

Annointing of the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

The Holy Spirit's purpose is to reveal the wonderful things God has prepared for those who love Him and to guide us in the narrow path of righteousness.

Duration: 1:00:44

Scripture: Matthew 7:28-29, Luke 4:17, Hebrews 12:1

Topics: "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of overcoming temptation in the power of the Holy Spirit. He highlights that Jesus was tempted for 40 days before facing the final three temptations mentioned in chapter 4 of the Bible. The speaker emphasizes that it is not enough to simply copy a pattern or follow a set of rules in order to have a vibrant Christian life or church. The key is to have the fire of God burning in our midst, exposing sin and igniting devotion and love for Jesus Christ. The speaker concludes by urging the listeners to seek a touch from God and to be set on fire with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

Thank you very much, and it's a joy to be here with you. To share the word of God, I want to read a verse in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2. 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, and verse 9. Here it says that, just as it is written, things which eye has not seen, ear has not heard, which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him. Now when you read a verse like that, what do you think it's referring to? A lot of us can think it's referring to heaven.

That God has prepared things which human eyes have never seen, human ears have never heard, has not even entered into the heart of man. The wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love Him. You know, this is a quotation from the Old Testament.

This is exactly what is written in Isaiah 64, verse 4, except for one difference, that there it says, the Lord prepares these things for those who wait on Him. Here it says, He has prepared for those who love Him. But in the Old Testament, that verse is just quoted and left there.

Isaiah says, God has prepared wonderful things for those who wait on Him, things which our human eye cannot see, our ear cannot hear, and mind cannot understand. But when it comes to the New Testament, it doesn't stop with that. It says, but, verse 10, God has revealed them to us through the Holy Spirit.

For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. The Holy Spirit of God was sent to earth to show us things which our human eyes cannot see, to speak to us things which human ears cannot hear, and to reveal to our hearts things which the human mind cannot understand. That's the whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming.

The most wonderful thing that ever happened after the ascension of Jesus, that's ever happened in the history of this universe, is the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And therefore, that was the beginning of a new age in God's dealings with man. You know, if you were to talk to the Israelites, they look back to that time when Moses went up to the mountain and the fire of God came upon Mount Sinai and God gave them the law.

The law was God himself with his finger wrote those ten commandments on two tablets of stone, cut them out of the rock and gave it to Moses and Moses brought it down. It was a tremendous experience. Now, in the New Testament, the equivalent of that is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

That was the great initial event that took place under the law, and this is the great initial event that took place in the New Covenant age. And therefore, I personally am not surprised, not at all surprised, that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the most controversial doctrine in Christendom. It has been like that for years and it's like that today.

And whenever Christians come across a controversial doctrine, they are too lazy, most of them, to go into the scriptures to find out what the scripture teaches about this. They say, we might as well leave it aside, it's too controversial. There are groups saying this, that and the other.

Or they've had some bad experiences with counterfeit manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Now, do you know that nobody makes counterfeit brown paper? Have you ever seen counterfeit brown paper? Nobody makes counterfeit brown paper. Why? Because brown paper is worthless.

Do people make counterfeit toilet paper? Counterfeit toilet paper? What do they make counterfeits of? Currency notes, diamonds, gold. Wherever there is a counterfeit, you can be absolutely sure that the original is very valuable. That's what I was trying to say.

Wherever there is a counterfeit, you can be pretty sure the original is very valuable, worth having. If there is counterfeit gold, the original gold is really valuable. If there is counterfeit diamonds, the original diamonds are really valuable.

If there are counterfeit currency notes, the original must be really valuable. In India, nobody makes counterfeit currency notes of the cheaper notes, 1 rupee notes. Nobody wastes their time making counterfeit 1 rupee notes.

They make counterfeit 100 rupee notes, 500 rupee notes, 1000 rupee notes. So, Have you seen counterfeit manifestations of the Holy Spirit? I have. What does it prove to me? It proves to me that there must be the genuine somewhere, and that the genuine must be very valuable.

And that's why the devil is seeking to lead so many people astray through the counterfeits. And so in Christendom today, I find, you know like, we used to, when we studied physics in school, and we had to put iron filings on a paper and he put a magnet, and we'd find all the iron filings all stuck around the north pole of the magnet, or stuck around the south pole of the magnet. Everything would be here or here.

And I find something like that in Christendom when it concerns the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I find some Christians who have gone overboard into all types of extreme manifestations, believing that anything supernatural is of the Holy Spirit. And I mean, any sensible person would understand that if a man barks like a dog, that can't be the Holy Spirit.

But they seem to believe that. I don't know how, but you probably have to stretch your imagination quite a lot to believe that. But they do.

And then, that's one side. And then you have these other multitudes of Christians reacting against the whole thing and saying, I don't want to have anything to do with this. I'm quite happy with the little bit that I know.

I've got my sins are all forgiven and I'm on my way to heaven. But in the process, both of them have missed the will of God. And that's exactly what the devil wants.

You see, the narrow way is a very narrow, very, very narrow path. And there's a steep cliff on the left side and a very steep cliff on the right side. And the narrow way that Jesus spoke of is like that.

And you have Christians falling over the left side into extreme manifestations. And then you have Christians backing away from those extreme manifestations and falling over the right side who don't have anything. And you know, the devil's quite happy with both groups because he doesn't bother which side of the cliff you fall over, provided you fall over.

So long as you don't walk that narrow way, the devil's quite happy. He doesn't bother whether you go to this extreme or that extreme. Now, the only way to keep on that narrow path, you know, the Bible says, let us run the race.

There's a race that we have to run on this narrow path. Jesus said, the way to life is very narrow and few there be that find it. Few find it because a lot of people go to this side or that side.

Now, the only way to stay away from this side or that side is to do what it says in Hebrews 12, that when we run this race along this narrow path, we look unto Jesus. Turn to Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews in chapter 12 and verse 1. The last part it says, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus or looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who endured the cross, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, sat down on the right hand of the throne of God.

Now, the only way to avoid going astray is by looking unto Jesus. In him we see that perfect balance and if we keep our eyes fixed on him, then we will never go astray in any doctrine. So, that's what it says here.

Let us run the race along this narrow path, fixing our eyes on Jesus. Never take your eyes off Jesus. You remember what happened to Peter when he was walking on the water and he took his eyes off Jesus for a moment.

Not for long. He took his eyes away from Jesus and looked at the wind and the waves and he immediately sank. And that was to teach us that the moment we take our eyes off the Lord, we will start sinking.

Immediately. A lot of Christians are sinking because they don't have their eyes on Jesus Christ. They have their eyes on some leader who they have a lot of confidence in perhaps, a very gifted man perhaps.

You know the number of people today in Christendom who admire a leader so much that his word is law even more than the word of God. Well, I say such people deserve to go astray. They deserve to go astray because they have taken their eyes off the Lord.

Such people deserve to sink because they have disobeyed the scriptures which tells them to look unto Jesus and instead of looking unto Jesus, they look unto a man. They deserve to sink. They deserve to sink to the bottom of the sea.

And they are sinking. A lot of people have hit the bottom as well. And that's why their lives are so depressed and defeated.

Their home life is so unhappy. The reason for it all lies in the fact that they are not looking unto Jesus. So, why does the word of God say in John's Gospel chapter 1 and verse 1, it reads like this, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

Why is Jesus called the word? I want to tell you a couple of reasons why he is called the word. First of all, God uses simple words to illustrate heavenly truths and we know that the word we speak, for example what I am speaking right now, is an expression of the thoughts in my mind. Now, if I stand here and just think some wonderful thoughts in my mind, you know that's not going to bless you, however wonderful those thoughts may be.

Those wonderful thoughts I have in my mind can bless you only when they are expressed in words. So, this wonderful God in heaven could not bless us till he expressed himself in the person of Jesus. Thoughts are invisible, words are audible.

You can listen to them or you can read them and you can see them when they are in a book. So, Jesus was the visible expression of the invisible God, just like my words are the audible expression of invisible thoughts or inaudible thoughts. So, that's why he is called the word.

And the word is also, we can say, just like you look up a dictionary for the meaning of a word. You know, you come across a word that you are reading in a book or a newspaper and you don't know the meaning, you look up a dictionary. And I see that Jesus is my dictionary.

That's why he is called the word. For example, what is the meaning of humility? We all have to be humble. What is the meaning of humility? You can look up a dictionary and get a wrong understanding of humility.

There are a lot of Christians who got totally wrong understanding of humility. They think humility is to say, oh, I am such a wretched sinner or to put their head down and walk in a sluggish type of way or to dress very simply. All types of crazy ideas about humility.

That's not humility. Jesus said, learn from me for I am humble in heart. So, if you want to learn humility, the meaning of it, you got to look unto Jesus.

Lord, what's the meaning of humility? And I look at Jesus, I understand what humility means. It means to be nothing so that God might be everything. In very simple words, when you are willing to be nothing so that God can be everything in your life, you are a humble person.

That's how Jesus was. Even though he was the son of God, equal with the father from all eternity, when he walked on earth, he would always refer to himself as an ordinary man. He said, I am a son of man.

Son of man means I am an ordinary man. He lived like that. Even the last day of his life, he was washing people's feet.

But his humility also included, you know, driving people out of the temple with a whip. Now, if you saw somebody driving people out of a temple with a whip, you wouldn't think he's a humble man. But Jesus was a humble man.

You see, humility meant being nothing. That if God told him to use a whip and drive people out, he would do that because he was nothing. He wanted God to be everything.

So, our concepts of humility can be wrong. If you see a man getting up in a pulpit and calling people, you generation of vipers, how will you escape the damnation of hell? You'd say, boy, that man's not a humble man. But that's how Jesus spoke.

That's how Jesus spoke. And he was the humblest man that ever walked on the face of the earth. You see, we've got some twisted ideas of humility because we look into an English dictionary to get its meaning.

Jesus said, learn humility from me. Not from a dictionary. You'll get all your meanings of scripture wrong if you look into an English dictionary.

Jesus is the dictionary. Jesus is the word made flesh. The word manifested in flesh.

Humility manifested in flesh. You see it in Jesus. A humble man can easily get up and expose Pharisees ruthlessly.

Just as much as he can wash people's feet. He's as humble when he's doing one thing as when he's doing the other. Because his humility is being nothing so that God might be everything.

And when he becomes nothing and God is everything, God may tell him to expose hypocrites in a church and he'll do that. Now if he was concerned about his own reputation, he wouldn't do that. You understand? He wouldn't do it because he'd say, boy, if I speak like that, people will think I'm a proud man and I want a reputation as a humble man, so I won't say that.

Such a man is not humble because he doesn't want to be nothing. He wants to be something. He wants to be known as a humble man.

Well, you can't be humble if you want to be known as a humble man. That's it. You've got to be willing to be nothing.

And where do I learn that? I learn that from Jesus. I don't learn it from the dictionary. Jesus is my dictionary.

I learn love from Jesus. Otherwise I'll get all types of wrong ideas about love. Can you understand the love of God which Jesus described in the story of the prodigal son? That when the son went away, the father did not go seeking for him.

Have you ever noticed that in that story? The father never went seeking for him. That was love. The father never sent him food packets to the far country.

That's love. Love was such to make, let that prodigal son starve, sink to the level of the pigs, don't send him any food packets, don't send him anything, let him come to an end of himself and come back. That's the love of God.

Can you understand that type of love? You know, if you don't understand that type of love, you will hinder God's work on earth. I've seen a lot of Christians who when God is disciplining a prodigal son, they go and give him food packets just to make sure that he never goes back to the father's house. You think that's love? That's foolishness.

Because they got their definition of love from the world. They got their definition of love from the dictionary. Not by looking under Jesus.

I'm just giving you one or two examples. I could give you many more. So, Jesus Christ is the word made flesh.

Now we're coming to the Holy Spirit. We're talking about the Holy Spirit. If you want to see, if you want to understand what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, where shall we find the answer? How shall I find out what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Shall I look up a dictionary? Shall I go and buy some book, some popular book in some book shop which talks about being filled with the Holy Spirit? No.

I shall look up my spiritual dictionary, which is Jesus. And I look at Jesus, the most perfect spirit-filled man that ever walked on this earth, and I understand what it means to be filled with the Spirit. This is what changed my life when I was seeking God, about what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

There's a little book I wrote on it called Living as Jesus Lived. The spirit-filled life. The spirit-filled life is living as Jesus lived.

A spirit-filled person. You know, we hear that expression a lot nowadays in Christian circles. They ask you, are you spirit-filled? Are you spirit-filled? I'll tell you something, my brothers and sisters.

Being spirit-filled is not a once-for-all experience. To be filled with the Spirit is a continuous thing. And those who are continuously full of the Spirit can be called men full of the Holy Spirit.

But what is going to be the characteristic of their life? The more filled with the Spirit they are, the more Christ-like they are going to be. Because Jesus Christ is the standard. Looking unto Jesus.

Now if you don't look unto Jesus, I guarantee that you'll fall on the left side or the right side. And the devil doesn't bother which side you fall over. You can go to one extreme, to some type of fanaticism, or you can go to the other extreme and reject everything and say, I don't want anything of the Holy Spirit.

There are people like that. You know, to me the Holy Spirit's power is like electricity. Electricity is a wonderful thing.

We wouldn't be able to enjoy many things in this room tonight if you didn't have electricity. Powering the lights, powering the amplifier, etc. But have you noticed that electric wires are always insulated? You know why they are insulated? Because they are very dangerous if they are not insulated.

They kill. A man can touch an electric wire and die on the spot, in just a few seconds. Where there is power, there is danger.

So when a person tries to install electricity in his house and he does not follow the laws of electricity, he is exposing his house to tremendous danger. Supposing he decides to wire his house with uninsulated wires. He is going to blow up his house and he is going to kill his children and he is going to do a lot of harm in his house if he's got uninsulated electric wires running all over the place which anybody can touch and get killed by.

That's exactly what's happening today with a lot of people who are talking about the power of the Holy Spirit that they don't follow the laws of the Holy Spirit. It's like installing electricity without following its laws. And so, what do some other people do? You know what the other people do? Go to the other extreme, they say, oh, look at the number of people who are being killed over there with what they call electric power.

We don't want electricity in our house. We'll just light a candle and live with that. Is that the answer? I know if you have a candle, nobody will be electrocuted.

That's true. But you're going to miss out a lot of things that electricity could run. The answer is not to avoid electricity altogether.

The answer is to have electricity and follow the laws of electricity. You understand what I'm driving at? The answer is to follow the laws of the Spirit and we need the power of the Holy Spirit. When people are teamed up on two different sides, some emphasizing the fruit of the Holy Spirit, some emphasizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I'm not confused.

I'm not confused because I go to the dictionary. Jesus, the Word made flesh. And I ask myself this question, what did Jesus have? Tell me.

You know the answer. Did Jesus have the fruit of the Spirit or did he have the gifts of the Spirit? Which did he have? Which? Both. Right.

So which should you have? Well, if you follow Jesus, I presume you should have both. The Bible says that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit. You know, in Mary's womb, the Holy Spirit came and he was born of the Holy Spirit.

And we also, when we are born again, we're not like Jesus in the sense that he was God. But in a spiritual sense, something happened in us and we were born of the Holy Spirit. So Jesus had the Holy Spirit with him right from birth and that's how he lived a holy life for 30 years.

But yet, we read in Luke's Gospel chapter 3, we read that when Jesus was being baptized, do you know what Jesus was doing when he was being baptized? How many of you have read the scriptures carefully? Now, most of us, when we get baptized, we're probably more concerned about whether water goes into our nose or into our lungs. But Jesus, when he was getting baptized, it says he was praying. Have you noticed that? Luke chapter 3 and verse 21, that when the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized and he was praying.

I have hardly met anybody who is praying when they are baptized. But Jesus was praying. And how do you know what he was praying for? I know what he was praying for.

It's not written there. I know what Jesus was praying for because of one reason, that whatever Jesus prayed for, he got the answer immediately. Immediately.

He always lived to please the Father and therefore the Father always heard him. And whatever he prayed for, he got the answer immediately. There was never a delay when Jesus prayed.

When he prayed for a blind man, the blind man's eyes were opened immediately. When he prayed for a deaf person, the deaf person's ears were opened immediately. And when Jesus prayed at his baptism, I know what he prayed for because the answer came immediately.

You know what it was? It says here, the Holy Spirit descended on him like a dove, verse 22. The Holy Spirit, that's what he was praying for. So I can imagine, can you picture this, John the Baptist standing in the river, baptizing people and Jesus also goes down there and as Jesus being dipped, he's praying, Father, anoint me.

Now people who try to pigeonhole the ministry of the Holy Spirit into theological compartments and little pigeonholes say, but he had the Holy Spirit. What is this praying for, the anointing of the Holy Spirit? Don't you have the Holy Spirit, Jesus? Lord Jesus, don't you have the Holy Spirit from birth? What are you praying for now? Get your theology right. He had his theology right.

It's we who got our theology wrong. He prayed, he who had the Spirit from birth prayed that he should be anointed to the Holy Spirit and the Father answered him. So theology must have been right.

The Holy Spirit came upon him and he went into this and he was, then it says in chapter 4, verse 1, Jesus full of the Holy Spirit. Now he was full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan and went into the wilderness and was tempted and he came back from the wilderness, verse 14, after being tempted in the power of the Holy Spirit. It's wonderful.

He went into the wilderness, full of the Holy Spirit, chapter 4, verse 1, and he returned from the temptation in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what temptation does to you if you overcome it. People filled with the Holy Spirit are then led into temptation, to be tempted by the devil before they go out into a ministry.

They have to be tested. Even Jesus was tested. You and I are not better than him.

Jesus is my dictionary. He's the author and finisher of my faith. He's the A and the Z in the dictionary.

That's the meaning of author and perfecter of my whole faith. Everything I want in the Christian life I find in him. As he was born of the Spirit, I want to be born of the Spirit.

As he was anointed, I want to be anointed. As he was full of the Holy Spirit, I want to be full of the Holy Spirit. And I know as he was tempted, I will be tempted.

But I know also that as he overcame, I can overcome and I can return from temptation like he returned from temptation, chapter 4, verse 14, in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's what temptation does for us. If we overcome it in the power the Spirit gives us, we can return in the power of the Holy Spirit.

There's tremendous authority that a man has when he's living an overcoming life in the power of the Holy Spirit, when he's overcoming temptation. Tremendous authority that a man can have. Jesus had such tremendous authority because he not only had the Spirit resting upon him, he went out and was tempted by the devil and overcame, overcame, overcame.

For 40 days he was tempted and he overcame. We don't know what all areas he was tempted in for 40 days, but we do know, it says in verse 2 that for 40 days he was tempted by the devil. Have you noticed

that? He wasn't just tempted on the last day, he was being tempted for 40 days.

And on the 40th day, the last three temptations are mentioned to us in chapter 4. But those are only the last three, there were probably a thousand before that. He overcame a thousand temptations and then in the last three we read, he overcame also and he returned in the power of the Holy Spirit. There's tremendous authority when a man has overcome temptation in the power of the Holy Spirit.

You know there's a lot of difference between a man who stands to preach God's word who never shouts at his wife and a man who stands to preach God's word who still shouts at his wife. There's a world of difference between the two of them. There's an authority that one has, the other doesn't have.

Both may have the same doctrine, but one has an authority the other doesn't have because he's overcome a certain temptation. There's a tremendous authority a man has who preaches God's word who has overcome lusting with his eyes, which another man who has not overcome lusting with his eyes does not have. He may get up and preach the same word, but it's not the same authority.

No. A man who has overcome the love of money will have such authority when he speaks which a man who has not overcome the love of money will not have. And I could go through the list like that.

That's why God allows spirit-filled people to be tempted by Satan. Because that's the way you're going to have authority. Otherwise you'll be an authority-less man.

The trouble with a lot of people today who claim to be filled with the Holy Spirit is they are defeated in one temptation after the other. A lot of them fall into adultery, they divorce their wives and remarry and all types of evil things and they claim to be full of the spirit. Well, maybe it's true, but it's not the Holy Spirit.

It's some other spirit, that's all. Sure. I don't have any doubt about it.

People try to scare me and say, Brother Zach, don't judge. Don't judge. Oh, don't speak against the Holy Spirit.

It's very dangerous. You won't be forgiven. I say, don't try to scare me.

I know God. I'm not scared by all these verses. The Bible tells me not to believe every spirit, but to test the spirits, whether they are of God.

And I'm not afraid to do that. Don't get scared by all these scary verses that people quote at you. A spirit-filled man will be a Christ-like man.

He'll be a man who overcomes temptation. He'll be a man who manifests the authority of the spirit in his life, in his ministry. Jesus did that.

And then he came into the synagogue in Nazareth, it says in verse 16, and he stood up to preach. And they gave him the book of Isaiah. He turned, he scrolled it and scrolled it and scrolled it and scrolled it, scrolled it till he came to Isaiah 61.

And he said, this is what I'm going to read today. He found the place, verse 17, where it was written, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me. That's what he preached on.

That was his first sermon. You know what is the first sermon Jesus preached in his hometown? That he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. Now for 30 years, he had come to that synagogue as a little boy and he sat there for so many years listening to all the boring sermons the Pharisees preached there and he kept quiet.

But now the time had come to speak. And when he got up to speak, he said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, to set people free, to give sight to the blind.

Isn't that interesting that the very first sermon Jesus ever spoke in his hometown, the very first sermon he ever spoke. And as far as we know, that is probably the very first sermon he ever spoke in his life. What was the subject of the first sermon Jesus ever spoke in his life? It was about being anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus valued it. Maybe you don't, but Jesus valued it. And I'll tell you my testament.

I have come to value the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It's the secret of the Christian life. If you go to the Old Testament, if you go to the Jewish people even today, and you ask them, what do you consider the most secret thing of all? They'll say the law.

The law, the law. What is the most important thing for you? You ask any Jewish person, he'll say the law. And you come to a Christian and say, what is the most important thing for you? He should say the Holy Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit replaced the law. Moses went up to the mountain and brought the law down. Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit down.

It's exactly the same. This is the equivalent of that. Did you hear it? Moses went up to the mountain and brought the law down.

Jesus went up to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit down. That law guided Israel. Everything in their life was governed by that law.

And everything in the life of the Christian must be governed by the Holy Spirit. And if you take away the law from Israel, finished. They become like any other nation on earth.

It's the law that made them distinct, different from all the other nations on the earth. And it's the Spirit of God that's supposed to make the Christian distinct from all the other people on the face of the earth. Not a particular doctrine.

I tell you, it's a very sad thing that Christians try to distinguish themselves from others by a doctrine or a teaching or a standard of life. No, my brother. It's the Spirit that should distinguish us.

Not a pattern. I find among Christians, for example, so many different groups. They distinguish themselves from that group on the basis of some doctrine.

They have this type of baptism, we have this type of baptism. And they have this type of church government and we have this type of church government and they have this and we've got this and they've got that and we've got this. Is that the way we're supposed to distinguish ourselves? I've often thought about the tabernacle.

Have you studied the tabernacle? In the book of Exodus, you read about the tabernacle. The tabernacle was God's dwelling place in the Old Testament. And do you know that it's possible for you to make a tabernacle exactly like that Old Testament tabernacle? Because all the dimensions and everything are given us in Exodus.

The material, the dimensions are all given. Any Philistine could have made that tabernacle. There's not only the people of Israel who could have made that tabernacle.

Any Philistine or Ammonite or Moabite could have made a tabernacle exactly the same pattern. Do you know that it's very easy to copy a pattern? There are people today who call themselves New Testament pattern churches. It's easy to copy a pattern.

I find in India, we have our conferences where we gather together people once or twice a year in Bangalore and in the other churches also other times of the year. We have about seven or eight of them a year. And when we come together in the conferences, we have sometimes visitors and other believers who come and they are so impressed by the spirit of fellowship in our midst.

And they say, boy, we want a church like this in our hometown. And they think the secret is in the pattern. So they say, if we can have a meeting the same way these people have their meeting that we sing songs like them and we share like them and we follow the pattern down to the last detail, we'll have the same life.

And it doesn't work like that. I've seen people who try to follow the pattern and that assembly is deader than the deadest of other Christian churches. Because the life is not in a pattern.

The philistines could have copied the tabernacle's pattern exactly. But there was one thing in the tabernacle which the philistines could not copy. You know what that was? What was that? What? The fire.

There was a what was called the Shekinah Glory, the fire that rested from heaven on top of the most holy place of the tabernacle. You could copy everything else, but you couldn't copy the fire. That is New Testament pattern.

It's not all the little details of how you have your meeting and all those things. It's the fire. If you don't have a fire, brother, it's no use.

That's the Holy Spirit. That is what makes a Christian a New Testament Christian. That is what makes a church a New Testament church.

That the fire of God is burning in the midst, exposing sin, setting people aflame with devotion and love for Jesus Christ. If that's not there, everything is worthless. Don't be satisfied when you preach God's word, that you are preaching the truth.

You know, it's good. We must be careful about the truth. Because there is a lot of error nowadays.

But truth alone is not going to build up people. Supposing I stand here and say, listen to me, I am speaking the absolute truth and tell me how much it edifies you spiritually. Two ones are two, two twos are four, two threes are six.

This is just a multiplication table. Two fours are eight, two fives are ten. Don't worry, I am only going to go up to sixteen.

Did I tell a lie? Was anything I told a lie? A lot of Christian preaching is exactly like that. It's like repeating the multiplication table. It's absolute truth.

But there's no anointing, there's no power, there's no fire. There's no Holy Spirit. You know, in India, when we go to buy meat, we go to the meat market and you have all these, the beef and all the other things hanging up there.

All the flies sitting on it. It's hanging up there, just in the open, in the meat market. It's in Bangalore, it's like that.

And your mouth doesn't water when you see, even if it's a chicken hanging up there, your mouth doesn't water when you... But somebody buys that chicken, takes it home and puts it on the fire and boy, you're walking by that house and you smell it and you wish you could go inside and get a taste of it. What was the difference? That was that chicken on fire. That was the only difference.

Same chicken that was hanging over there, that didn't make your mouth water, now see what happened to it when it was set on fire in the kitchen. That's the difference, brothers, sisters. That's the difference, brothers, sisters, between the Word and the Word set on fire.

It's the power of the Holy Spirit and every one of us can have it. I don't mean just when we preach from the pulpit. Even if somebody comes to visit you in your home and you share a word, maybe two, three sentences with him, it should be the anointing of the Holy Spirit on it.

There is a difference. Have you noticed how Jesus is, not only when he was preaching, sometimes one sentence, one sentence, he who is without sin, let him cast the first stone. That was better than a whole sermon.

He who is without sin, throw the first stone at this woman caught in adultery. One sentence. Lord, should we pay tax to Caesar? Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and render to God what is God's.

It wasn't a big sermon. One sentence. He was like that.

He's my dictionary. He's my example. And do you know how he was like that? You say, well, he was the son of God.

I know he was the son of God, but when he came to earth, he did not use that power as the son of God to live this life. He lived as a man, anointed by the Holy Spirit. That's how he lived.

And I say, Lord, that's how I want to live. When he preached, it says here in Matthew 7 and verse 29 and 28 and 29, when people heard, they were amazed. Matthew 7, 28, 29, that when Jesus finished preaching, the multitudes were amazed because he was teaching them as one word authority and not as the scribes.

The scribes just held up the chicken in front of everybody and Jesus held up a cooked chicken which is on fire. And that's what they wanted. A lot of difference.

A lot of difference. The words he spoke, the way he lived. I think of a time when Jesus and his disciples were walking through Samaria, 13 of them.

Now, I know that when I have traveled with different brothers preaching the gospel or going to some place and we're all hungry, you know what we do? We all go to the restaurant to eat. That's normal. Before we continue.

Okay? Jesus and his disciples were going through Samaria and the normal thing for them to have done was for all of them to go to the fast food shop and eat lunch there. But somehow Jesus felt a prompting from the Holy Spirit, don't go with them. You sit here by the well, even though you're hungry, let them go.

It's very unusual. It's not normal. So Jesus said to them, you go, you go and bring some food for me.

I'll sit here. Sit there, all alone in the desert, all alone, nobody around. But he was listening to the Holy Spirit.

And sure enough, a little later, that sinful woman from Samaria comes there, gets converted and goes and brings the whole city and the whole city. There's a revival in that city. Just think, if Jesus had not listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, think what Samaria would have missed.

Can you think of what some people have missed? Because you did not listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I don't want to be like that. I say, Lord, I have only one life on earth, and I want to be sensitive to the voice of the Spirit, to go where you want me to go, to do what you want me to do, to speak what you want me to speak.

That was my desire 40 years ago, and that's my desire today, and if the Lord gives me another 30 years, that'll be my desire 30 years from now. To listen to the voice of the Spirit. Don't seek for reputation before men.

That's fit for the garbage bin. Seek for the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon your life. Seek for it.

God does not give valuable things to those who don't seek for it earnestly. Jesus says, God says, you shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. If any man thirst, let him come to me.

Out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. You got a thirst, and you know what thirst means? Well, I may be thirsty right now. I'd like to have a glass of water.

But, supposing somebody said, Brother Zach, you're welcome to have this glass of water, but it costs a hundred thousand rands. That's the cost of this water. If you drink it, you're welcome to have it, but that's what you got to pay.

I say, well, I'm not that thirsty. Thank you very much. I'm thirsty, but not that thirsty.

A hundred thousand rands. Sorry. I can live without it.

But supposing I had been wandering in the desert for one week without water. This is water. I say, water.

And somebody comes to me and says, water? Sure. A hundred thousand rands. Brother, whatever I have, take it.

Give it to me. If I have a hundred thousand rands, I'll give it. Won't I? Won't you? Because now I'm about to die.

That is thirst. When you can live the Christian life comfortably without the Holy Spirit, because the price is too much, you're not thirsty enough. And I can tell you, in a hundred years, you will not receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

You can pray. You won't get it. I'll tell you right now, you won't get it.

You don't waste your time praying. But when you get desperate, when you say, Lord, I'm willing to pay any price. I don't care if all men reject me.

I don't care if this doesn't agree with somebody's theology. I don't care what anybody thinks. I'm desperate because my life is defeated.

I'm desperate because I'm wasting my earthly life. I'm holding up uncooked chicken before people, expecting them to come be drawn to it. Something is missing, Lord.

The fire is missing in my life. And I'm willing to pay any price. Fill me with your Holy Spirit.

If you thirst, Jesus said, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. Open your mouth and drink. It's as easy as that.

Believe. And from your innermost being will flow rivers of living water. Do you know what are the first two promises in the New Testament? There are many wonderful promises in the Old Testament.

Many, many wonderful promises, all the way from Genesis, right up to Malachi. From the seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3, to the son of righteousness that will arise with healing in his wings, promised in Malachi chapter 4, there are wonderful promises. But when you turn over to the New Testament, to the pages of Matthew, you come across two promises which are the first two promises in the New Testament.

Number one, you shall call his name Jesus, Matthew 1.21, because he will save his people from their sins. That's the first promise in the New Testament, that Jesus will save us from our sins. I think many of you have begun to experience that.

What's the second promise in the New Testament? Matthew 3.11, he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit. Those are the first two things you need, more than anything else, to be saved from sin and to be immersed. Baptism means immersion, to be immersed in fire.

I know that from the time that God made that a reality in my life, many years ago, I will never exchange it for anything in the whole world. The baptism of fire, immersed in fire. The fire that burnt on the most holy place of the tabernacle, glory of God, that distinguished that tabernacle from all other tents on the earth.

Today, I am the tabernacle of God, God's dwelling place. You are the tabernacle of God. The pattern to be baptized in the right way, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is all good, but the pattern alone is not enough.

You need the fire resting upon you. Fire that burns purity into you, into your eyes, into your tongue, into your life, into your ministry. Dear brothers and sisters, can I encourage you this evening to seek God for something that you may have been missing in your Christian life.

Don't let prejudice and theology stand in your way. Don't let the extreme fanaticism of some groups who talk about the Holy Spirit stand in your way. I don't agree with them.

I remember as a young Christian, I went to some of these Pentecostal groups and I saw all the noise and the racket and I said, Lord, I don't want that. I want what Peter, James and John got on the day of Pentecost. There's nothing wrong with that.

That's what I'm asking you to seek. I'm not asking you to seek all these fanatical extremes that we see today in Christendom. I'm asking you to seek for what Peter, James and John got on the day of Pentecost, which changed them from fearful, timid, money loving, selfish, power loving people into selfless, devoted disciples of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. While our heads are bowed in prayer, if God has spoken to your heart, my brother, sister, respond to his word. Respond to his word.

Don't let the devil take away that word from your heart. Say, Lord, the things which human eyes have not seen and ears have not heard, not entered into the heart of man, I want to know them by your Holy Spirit. I want you to fill me.

I'm willing to pay any price. I surrender all to you. I'm willing to set everything right in my life, confess every sin, forsake everything that's wrong, give up all worldliness.

Lord, I'm willing to stop seeing all those filthy movies on television that pollute my mind. Lord, I'm willing to give up anything in my life if you will fill me with your Holy Spirit, set me on fire so that at least the remaining days of my life I can live for the glory of God. Heavenly Father, I believe there are at least some here who are seeking you, who need a touch from you, a touch from heaven, a being set alight with the power of God.

I pray that they'll experience it. Heavenly Father, be glorified in our midst. Bless the word.

Let it ring in people's hearts tonight when they go to bed that they will not rest until they seek you and you come and meet with them. Father, hear us, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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