

# The Blessing of the Spirit

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers, contrasting it with the law and highlighting the importance of faith in receiving God's blessings.*

**Duration:** 58:51

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:1-3, Habakkuk 2:4, Matthew 6:33, John 15:5, Galatians 3:10, Galatians 3:13

**Topics:** "Blessing"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's help and acknowledging our own limitations. He shares personal experiences of feeling desperate and helpless when preaching, and how he depends on the Holy Spirit for guidance. The speaker encourages the audience to depend on the Holy Spirit in all aspects of life, not just preaching, and promises that God will bless them and make them a blessing to others. He contrasts the old covenant of 'thou shalt' with the new covenant of 'I will,' highlighting God's grace and provision in Abraham's blessing. The speaker also challenges the audience to believe in the greater blessing of giving rather than receiving, even when it goes against human logic.

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## Transcript

Last Sunday we were thinking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I feel more and more that the Lord wants us to consider seriously why he sent the Spirit to earth on the day of Pentecost. And as I have often said, what Israel would have been if they didn't have the law, the church is without the Holy Spirit.

You see, Israel could do without many things. For example, they could do without the land of Canaan because they had the law even in the wilderness. They were okay.

But if the law was taken away from them, that was the end of Israel as a nation. The thing that distinguished Israel was not that they did a lot of good things or they prayed, but they had the law. And the thing that should distinguish us as Christians in the new covenant is the exact equivalent of the law, the Holy Spirit.

You know, the Jews made much of the law. It was a big thing. They gloried in the fact that of all the people on the earth, we alone have the law of God.

And all that is a picture of how we should value the Holy Spirit. And I really believe that the reason for many of our problems is because we have not given the Holy Spirit his rightful place in our life or in our

ministry. We have chosen to ignore him.

So, let me share with you a little more along that line. In Galatians chapter 3, first of all, You know, Galatians, like Hebrews and like 2 Corinthians 3, these are some New Testament passages that contrast the old covenant with the new covenant. And in Galatians 3, you know, he talks about law and spirit almost right from the beginning.

Verse 2, Did you receive the Spirit by keeping the works of the law? You know, a lot of people think that I can receive the Holy Spirit if you do certain things. No, it's like a whole lot of people think they'll get forgiveness of sins by doing certain things. No, it's by hearing with faith.

How did we get salvation? Hearing with faith. How do we get the Holy Spirit? Hearing with faith. What do people get when they try to get forgiveness of sins through keeping the law? Nothing.

What do people get when they try to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit by fulfilling certain conditions? Nothing. So, and he says, further, if you began by the Spirit, when you were baptized in the Spirit, you think later on in life, you're going to now, okay, we started with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but now we sort of have to keep certain commandments in order to be perfect. No, you're not going to be perfected by the flesh.

And if we are not becoming more and more perfect, becoming more and more like Christ, the reason is here. Are you so foolish, Galatians 3.3, having begun in the Spirit, are you going to be perfected by the flesh? That means your new birth is called being born of the Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit, you couldn't have been born again.

Do you know that? I mean, as much as Mary could not have had a baby as a virgin without the Holy Spirit coming upon her. As impossible as that. I mean, however much Mary prayed and fasted, nothing would happen.

It's not praying and fasting that brought the body of Jesus into Mary's womb. It was the Holy Spirit coming upon her. And that's a picture of how the Holy Spirit seeks to bring us to new birth.

So, if we begin in the Spirit, that means you're born again by the Holy Spirit. How can I make myself a child of God? That's impossible. The Holy Spirit comes and makes me a child of God.

And He says, you started right. Now, after that, are you going to become holy by doing certain things? See, that's what all false religions teach. All false religions teach that you can make yourself holy.

You can improve your conduct, maybe your character, but you can't change your nature. Only God can do that. Conduct and character are on the outside.

Nature is something within. You can't change that. And we should never mistake a change in our outward conduct and being better behaved and learning to say thank you and sorry and being gracious and nice.

That's not Christianity. That's just civilization. Christianity is a change of nature.

Only the Holy Spirit can do it. And if you're not progressing in the sense of coming to greater and greater victory in our lives over things that defeat us, that's what it means to press on to perfection. He says, probably it's because you don't seek the help of the Holy Spirit in this process.

And then you're exactly in the same category as those other people out there who think that, you know, there are even Christians who think you burn candles and do some novenas and things like that and you become a child of God or sprinkle some water on a child. It's no different from that, really. Except that you believe that the new birth is by the Holy Spirit, but afterwards you sort of, you've got to perfect yourself by the flesh.

I think it's a very common mistake among many Christians. So, I think that's also the reason why many Christians don't experience miracles in their life. Because, it says in verse 5, How does God do miracles among you? Is it by keeping certain works or by faith? You know, if I think that if I do certain things, God will do a miracle.

That's back to salvation by works. It is by faith, dependence on the Holy Spirit. Then he gives us the example of Abraham.

How Abraham was justified by faith, just by faith. It was not because of any works. And in other places he says how Abraham was 430 years before the law came.

And then he says, if you really get back under the works of the law and think that you're going to please God by a lot of works that you do. Verse 10. All the works of the law are under a curse.

A curse, why? I mean, why would that be a curse if a man kept the Ten Commandments? The curse is if a man thinks that he's going to be acceptable before God by keeping those commandments. Those commandments were really an expression of something that had to be done externally so that people could live together in society without killing each other and committing adultery with everyone else. That'd be confusion.

So it brought a certain order into Israel. It didn't make them holy. And even if a man kept all the Ten Commandments, he couldn't go to heaven.

Think of the rich young ruler who couldn't become a disciple of Jesus because even though he did so many things from childhood. So everyone, the reason is, it says here, everyone who does not keep every single thing written in the law to perform it, verse 10, is cursed. So in other words, if you keep the law, you've got to keep the whole thing.

And nobody could keep it. And if you broke it once, that was it. You're finished for life.

So no one can be justified by the law. But the Bible, even the Old Testament, says in Habakkuk, the righteous man shall live by faith. And law and faith are contrary to each other.

They are opposite to each other. Where the law says you've got to live by keeping this, grace says you shall keep it, you shall live by faith. Then he says, verse 13, Christ has redeemed us from this curse.

There is no curse for a Christian. You know, this curse of... You know, if you lived under the law, I'll tell you how you felt. Please listen carefully.

This is how you can find out whether you're living under the law. Do you always feel God is saying, you're still not good enough? Then you're definitely under the law. That's how people felt when they were under the law.

Do you know the number of Christians who feel like that? Do you know the number of preachers who preach in such a way that Christians feel like that? I mean, we ourselves had some, 20 years ago, preachers like that who came here, the whole burden of their message was to tell you you were not good enough. I mean, we already knew we were not good enough. You don't need to spend time to tell us that.

But that's the mark of being under the law. Always the feeling, I'm not good enough. And the amazing thing is, that we think we are spiritual when we feel like it.

What a work the devil does. He keeps you under law and makes you think you're spiritual. On top of that, I mean, if you realize you're wrong, at least there's some hope.

But if you feel like that and you think you're on the right track, then the devil's done a tremendous work. This curse, it's a curse. You know how people feel who are under a curse? They feel the thing never goes.

It's like demon possessed people, they just can't shake off that demon. And people on whom somebody's done black magic, wherever they go, everything's going wrong. The curse is something like that.

You know, where you just can't be happy because you're not good enough. You try your best and make some decisions and claim something by faith and all that. And then at the end of a couple of weeks, you're still not good enough.

That's the curse of the law. And I hope everybody sitting here, if you're not free from it already, will be free at least this evening. That's not the voice of the Holy Spirit.

And I'll prove to you that's not the voice of the Holy Spirit. How many of you fathers and mothers will tell your children constantly, you're not good enough? I hope there are no stupid fathers and mothers like that here, after all that you've heard here. Because if you say that to your children, you're grooming a rebel who when he's 18 or 19 years old will run away from your home and will be a useless person in society.

Do you know, I myself have heard people who have told me, 30, 40 year old people, even in countries like the United States where there's a lot of Christianity, said, my dad used to tell me, you'll never make it. Ah, you're good for nothing. You'll be useless.

Look, you can't fix that. You can't do this. You can tell a 10 year old boy things like that.

Tell him the same thing when he's 11, 12, 13. And you know what happened? It was like a self-fulfilling prophecy. This guy got it into his head for 20 years that he'd never make it in life.

He'd be a failure, he'd be useless. And he turned out to be a failure and useless. What an evil, wretched, rotten father.

And what a guilt he'll have before God for training up this child like that. Train up a child the way he should go. Tell him he's useless, he's good for nothing, he'll never make it, he's still not good enough.

You grow up, your son or daughter will be like that. And who made him like that? You. On the other hand, you encourage him and say, OK, you never made it, that's OK, it doesn't matter, we all make mistakes.

You're going to make it. You're going to make it, I tell you, you're going to make it. You've got abilities that you probably don't realize.

Do you ever write something like that to your son and daughter on their birthday at least, once a year? If you don't do it, I want to encourage you to do it. Every birthday, I can remember of my sons who would always write something, if they were here in a car, if they're not here, by email or something. Something to praise God for in them.

And I saw the result it produced. He said, that they were perfect, they never made any mistakes. I'm not perfect.

So where's the question of their being perfect? We're not talking to perfect people, there are no perfect people on earth. So what I say is, and all of us are evil fathers, think of how God is. God will never say such words to any of his children.

That is the curse of the law. Christ has redeemed us from that. Have you been redeemed from it? We not only need to be redeemed from our sins, we not only need to have our sins forgiven, we need to be redeemed.

Redeemed means delivered. It's a word that pictures a slave standing on the market. Who will buy this slave? And Jesus says, I'll buy him.

That's redeemed. Redeemed means bought from the slave market. Okay, here's my blood, I'll buy him.

And who's holding me? Not the devil. No, no, no. Jesus didn't pay the blood to the devil.

He owes nothing to the devil. The law of God. Jesus paid the price to the law of God.

The law of God was the one holding me there, saying, this guy's a sinner. He's a slave. He can't be free.

Jesus says, I'll purchase him. He paid the price and set me free. Now, imagine one of these, in the olden days there used to be slaves who used to be sold in the market just like anybody else.

And imagine a person who somebody paid the price and brought him home and said, hey I'm not going to treat you like a slave. You're free here, but you can work for me if you want. I'll give you everything you need.

Or you can go free and do what you like. Can you imagine a stupid slave saying, I think I'll go back to that old master who sold me as a slave. I can't think of a single slave who would do that.

But many Christians do. Christ has redeemed us from that law. From the curse of that wretched slave master.

God's law is standard, right? I mean, it's right that I'd broken the law and I was a slave. But Christ has redeemed me from that curse. Okay, why did he how did he redeem me? By becoming a curse for me.

It's almost as though he said, I'll exchange places with him. I'll stand there. Let this chap go free.

And so, he became a curse. I can't understand all that that means. I think it means he was forsaken by God.

And all that's involved in that agony on the cross. Now, after going through all that agony on the cross, imagine how disappointed Jesus is when he sees his children going back there and saying, okay, I'll try to please God by doing all these things. No, that's not the way.

And now, I'll tell you this. You remember what Jesus said? When you cast out a demon out of a person, fill that empty house with something. Otherwise, that demon will go and bring seven other demons and possess that empty heart.

So, we should not, whenever we get rid of something which is bad, you must fill that vacant space in your heart with the opposite of that bad thing. For example, I'll tell you, if you decide, okay, from now on, I'm going to stop murmuring and complaining. That's good.

Think how happy your home will be if you stop murmuring and complaining. But if you don't replace that with the habit of saying thank you. Thank you to God.

Thank you to your wife. Thank you to your children. If you don't develop the habit of replacing that murmuring habit with thanking God, then the house is empty.

And then, it's just a matter of time before the old habit will come back again. And I think many of you have found that true to be in your life. That the old habits came back.

Because you didn't replace it with the opposite of that good. So, when Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, what's the opposite of curse? You know what it is? Blessing. So, we got to replace this with blessing.

And that's what it says in the rest of that verse. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. So that, in order that, the whole purpose of this was not just that I can be free, but that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us.

I mean, the Jews may claim him to be their father, but the blessing which God gave Abraham is for us. And if the Jews don't claim it, well, just too bad. And that is, that the blessing of Abraham So, we can receive the Holy Spirit by faith.

We can receive a blessing. And the blessing in the New Testament is the Holy Spirit. See, that's the opposite of the curse of the law.

Law, Holy Spirit. Curse, blessing. Curse of the law, blessing of the Holy Spirit.

So, this is it. So, if I don't replace this, you and I were under the curse of the law for so many years because we tried to please God that way and it didn't work. But now, have you just kept our heart empty? And we sort of nod and say, I believe in the Holy Spirit.

It's not a question of believing. It's a question of whether he's occupied the place in our heart. And say, Lord, I believe that you've given me the Holy Spirit to give me Abraham's blessing.

That's been a tremendous encouragement to me. I can receive the promise of the Holy Spirit by faith. Abraham received it by faith.

He didn't do any works. I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 12 and see what Abraham's blessing is. Genesis chapter 12.

You know, we read here what the Lord said to Abraham when he was 75 years old. It tells us in verse 4, he was 75 years old when he departed from Haran. Now, I don't know at what age he left Ur of the Chaldees.

You know, because God had called him when he was... Ur of the Chaldees is down south near somewhere near South Iraq or somewhere there. And then he went north to a place called Haran. And that was just the route to go to Canaan, which is today Israel.

But because he took his father with him and took his nephew with him and there were some others also. It says in chapter 11, 31, Terah took Abraham his son and Lot the son of Haran, grandson and Sarah his daughter-in-law. And they all went together to Haran.

And when they saw this place called Haran, Abraham's dad said, Hey, this is a good place. We're going to stay here. And little boy Abraham, 75 years old, said, Okay, daddy, we'll stay here.

God had told him to go to Canaan. He didn't listen. Imagine listening to your dad when he was 75 years old.

That dad must have been a strong man for Abraham. You know what God had to do? He killed his father. I've got a purpose for Abraham.

I'm not going to let... I mean, he didn't kill his father when he was young. His father must have been 150 or something. It's okay, about time to die.

Just knock him off so that Abraham can move on. It says there. The days of Terah, Oh, 205.

He was much older than that. That's fine. So he killed him.

And then, Abraham, then it says, So, chapter 12, verse 4, Abraham went forth. Why? Because in between it tells us in verses 1 to 3, chapter 12, 1 to 3, what God had told Abraham when he was in Ur of the Chaldees. You see, chapter 12, verse 1 to 3 is not what he told him in Haran.

That's what he told him some years earlier in Ur of the Chaldees. Now, as I said, I don't know. It doesn't say here how long they settled in Haran.

I hope it was only a year or so or less. I don't think God would have kept them long there. But, anyway, chapter 12, verse 1 to 3 says, Way back in Ur of the Chaldees, maybe a year earlier, a few months earlier, God had told Abraham, Leave your relatives.

He didn't listen. Leave your country. He listened to that part.

You see, it's very common throughout Scripture for people to obey half of God's commandments. They'll believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they won't get baptized. Or they'll come out of Egypt, but they won't go to Canaan.

And there are numerous cases like this. The Lord told Abraham, Give up your land and give up your relatives. He gives up his land, but not his relatives.

And they become the cause of the problem. You look into your life, you may see a lot of problems come because you obeyed one thing and you didn't obey the other. And numerous husbands and wives who suffer because God tells the husband, Leave your father and mother and leave your wife.

The last verse of Genesis 2. And God tells the wife in Psalm 45, 10, Forget your father's house. Well, one or the other don't obey. They don't have a very happy marriage.

That is true universally. So, it's like that. You know, they think they know better than God.

And Abraham probably thought, Okay, I know better than God. But he didn't leave his father's house. He left his country, but he didn't leave his father's house.

He took his dad along with him. The Lord said, You've got to leave all that if you want to follow me. Even today you find, you know, Jesus said, If you want to be my disciple, you've got to hate your father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children.

And I'll tell you, through many, many years, I've discovered the fundamental reason why many people don't become disciples of Jesus is because some attachment to some earthly relative who means more to them than Christ, whose word means more to them than Christ's word. So, they're never disciples. They always wonder why they don't make progress because they've got one leg tied back to somebody on earth.

That's what happened to Abraham. Anyway, God did something radical. And listen, here is Abraham's blessing now.

When you fulfill this, it's like I said the other day, you get rid of this wretched chameleon or lizard sitting on your shoulder and throw it down, it becomes a horse, a steed on which you can drive, ride. And so, when he, the Lord said, If you break free from your relatives and break free from your family, you know what I'm going to do for you? I'm going to bless you. And this is Abraham's blessing.

Now listen to this. In verse 2, it's all there together. I will bless you and you will be a blessing.

Basically, that's it in one sentence. Two parts. I will bless you and you'll be a blessing and all the families of the earth, verse 3, will be blessed through you.

Now, there are certain other things he told them about he will curse those who curse them, which, you know, in Jesus, that's under the law for the Jews. But, it doesn't apply to us because there's no curse on us and we don't put a curse on anybody else either. Jesus said, Bless those who curse you.

We don't curse anybody. So, that part doesn't apply to us. We're talking about the blessing.

The blessing is, I will bless you and you will be a blessing to everyone. You see, in fact, that's one of the promises the Lord gave Israel towards the end of the Old Testament in Zechariah chapter 8. The Lord told Israel in Zechariah 8, in verse 13. That's a lovely promise.

And it will come about that just as you were a curse among the nations, so now, you will become a blessing. I will save you. And you will become a blessing.

Don't fear. Let your hands be strong. So, that's a promise we can take ourselves.

I mean, if you've been a nuisance and a curse to other people in your past life, the Lord says, I can change all that. Now, the thing I want you to notice in Genesis 12. You remember in our last study on Sunday, I mentioned how the Old Covenant was, Thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not, thou shalt not.

And now the New Covenant, God says, I will, I will, I will, I will, I will. Now notice how it is with Abraham's blessing, Genesis 12. There's nothing of thou shalt.

There's nothing of, you have to do this, or you shall do this. It's almost like, before God gave the Old Covenant in Exodus, He gave a glimpse of the New Covenant in Abraham. He told Abraham, I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will bless those who bless you, and you will become a blessing, not you should.

You know, there's a difference between you will becoming a blessing and you should becoming a blessing. Some people, they feel, God says, you should be a blessing to others. And so they try to be a blessing.

Have you ever tried to be a blessing to other people? And you don't realize what a nuisance you are. If you go and ask those other people to whom you are trying to be a blessing, they say, hey listen, please don't try to be a blessing to me. You tried to be a blessing to me last month, and I know what happened.

Thanks. No, there are a lot of people like that. They try to be a blessing to others, and they make a nuisance of themselves.

I come across a lot of people, particularly older people, who don't have wisdom. A lot of older brothers and older sisters who don't know how to deal with younger brothers and younger sisters. They try to be a blessing.

And those young brothers just run when they see this person coming. Because he's coming to be a blessing to them. It's really true.

I don't try to be a blessing to anybody. I know I can't. I'll make a nuisance of myself to them.

I'll give you a little bit of advice. Don't try to be a blessing to people. Because you don't realize what a pain in the neck you've become.

And those people who you try to be a blessing to, you know, you give a lot of advice. You should do this. You should do that.

I've got a lot of experience. I should do this, do that. They're sick and tired.

When is this person going to get away from me? So, the Lord says, I will make you a blessing. Let the Lord do it. And when the Lord makes you a blessing, people come running to you and say, hey, can you tell me something? Isn't it better to have it like that? And we go thrusting ourselves on people, trying to be a blessing to people.

The Lord says, I will make you a blessing. You shall be a blessing. Not, you should go out and become a blessing.

Don't misunderstand the blessing of Abraham. The Lord, when He blesses us, He makes us a blessing. I will do it.

I will make you. I will do this. I will do that.

That's wonderful to see that. That is God's work and God's plan to make me like that. And He knows that I can never do it on my own.

And I hope you realize that too. Do you have to toil all night before you realize that you can't catch any fish? Do you have to try every other method before you realize that you can't feed the 5,000? Have you learned the lesson that we just can't do it? You know which is one of the most important lessons that the Lord wanted to teach His disciples in those three and a half years? John 15, 5. Without me, you can do nothing. Well, they learned it in three and a half years.

I don't know how long it takes for some of us to learn it. Without Him, I can do nothing. John 15, 5. Which means, now listen to this.

That means that whatever I do without Him will finally amount to what? Nothing. You may think there is something in what you did. But you did it without consulting Him, without praying, without depending on Him.

You got some bright idea and you decided to do it. Fine. What will it finally amount to? Nothing.

Why waste your time? Why waste so many hours doing nothing? I don't want to spend my life like that. Wasting so many hours to do nothing. I have only one life.

And it's slipping by so quickly that I say, Lord, I really want to do something before I leave this earth. But I can't do it. I can't make myself a blessing.

You got to make me. And so, how is that? Through the Holy Spirit. Blessing of Abraham, we saw in Galatians 3. It's through the Holy Spirit.

Something more than Abraham could have. Abraham could not be a spiritual blessing to anybody. I mean, he was a blessing physically perhaps to so many people, but spiritually? He saved all those people whom the whole people from Sodom who were taken captive in Genesis 14.

He went with his 318 servants and delivered all of them. But where did they all go finally? To be burnt. They got burnt in Sodom.

What sort of blessing was that? Whether you get captured by those other kings or burnt in Sodom, it doesn't make much of a difference. No, Abraham could only be a physical blessing. But to us, we can be a spiritual blessing to people for all eternity.

And do you have a passion? Do you have a passion, oh God? I want you to do that. I want you to bless me spiritually and make me a blessing to other people. The Bible says in Ephesians 1, 3 that He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

That's a wonderful promise. You say, Lord, make that true in my life. Make all those blessings mine.

And make me a blessing. That's the meaning of rivers of living water. Like we said the other day, you know, we are first washed and then the well comes inside and then it becomes a river.

That's the same thing, being a blessing to other people. We are first blessed ourselves, the well. That's a blessing.

Then, the river. That's being a blessing. So that's Abraham, the same thing that Jesus said.

I'll first put a well inside you, I'll bless you. You won't have any lack, you won't have any need. You'll always have water, nobody can turn off your water supply because you've got a well inside.

Nobody can take away your joy, nobody can take away your victory, nobody can take away your peace. But then, that's not enough. The Lord says, I'll make it a river.

And you will be a blessing to others. So, all this can only be through the Holy Spirit. And that's why it's so important to honor the Holy Spirit in our life.

Practically, to really see that the Holy Spirit has come to replace the presence of Jesus that the Apostles had. See John chapter 14. John's Gospel chapter 14.

Jesus said, I really like the NASB translation of that word, when King James says, comforter. But he's not just a comforter, he's a helper. It says here in John 14 and verse 16, I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper.

And the meaning is, someone called alongside to help me. It's the same word for advocate. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

And we have the Holy Spirit as our helper here. Coming alongside me to help me. I understand, I don't know Greek, but it's written here in my margin that the Greek word is parakletos, which means one called alongside to help.

Someone who comes alongside to help me do that thing. And that's why he's called a helper. Who else was called a helper in the Bible? You know, he.

So Jesus said, I'll give you a helper. The Father will give you a helper. And the Father also told Adam, I'll give you a helper.

So there must be some similarity. The Father said to Adam, I'll give you a helper. And Jesus said, the Father says to us, I'll give you a helper.

And the helper the Father gave Adam was Eve, his wife. And the helper that the Father is going to give us is the Holy Spirit. There must be some similarity between wife's ministry to husband and Holy Spirit's ministry, right? I think so.

So, all of you better respect your wives from now on. She's got the same name as the Holy Spirit. Did you know that? So, I mean a real spiritual wife does not seek to lord it over her husband.

Doesn't seek to rule him. The Holy Spirit doesn't rule us either. He won't say, come on, do that quickly, otherwise I'll... That's the devil.

If you hear a voice like that, that's always the devil. People say, how can I recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit? I'll tell you. If you hear a voice saying, you've got to do that right now, that's definitely the devil.

If you don't do that, I'll punish you. Certain, that's confirmed, the devil only. The Holy Spirit doesn't talk like that.

Does your wife ever tell you, come on, do that now? Maybe some wives do, but I hope yours doesn't. If you don't do it, I'll teach you a lesson. Oh dear.

That's not how a wife is supposed to talk anyway. If she does, she's being influenced by the devil. No doubt.

The Holy Spirit, I mean, Eve was not meant to talk to Adam like that. A helper. You know, whatever, Adam was a gardener, so she was supposed to help him in gardening.

That's it. So whatever Adam was doing, she was to be a helper. There, called alongside, say, okay, let's do that together.

That's the meaning. And God told Adam, you don't have to be alone. It's not good for you to be alone.

It's not good for you to do anything alone in your life. Don't try to do anything alone. You need a helper.

You need someone who's alongside you all the time. In the garden. That's how God wanted man to live.

Always with his wife. You know, it is not like this busy life in the cities where you have to go to work 8 to 12 hours a day. No, it wasn't like that in the Garden of Eden.

They were to be together all the time. That's how God intended man to live. So the children of Cain, who built the first cities, started drifting away from God.

God intended man to live in a garden. Unfortunately, we live in the cities today. Why? Because the sinners are in the cities.

We've got to reach the sinners for Christ. So we've got to live here. But if you leave it to me, I would not live in a city.

We've got to live here to reach the sinners. That's all. So Adam and Eve were supposed to do everything together.

They were supposed to work together, sing together, play together, do the garden together, and worship God together, and talk to God together, and everything together. That's the meaning of a helper. That's what the devil has done in breaking up marriages where husbands and wives each do their own thing.

That's how marriages break up. They don't care for one another. I'm not saying we have to do the same thing.

You don't have to go to the kitchen tomorrow and say, Hey, Brother Zach said you've got to help. I've got to help. You'll mess it up.

I'm talking about the spirit of it. I don't go to help my wife in the kitchen because I wouldn't know what to do. I'd be less of a nuisance if I'm outside.

I mean the spirit, that we do everything together in spirit, not each individual action. But the spirit of being together and working together, in raising our children, doing it together. And I'm applying that now to the Holy Spirit.

Do you know that the Holy Spirit wants to be like that in your life? That He says, Let's all do it. Let's do it together. Why do you want to try and do that alone? Here, I'm your helper.

I'm here to help you. How much do we honor the Holy Spirit like that? Just like a lot of husbands neglect their wives. Hey, mind your own business.

Let me do it. That's exactly what we're saying to the Holy Spirit. Not in so many words, because we respect the Holy Spirit more than we respect our wives, so we don't say it in the same language.

But the attitude is the same. Yeah, I can do it on my own. I don't need your help.

I don't need to seek God. I don't need your power. I don't need your gifts.

Why do I need your gifts? I can serve God on my own without your gifts. The Holy Spirit says, Okay, go ahead. You know what is the main purpose of the Holy Spirit? The word Jesus used here is, I'll give you another helper so that He can be with you forever.

He was telling them, I'm going away now. Remember, this is the last night that He was with them. Next morning, He was gone.

And that night itself, He was gone, and they could never be with Him again after that. This is just a few hours before He was going to leave them forever. They were all upset.

You know, this one, we never had a problem when He was here. Whether it was a storm in the sea, or somebody sick, or somebody dead, or whatever the problem was, and not enough food, doesn't make a difference. He was there.

He had a solution for everything. And now this person with whom He lived for three and a half years says, He's going. What are we going to do? And the Lord says, it's better for me for you that I go away.

You read in John 16, He says, it's better for you that I go away, because if I don't go away, I'll only be here in Jerusalem or Galilee. What about all the other believers somewhere else? How can I be with them? If I go away, I'm going to send the Holy Spirit. And then that will be exactly the same.

See, this is what we've got to understand. It will be exactly the same as Jesus being with me here, in our particular calling. I mean, if I'm called to preach, I want Jesus with me right here, telling me what to say, how to say it.

And that's the Holy Spirit. And in everything in life, you face a particular problem, which of us doesn't face problems. Something can crop up tomorrow, which you don't even anticipate today.

But it may take you by surprise when it happens tomorrow, but it doesn't take God by surprise. God doesn't say, hey, I didn't know that would happen. No, He already knows it.

He knows it right now that it's going to happen tomorrow. In fact, He knew it before you were born, that something would happen tomorrow. And He's already made provision for it.

And the Holy Spirit says, hey, I'm right here. Why didn't you seek my help? Is it a sickness? Is it a failure? Is it a financial crisis? Is it something else? Is it a problem you have in your home? Is it a difficult son or daughter? Is it a difficult husband or wife? Whatever it is, the Holy Spirit says, I'm right here. Why are you trying to do it alone? It's like a wife telling a proud husband, why do you want to do it alone? Don't you believe God has given me to you as a helper? Do you want my help or not? And that's exactly what the Holy Spirit, in His humility, the humility of the Holy Spirit, to, oh, it really challenges me.

He's my Lord. He should rule me. But He says, I'm your helper.

Do you taste something of that? That He takes the position of a helper, a humble position. Everything I see about God is humility, humility, humility, humility. It's Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus washing the disciples' feet like a servant. And we really need to be gripped by that. I feel that a lot of Christians are not gripped by it.

And that's the reason why grace doesn't come upon them. I see so many believers, they haven't seen the value of humility. They haven't seen that their whole calling in life is to be like Jesus, who was a servant.

Like the Holy Spirit was just a helper. Just a helper. In Romans 16, I think Paul speaks about a sister who was a helper of many.

She must have really filtered the Holy Spirit. And she also got the title of helper. Same title as the Holy Spirit.

It's really amazing. Now, are you challenged by that? Let me see if I can find that verse. It's in Romans 16.

Yeah, verse 2. He says, I want to commend to you. You know, when he talks about, even Priscilla and Aquila he talks about later on in verse 3. And some of those other men, Andronicus and Junius and all of them. Hang on, we can talk about that later.

First of all, I want to talk to you about our sister Phoebe. Who is a servant. She is a servant.

That's the name Jesus had. And receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints. And help her whatever she may need for you.

Because she herself has been a helper of many and of myself. That's the title of the Holy Spirit. Imagine a woman who got the title of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Servant and helper. That's fantastic. What a woman that sister was.

I don't think she got up in a bossy way in the church. No, I think helpers and servants don't behave like that. You go into a home and you see a bossy servant shouting and ruling.

That's what is not a servant. A real servant is someone who is in the background. You don't even see servants.

If they are really good servants, you won't even see them. That's how this sister was. Godly, godly woman who did things quietly in the background and didn't want any honor for it.

But Paul sort of found out. She's been a helper. Spirit filled woman.

I tell you the churches need more people like that. Anyway, the Holy Spirit is called a helper who comes alongside to do what? To be to me, listen to this, to be to me what the presence of Jesus was to the apostles during those three and a half years. The solver of every problem.

The one to whom I can go immediately and say, Lord, this is my problem. Can you do something for me? The helper. And in other words, I'd say to make the presence of Jesus real to me.

That I can talk to Jesus just like I talk to a friend who is standing right here. And who I believe can talk to me. The Holy Spirit has come to make the presence of Jesus real.

You know, one of the things I've been challenged about and I'm getting challenged about more and more and I feel I need to be stirred in my own spirit more for this is that our calling as a church is to show the world that Jesus is risen from the dead and is alive. That's it. And we've got it outside on that cross outside our building.

An empty cross to prove that he's not there. That's the testimony of that empty cross. He's not there.

He was there, but he's not there. We wouldn't put a crucifix there, oh no. That would tell people that's the last we saw of him.

We don't know what happened to him after that. But he's not there. He was there, but he's not there.

And that's why we've got some words written on it saying he's alive. But it's easy to put those words. But you know why we put those words? Because that is the primary calling of our church.

More than anything else. To demonstrate to the world around us that Jesus Christ is not dead. He rose.

He's alive. And the apostles always used to say we are witnesses of his resurrection. We are witnesses of his resurrection.

They never saw the resurrection actually take place. They saw the crucifixion. They should have said we are witnesses of his crucifixion.

No, they never said that even once. They said we are witnesses of his resurrection. We saw him alive after he died.

We know he's alive. And you say, well, if I could only see him. Yeah, I would believe.

That's what Thomas said. But you know what the Lord told Thomas? He read these words. Do you want to be more blessed than Thomas or not? I'll tell you how to be more blessed than Thomas who saw Jesus.

You say there can't be anything more blessed than that. Yeah, there is. John 20 verse 29.

Jesus told Thomas, Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they who did not see, yet believed. Are you in that category? I can't understand that.

Now, I'll tell you honestly, as a human being, just like you, with a flesh like you, in my childlike way, I say, God, I still feel it would be better if I could see you. I can't understand this. I mean, if you appeared to me tonight physically, Lord Jesus, boy, that would boost my faith like anything.

You tell me it's more blessed that I don't see you and still believe? I can't understand that. But, you are right. I don't understand that.

You must be right. Because everything you say is right. So, I suppose there is something.

I mean, it's like this other verse we have here. It's more blessed to give than to receive. How many people do you think really believe that? Do you really believe it? And if somebody came and gave you some money, you'd say, great.

You'd be quite happy. Now, how many of you believe that when you got 500 rupees from somebody, you add another 500 and give that away, you'd be more blessed? Anybody, any of you ever done that? Or you say, hey, that's great, I didn't expect that. Thanks very much.

You know, I don't understand that. Humanly speaking, I'll tell you, I'm like you, my flesh is like yours, in which nothing good dwells. And my flesh tells me, that's all nice to talk about.

But really, it's more blessed to receive. You're really happier when you receive. And you begin to think, should I have given so much, should I, etc, etc.

It's a lie. The flesh is a liar. It's one of those things where I have to take it by faith.

I say, Lord, it must be true. There is a greater blessing in giving than receiving. And I've certainly found that in different situations.

You know, I think of my wife and I going down to these Tamil Nadu villages, particularly the way she helps all those people medically. The joy that those people have when they are treated and healed. I tell you, any, even lakhs of rupees, earning lakhs of rupees couldn't duplicate that.

There is a blessing in giving away something which is far better than receiving. And it's true. In the same way, it's more blessed not to have seen and yet believe.

I don't understand it, but I believe it. It's true. Some blessing in that the Lord says, you trust me even though you haven't seen me.

Peter says that, you rejoice with joy unspeakable. Imagine that. Now, 1 Peter 1, he says, even though, verse 8, you have not seen him, 1 Peter 1, 8, even though you have not seen him, you love him, and though you don't see him now, you believe in him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

You would think that that joy would be greater if you could see him. No. The joy is greater when you don't see him.

I don't understand that, but it's true. I'm certainly full of joy. And the result is the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

I think it is got to do something to do with faith, that if I see him, my faith will become less. Because then I walk more by sight. Sight is the opposite of faith.

So, if sight is the opposite of faith, more sight I have, faith becomes less, I suppose. Must be something like that. So, when I don't have sight, I have faith.

Then I suppose I'm stronger, really. So, the Holy Spirit has come to make the presence of Jesus real. He's there.

He's there to help me. He's there in every situation. He's there with me.

He's going to be a helper. You know, that I sort of should have been lost. You know, like sometimes when my wife is away somewhere, ministering somewhere, or away with somebody else, helping someone, and I'm all alone, I say, I don't feel very too happy.

I sort of miss her. And I say, Lord, that's how I've got to miss the Holy Spirit. He's not there.

It's like my wandering around the house and I say, Oh, she's not here. I've got to fix something with myself today. And to feel like that about the Holy Spirit.

He's not here. What happened? Lord, I don't know. Do you ever sense that the Holy Spirit's withdrawn himself? I think he tests us sometimes.

Do you feel, I'm not there? Oh, do you carry on? Yeah, yeah, that's okay. He's not there, so what? I've got to do my work. That would be like a husband and wife who don't love one another too much.

Yeah, the wife's not there, so what? She minds her business and I mind mine, and we both get along fine. That's sad. I don't want a marriage like that.

And I don't want a marriage with the Holy Spirit like that. Where, you know, he tests me to see by withdrawing himself a little bit. Will I sense the absence? Come running to him and say, Lord, where are you? I'll say, oh, it's okay.

Don't seem to miss anything today. I'll tell you this. We don't value the Holy Spirit enough.

Think of the best husband in the world who values his wife so much. That should be nothing compared to the way we value the Holy Spirit. Lord, I can't live without you.

It's like a husband-wife relationship. He's a helper. And so many things in my life to today I could have done better if I sought his help.

I was too proud to seek his help. So what's the result? Failure. You know, I've been preaching for 45 years at least.

I started preaching when I was 22. But even today, I feel so desperate and helpless when I'm cast to speak. You may not believe it, but it's true.

I say, Lord, you've got to help me. I want you there with me. Otherwise, I won't be able to make it.

I'll just waste people's time. I'll bore people. I'll bore people in five minutes.

You've got to be with me. I want you. I want to live like that all the days of my life.

Everything, not only preaching, but everything in life. I say, Lord, I can't do it. I'm a little child.

You've got to help me. I want to encourage you, my brothers. Depend on the Holy Spirit like that.

He will bless you. And without your trying to bless others, he will make you a blessing. Don't we want that? Think about it and let me know whether you want it or not.

Do we want that? Okay, let's just pray. Heavenly Father, help us to honor the spirit you've given us to dwell with us forever. For, Lord Jesus, you said, I will pray to the Father and he will give you a helper that he may be with you forever.

Thank you, Lord, for this wonderful gift. I want to be more open to the Holy Spirit myself. I see a great need in my life.

I want to be more open and more hungry and more thirsty. I want to cry out more, Lord, for the power of the Holy Spirit in my life, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I want to never live a single second in my life without Him near there with me all the time.

Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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