there in the Old Testament. He will save them from their sins. It was a completely new message which since the time of Adam nobody had experienced.

And then the second promise in the New Testament is Matthew 311. Even if you don't know anything else in the New Testament, know the first two promises. Matthew 121, He will save you from all your sins.

I don't care how long you've been in that. I don't care whether you inherited your anger. He can save you from it.

Every single sin, He will save His people from their sins. That's the meaning of the name Jesus. So many people use the name of Jesus not knowing what it means.

You know when you pray in the name of Jesus, I'm saying Father in the name of one who came to save me from all my sins, I'm asking for this. That's what it means to pray in the name of Jesus. For some people it's like some magic word in the name of Jesus.

It's in the name of someone who came to save us from all our sins. And the second promise is like that. Again what Jesus will do.

Not what I will do. What I will do is Old Testament. Thou shalt not murder, and thou shalt not commit adultery, and thou shalt honor thy father and mother, and thou shalt not worship idols, and thou shalt have me only as the Lord thy God.

All this thou shalt and thou shalt not, that's Old Testament stuff. The New Testament is He shall, He shall. I'm so thankful for moving over from this Old Testament thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, which only brought me under condemnation and defeat to the New Covenant where the promise is He shall, He shall.

And that's how the first two promises in the New Testament are. He shall save His people from their sins, Matthew 121 and Matthew 311. He shall immerse you in the Holy Spirit and in fire.

I use the word immerse because the word baptize has got a sort of a strange mystical religious type of meaning because most people don't know that it's not an English word. I mean if I spoke some Indian word like manantirambal, manantirambal, do you understand it? It just means repentance. You got it now? It's like that, you know, in the early days when people, they didn't translate the word baptizo or bapto from the Greek into immerse.

They should have done that, but those great guys who translated the King James Version, King James told them don't rock church traditions when you translate. So they didn't translate baptizo because nobody was immersing people in water. So they didn't know what to do about that word.

They couldn't translate it christen or sprinkle because that wouldn't be honest. So they invented a word, baptize, nobody knew the meaning, thankfully. So those guys who translated the Bible didn't lose their heads because they could tell King James, we didn't, all these people who revere the King James Version as the most holy thing on earth, they were not honest.

They should have translated it as immerse. Any person will tell you that's the meaning of that word. And what a difference it would have made if you had heard the commandment saying go and make disciples and immerse them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There wouldn't have been any more sprinkling of children after that. Matthew 3.11, he will immerse you in the Holy Spirit and fire. He will drench you completely.

There are two ways to be immersed. One is to be dipped in water like when we get baptized in water, somebody puts you in the water and takes you out. The other way to be immersed is if you were to stand under the Niagara Falls, you'd be thoroughly immersed, I'll tell you that.

Where a waterfall is coming down upon you and you stand there and you're drenched. Just like if you were put in the water. The Holy Spirit is called the river of God.

In Revelation 22 it says it flows from the throne of God. It's a much higher fall than Niagara Falls. From heaven, there's a river flowing.

It began to flow on the day of Pentecost. A mighty river from the throne of God has come all the way down to earth. Imagine the speed with which it is by the time it comes here and I stand under it.

Jesus brings me under that and says, be immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire. I tell you, it makes a difference. It made all the difference in my life when I was filled with the Holy Spirit and fire.

You know the difference between uncooked meat which is taken out of the freezer and the same meat put on top of the fire on a grill? Oh, there's a difference. A lot of difference. One makes your mouth water, the other you say, no, thank you, I'm not hungry.

A lot of, I've heard a lot of preaching in my life. A lot of it is truth, absolute truth, but it's like meat taken out of the freezer, uncooked. Yeah, it's not spoiled, but I'm not attracted to it.

You know what Jesus does? He takes that and puts fire into it. It's a tremendous difference when you're baptized or immersed in the Holy Spirit and fire. Your whole Christian life, every area of your life, the fire lights up things and shows you things you don't see.

The olden days, fire was light. They didn't have electric light. Immersed in the Holy Spirit means, and fire means it gives you light on things you never knew were seen.

Boy, the things I have discovered in my life in the last 35 years especially, which I never even thought were seen in the olden days. I'll give you one example of how the Holy Spirit gives you light, and it's just one among many, many. We had a young brother who used to, in the early days, our church used to meet in my house for six years.

We had a lot of young people who would stay in our home, we had three, four meetings a week in our home. I think of one young brother who we did so much for him, so much, and then he got a big job and he went away to another town. I found he hardly ever wrote a word, didn't appear to be thankful for anything that we did for so many years.

I was thinking one day, look at this ungrateful guy. The Lord said to me, the fault is with you, but me, I never harmed him, I only did good to him all the time. The Lord said to me, you are at fault for expecting gratitude from him.

I had never thought that expecting gratitude from a person was a sin. Did you ever think of that? When you wait for somebody to say thank you? Is that a sin? You say, that's not a sin. I mean, to teach your children to say thank you is good, but for you to sit there waiting, expecting somebody to say thank you, it's a sin, I'll tell you that.

I said, Lord, how is it a sin? The Lord said, inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me. So you should have recognized that when you did good to another child of mine, you are actually doing it to me. So you should be expecting thank you from me, not from him.

I got light. See, he's a member of my body. Supposing there was an injury on my hand and you came and did something and put some bandage on it, it's not my hand that says thank you, it's my head.

I learned something from that. And when I do good to a member of the body of Christ, I don't expect any thanks from that person no more. The head will say.

I tell you, it'll change your life. If you listen to the Holy Spirit, you'll discover things which you never thought were sin. You'll see sin there.

Those little germs. It's a wonderful thing to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit. It's a wonderful thing to be immersed in fire that gives you light on a whole lot of things.

Imagine walking this way of discovery, this whole way through the flesh, a cleansing. It says, let us cleanse ourselves with 2 Corinthians 7.1, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. For every nook and corner, pulling out all those little things and getting into a real clean light.

Not this superficial shower, but a real thorough cleansing like a sauna where everything is got out of our system, the filth. Imagine having a cleansing like that by the Holy Spirit. Many Christians are not serious about it.

They just get rid of the superficial sins which even worldly people get rid of without the Holy Spirit's power, and they think they're pretty clean. The reason is because we have this pathetic type of Christianity today where preachers, you discover after 10 years the guy was living in adultery, or after 20 years the guy was a homosexual. All these type of things going on in the world today.

They divorce their wife and marry another, and marry another, marry their secretary, and there are still pastors there. Or somebody falls in sin with prostitutes, he's put aside for one year and he comes back into the pulpit because of his guilt. We don't live like that.

I've told the elder brothers in our churches, I say if you were living in sin, even a murderer like Paul, before you became an elder, fine, you can be an elder brother still. But if you become an elder brother in a church, and then you fall into adultery, in our churches you'll never again be an elder for the rest of your life. You can be restored to fellowship and break bread, but you'll never be an elder.

Impossible. I mean, what respect would you have for Paul after you read all his letters and then you found that he fooled around with some woman and lived in adultery with her. Would you have any respect for that man or his writings? We're not talking about David.

He was in the Old Covenant. He committed adultery, murder, couldn't forgive somebody and all that and still went to heaven. But that was, much less was expected of him.

I mean, if you told me that, well, that one year old is still dirtying his diapers, that's understandable. David was like that, a one year old dirtying his diaper, murder, adultery, all that. But God treats us like sons.

We're not babies. Very important to understand this. The power of the Holy Spirit changes us completely, inwardly, and I want to encourage you, seek for the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Seek for it with all your heart. Don't get taken up with the controversy the devil has built up on that doctrine with one extreme of people saying, I got everything when I was saved. I don't need anything.

Another extreme of people who go to all types of fanatic, stupid things which they call the work of the Holy Spirit. I steer clear of both of them. I read, I remember reading in scripture that Jesus said, he who believes in me, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

And I looked at my life, it was not like rivers of living water, like a hand pump, there's struggle, struggle, struggle, and a few drops come out. And I said, Lord, this is not the Christian life. There's something wrong.

And I need to seek for rivers of living water. So I don't go around asking people, are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Are you baptized in the Holy Spirit? I'm not a Pentecostal or a charismatic. I'm a Christian.

And I ask people, listen, brother, you know that Jesus has promised rivers of living water come out of every believer? Do you experience that? Do you want to experience it? If you want to experience it, there's one condition, two conditions actually. One is you must thirst for it. If you're quite satisfied with the few drops that come out of your life, you'll never get it.

Well, I was not satisfied. I was not satisfied. Some Christians are satisfied.

Hey, a little drop came out of my life the other day. A little drop, brother, rivers are supposed to come out of your life, to bless hundreds. Rivers.

Don't be satisfied with anything less than that. It's your inheritance in Christ. Claim it.

Don't let some crooked lawyer cheat you of the inheritance your billionaire father left for you. Don't let some crooked devil cheat you of the inheritance that Jesus purchased for you on the cross. Rivers of living water, thirst, the second thing, it's all there in John 7, 37 to 39.

Lord, I want this life of rivers of living water. And you know, wherever rivers are, you see the surroundings are fresh. This green grass and trees, wherever rivers are, everything is fresh.

And I wanted my life to be like that. I didn't want to be a dry Christian any time, not even for one second or one day in my life. I wanted to be fresh all the time.

And the other condition he said was believe. He who believes in just thirst and faith. If you've got a thirst today, you young people and older people, to live a spiritual life, life immersed in the fire of the Holy Spirit, the next thing you've got to do is say, Lord, I'm willing to pay any price for it.

Send me the bill. I'll pay it, whatever it is. And I believe you'll do it for me.

You're my loving Father. If earthly fathers know how to give good things to their children, Luke 11, 13, how much more will your heavenly Father give this mighty power of the Holy Spirit to all those who ask what you've got to ask? Let's bow our heads in prayer. Heavenly Father, I pray that we will not miss out on all that Jesus, our Savior, died to purchase for us.

We don't want to treat it lightly. We don't want to slight the tremendous gift that you've given us. Thank you for the blood that cleanses and justifies.

Thank you for the Holy Spirit that strengthens us with grace. I pray that everyone here will experience their inheritance in Christ, Lord, and not get taken up with controversy. Help us in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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