

(The Law of the Holy Spirit) the Spirit and the Aroma of Christ

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in making us a fragrance of Christ, primarily to God and then to others, and the need for a deep reverence for God in worship.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: Romans 8:1

Topics: "Law Of The Holy Spirit", "True Worship", "The Holy Spirit"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant compared to the Old Covenant, illustrating that true ministry begins from within rather than merely external acts. He warns against the dangers of superficial Christianity, where many preachers may have impressive ministries but lack genuine inner change, leading to spiritual shallowness. Poonen highlights that the Holy Spirit's work is to fill us from the inside, creating a well of living water that overflows into our lives and relationships, producing the aroma of Christ. He stresses the importance of worshiping God sincerely and the need for believers to seek a deep, personal relationship with Christ rather than merely seeking ministry success. Ultimately, he calls for a return to genuine worship and the life-changing power of the Holy Spirit, which leads to true discipleship and a life that reflects Christ's character.

Transcript

There was an illustration I used which illustrates the difference between the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. I want to repeat it. Because there's so much emphasis today on ministry and gifts.

We don't devalue them. Jesus had gifts and yet a tremendous ministry, more than anything the world has ever seen. I believe in ministry.

I've been doing it for 50 years. I believe in all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But there's a fundamental difference in the way the Holy Spirit operated in the Old Testament in ministry and in the New Testament.

And it's because most Christians haven't understood that or valued that, that we see so much shallowness in Christendom. That's why you hear of preachers falling into adultery or going after money. It's all because they haven't understood the difference between the ministry of the Holy Spirit under the Old

Covenant and the New Covenant.

So what I said was in the Old Covenant it was like pouring water on a cup that was upside down and the water overflowed around the cup and maybe blessed thousands of people. Moses had a ministry that blessed two million people for 40 years and many Old Testament prophets were like that. But the inside of the cup remained unchanged.

You see that in the example of Samson, David and many others. Even people like Elijah would get depressed. Now you may think depression is not a serious thing.

I remember once a preacher telling me well I'm depressed but Elijah was depressed. And I told him if Elijah is the author and finisher of your faith you have every right to be depressed. But the author and finisher of my faith is Jesus Christ and he was never depressed.

He was never in a bad mood. He was never grumpy or sour. He was never grumbling or complaining about anything.

And if he is the author of your finisher of your faith, you do not accept depression as normal. I used to be tremendously depressed in the days before I understood what it was to be filled with the Holy Spirit on the inside. You can have a tremendous ministry and no change on the inside.

That's Old Covenant ministry where the water overflows and blesses maybe hundreds of thousands of people and the inside remains full of lust and bitterness and the love of money and grumbling and complaining and such a preacher could even lose his salvation finally. That's why Jesus said in the last day not one or two, Matthew 7 verse 22-23 said many probably hundreds of thousands of preachers will come to me and say Lord Lord in your name not in the name of some other heathen God, in your name we prophesy. That means we preach powerfully.

We did miracles in your name. There was water overflowing all over their life. We cast out demons in your name and Jesus doesn't question that.

He doesn't say you're all a bunch of liars. You never did that in my name or you never did that at all. They couldn't dare to tell lies to Jesus.

I mean they can fool you and me today saying the miracles happened somewhere else in their ministry but they cannot stand before Jesus and say we did miracles in your name if they did not actually happen. Yes, there was a ministry but the Lord says let me see the inside of your cup. Depart from me you workers of iniquity.

There's sin in your life and that's why we should not be fooled by a person's ministry or his gifts. In that same passage earlier on in Matthew 7 he said by their fruit, what's inside, you will know them. How shall we know what's inside of a man's heart? Out of the abundance of a heart the man speaks.

And so that's the difference in the new covenant that in the new covenant the Holy Spirit fills the inside first. It doesn't mean there is no ministry but as the inside gets filled and overflows, then there can be miracles, healing, prophecy and everything but it must start on the inside. That's why Jesus said out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

Now a lot of people have placed the emphasis on the rivers of living water but the emphasis should be from the innermost being. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, you know there are three places where Jesus used the picture of water as referring to the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John. The first is in John chapter 3 where he said in verse 5, unless you're born of water and the Spirit and water is just another picture of the Holy Spirit there, it's not two separate things.

Born again or born from above or born of water, born of the Spirit, all referring to the same thing. He used different expressions there. Born again, born from above, born of water, born of the Holy Spirit.

It all means the same thing. It means a birth that came inside us through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is pictured like water here. The next step, John chapter 4, once you're born of water and when we are born it's like you know like it says in Psalm 116, I will lift up the cup of salvation.

The Holy Spirit comes in when we are born. You cannot be born again without receiving the Spirit. That's very clear in Romans chapter 8 and verse 9. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't even belong to Him.

See there's a lot of confusion concerning this. Is a person who is really genuinely born again, does he have the Holy Spirit? According to Romans 8 and verse 9, if he doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't even belong to Him. The Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit and because we have tried to lock up the third person of the Trinity in a theological box that we have made according to our understanding of theology, we find that verses in scripture don't fit into this theological box that we have made.

But they tried to do that with the second person of the Trinity when he came to earth 2,000 years ago. The Pharisees tried to lock him up in their theological box and he didn't fit. And when he didn't fit, they said he was Beelzebul.

I've tried for 52 years studying the scriptures to get a perfect theology of the Holy Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit and I have to confess I have failed to lock up the third person of the Trinity in a theological box. I haven't succeeded. And I'm not surprised because he's God.

And we think in you know mathematical terms 2 plus 2 is 4 and length, breadth and height and all that type of stuff and God doesn't fit into all that. God is a Trinity. Try and work that out.

Three persons and one God. That itself is enough to confuse us. So I've never tried to fit.

My theology of the Holy Spirit is in this verse. John chapter 3 verse 8. The wind blows where it wishes. You hear the sound but you can't say where it's coming from or where it's going.

So is everyone who is born of this spirit. I cannot, you know, formulate a theology of the Holy Spirit just like I cannot say definitely the wind's gonna blow this way or that way. We read the Holy Spirit can move like a gentle breeze or like a whirlwind.

We read that in the days of Job chapter 38, God spoke to Job in a whirlwind, mighty whirlwind. You read God spoke. But in the days of Elijah there was a whirlwind and it says God was not in the whirlwind.

And then he spoke in a gentle whisper. So how does the Holy Spirit work? In a whirlwind or a gentle breeze? The wind blows where it lists, where it wishes. You cannot dictate to the Holy Spirit you must work like this.

Because you work like this in Job's time, you have to work like that in Elijah's time. Because you work like that over there, you must work like that over here. This is how so many superficial revivals have taken place, which have no lasting effect.

I hear of so many places where people speak about, oh there was a revival, revival and this thing happened and that thing happened. I say let me see after one year, let me see after four or five years, what's the result of that? Are these husbands and wives better husbands and wives? Are these young people who appear to have revival godly disciples of Jesus? Most cases are. Verse 14, whoever drinks of the water that I give him shall never thirst but the water that I give him will now be not just a cup, it'll be a well of water inside him.

Notice the emphasis on the inside. Inside him will be a well of water springing up to eternal life. Like I said, coming out of the cup and overflowing, that's new covenant ministry.

But it begins with Jesus doing something inside and he doesn't do it for everybody by the way. If a person is happy that my sins are all forgiven and I'm on my way to heaven and I can prove from scripture from this verse and the other verse and the other verse that I have received the Holy Spirit, I'm okay, he's not gonna expect get anything. But it says if anyone thirst, that's the type of person whom God is going to satisfy.

John chapter 7, you go on from a well, the well springing up which satisfies his own need, begins to flow out and it becomes not just one river, John 7 verse 38, it becomes many rivers. So do you see the progression here? Born of the Spirit, a little cup, the Holy Spirit's come in and brought a little change, a new nature has come in, that can never happen without the working of the Holy Spirit. But then it becomes a well because this person is not satisfied with being born again.

He's not satisfied with the sins being forgiven. He wants a well that springs up, that satisfies his need. You know where we live in Bangalore in India, very often there's a shortage of water.

So the pipe water that comes from the city corporation, sometimes they turn it off because there isn't enough water for everyone. But we happen to have a well in our compound, so it doesn't matter if they turn off the water. We never have a shortage of water just because of one reason.

We got a well inside our compound. And the application here for us is that another person's action can never turn off my joy. If somebody else can turn off your water supply, brother, you need a well.

If somebody else can take away your peace, you need a well. If somebody else can take away your joy, something somebody does disturbs your joy or your peace or makes you hate him, you need a well. If somebody's action can make you hate him, you need a well in your heart when nobody outside can turn off your water supply.

Your water supply should not be coming from outside, it must be from within. And yet if you look at your life, you see how often you get into a bad mood because of something your wife said or husband said or something somebody else said or something your neighbor did. They are controlling your water supply.

Jesus said the water I'm going to give him is going to be a well within. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit within, within. And yet many people who are depressed and gloomy and get into bad moods and get angry and grumble and complain, they have a tremendous ministry.

It's the cup upside down. They're satisfied that people are being blessed and people are being helped. So what? You may never enter the kingdom of God even if you stand in the final day before the Lord and say, Lord we did miracles in your name.

He'll say, depart from me you workers of iniquity. It's the inside that matters. From the innermost being, Jesus said here in John 7 38, rivers of living water, that's the only type of ministry that he's interested in.

And he demonstrated that by his life on earth, the law of the Spirit. What did we see that yesterday in Romans chapter 8 verse 2? The law of the Spirit is not a bunch of commandments, is not a bunch of rules. It's not a theology of the Holy Spirit.

It's life in Christ Jesus and it's very difficult to define life in Christ Jesus. It's the life of Jesus Christ, which is the law of the Holy Spirit. And what the Holy Spirit brings into us is the life of Jesus.

And this well that springs up is the life of Jesus. And the rivers of living water that is the life of Jesus flowing out in ministry to other people, not just in words that we do or in healings or miracles that we accomplish, but just by our influence. You know, Paul speaks in 2nd Corinthians 2 about the aroma of Christ.

Have you read that expression? It's a beautiful expression. 2nd Corinthians 2, he says, we are a fragrance of Christ to God. Now, we are not called to be primarily a fragrance to other people.

So many Christians are so eager, people must see Christ in me. That sounds very spiritual. I say, let God see Christ in you first before you try to show Christ to other people.

When you try to be Christ-like to other people, you can be artificial. You can be manufacturing it. It may not be from the inside.

There's so much of artificial humility in Christian circles, artificial zeal and purity. It's all because we want to be Christ-like to other people. We want to bless other people.

We want to go and help the needy. We want to be Christ-like. A lot of it is just hypocrisy.

We are a fragrance of Christ to God, 2nd Corinthians 2, 15. Have you read in the Song of Solomon? It says, let me read that verse. It's a beautiful verse.

In Song of Solomon and chapter 4, it's the bride speaking to the bridegroom. You know, we're speaking to Christ. Oh, north wind, awake! Whether it's the north wind of adversity or suffering or the south wind of prosperity and warmth, it makes no difference.

Come, blow into my garden and let the fragrance of my garden be wafted so that my beloved, I'm not worried about the others, my beloved can come into this garden and smell that fragrance and eat its choice fruits. This is Song of Solomon, chapter 4, verse 16. So, the Holy Spirit comes to fill us, to make us a fragrance of Christ, 2nd Corinthians 2, 15, primarily to God and then to others.

The first commandment is not love your neighbor as yourself. The first commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength. Jesus said to the devil, you shall worship the Lord your God first and then serve Him.

Today's Christians have not understood what it is to worship God and that's why their service is so shallow. There's so much emphasis today on ministry without worshipping God. And I'll tell you another thing.

What a lot of people call praise and worship is not worship at all. Today's Christians know pretty close to zero about real worship. One of the last men, I think, who knew what worship was, was A.W. Tozer.

I hardly know of any other writer who knew anything about worship. What people call worship today is praise. That's good.

Thanksgiving. It's not worship. Thanksgiving, praise and worship are three different levels.

We start with prayer, thanksgiving, praise and then finally worship. Hardly anybody climbs up to that highest level of communion with God. A lot of people are at that low level of prayer.

Many people. Some people move up beyond prayer to thanksgiving, which is thanking God for what he's done for us. One leper out of ten will come back and give thanks.

It's about 10%. And very few move on from thanksgiving to praise. Praise is, even if God's done nothing for me, I want to praise him for who he is.

And if you read carefully, you know, the trouble with a lot of Christians is when they sing, like I said yesterday, they don't read carefully. They don't think carefully about what they're saying. The book of Ecclesiastes says, be careful when you open your mouth in the presence of God.

Don't say something that you don't mean. And yet Christians are disobeying that every time they sing. Particularly if you're singing a song that you're very familiar with.

Be very careful that you're not telling a lie to God. Take your singing as seriously as you would if you were signing a document in a court, sealed with witnesses and the judge and the magistrate endorsing it with a signature. How carefully you would read that document.

Especially if it's got something to do with money or a business contract. You wouldn't put your signature there in a slipshod way. How carelessly Christians sing songs to God.

Be careful with your mouth. And if you read carefully, I've done it. There are times when I've sometimes sung a very familiar song in a meeting, in a service.

And at the end of the song, I realized, hey, I didn't even pay attention to the words because I've sung that a thousand times and I didn't even think about it. I was just appreciated the melody. And so when the song leader announces the next song, I turn back in my hymn book to the old one.

I say, Lord, I'm sorry. I didn't mean this. I've got to go through this.

Let them sing the next song. But I want to say the words of this old, the one they were singing previously, which I sang without meaning it and I've repeated it to God. Have you ever done that? I did that because I realized I spoke to God without even thinking what I was saying.

Would you go before the governor of your state and speak to him things without even thinking what you're saying? We're doing it all the time when we sing to God. That's because we have lacked reverence. We

have a generation of Christians growing up today, particularly among the younger people, who lack reverence for God.

And that's why we can say so many things without meaning. And so praise is appreciating God for who He is. And look at the words of the songs you sing.

You'll find a lot of it is prayer, thanksgiving, praise. It's good, but it's not worship. You may call it praise and worship, but I want to tell you it's not worship.

And if you don't believe me, if you're serious about Bible study, take a concordance and look up the word worship in the New Testament. I did and it'll revolutionize your idea of what worship really means. But if you're too lazy to study the Bible, you deserve to be deceived about worship.

I'll tell you the truth. I don't want to be deceived. I've got only one life to live.

And there's only one book that God's given me that's shown me how I should live on this earth. And I don't want to be fooled by Christian tradition, whether Roman Catholic tradition or Pentecostal tradition or charismatic tradition or Baptist tradition or any tradition. I want my life to be governed by God's word.

I mean, think of example the way sometimes, maybe you yourself have gone away from what you call a praise and worship meeting in your church. And you've gone away and said, didn't we have a great time today in praise and worship? Notice the emphasis on didn't we? Did you bother about whether God had a great time that? No, it wasn't meant for God at all. It was meant for us.

We had a great time. Boy, the music was great. The pianist was great.

The drums were great. And we had a wonderful time swinging our hips and the guitarists were great. And we enjoyed it thoroughly.

What about God? What did he think about the whole thing? It doesn't matter. It wasn't meant for God at all. It was entertainment.

It was entertainment just like the rock musicians entertain people. The only thing is we are using Christian songs. I tell you, the lot of so-called praise and worship in Christian churches today is pure entertainment.

And that's why you find so many Christians never growing spiritually. If a man really worshipped God, it would change his life completely. The way these people in the Bible worshipped God, they fell down before God.

And to me, one of the clearest marks of worship, clearest expressions of worship is what the psalmist says in Psalm 73, verse 25. In my study of scripture, I haven't found a better expression of worship than this. It's not how well we can sing.

I tell you one thing, it may disappoint you to hear me and I felt God saying to me, it doesn't disturb me. But Lord said, what disturbs me is there are husband and wife here who are not in good terms with each other. There are two brothers here who won't have fellowship with each other.

That's what disturbs me. Many years ago it happened and I prayed a prayer that day. I said, Lord, from now on, don't let anything that doesn't disturb you disturb me.

I couldn't care less if the instruments don't play properly or the music is not so good as it should be. I want to be disturbed by the lack of melody or harmony in the church among people. The lack of harmony in the homes, not in the musical instruments.

I couldn't care less for that because God doesn't care for that. That could be just entertainment. What is the melody God is listening to? What is the harmony God is watching for? You think it's in our music? No, it's in our relationships.

That's the melody and harmony He is listening to. I'm not despising, I say we should do our best in everything. We dress with clean clothes when we come to the service and we should have good music.

But don't let's place a premium on that to such an extent that we miss out on worshipping God, what God is after. Psalm 73 verse 25, Whom am I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on this earth. If a man can fall down with his head down before God, like the people worship God, Abraham and Job and John etc.

and say, Lord Jesus, you search my heart, I tell you the truth, I desire absolutely nothing on this earth but You. Nothing. I'm not interested in money, comfort, prosperity.

I don't care if you don't give me anything. I'm happy that I have you. And you are enough, more than sufficient for me.

Maybe you're married and you don't have children. Say, Lord, that's fine. I'd love to have children but it's okay if you decide not to give me children.

You are enough for me. And if you don't give me as much success in my ministry as you give to that brother there, that's nothing to do with... I'm not bothered by that. You are enough.

I'm not looking for anything outside of you. I'm not looking for a better car or a better house or a better job or anything. I desire nothing but You.

I don't even desire a ministry. I don't desire to be known. I don't desire that people should respect me in the church or think that I'm a wonderful brother or sister.

I couldn't care less for that. I have You, Lord, and that's enough for me. That is a true worshipper.

And I tell you, there are very few like that. Very, very, very few. And that's the reason for so much of shallow Christianity.

The Holy Spirit has come to make us worshippers, to bring a well within us that makes us completely satisfied with Jesus Himself. And as He overflows from us, it's not so much in powerful preaching that God gives very few people with that type of ministry. I remember, you know, when I think of the tremendous need in my own country, my main ministry is in India.

When I think of the tremendous need there is in India and many other countries in the world, I say, Lord, why don't You raise up more anointed teachers and preachers who can preach powerfully the whole counsel of God? And I've come to see that God could easily do that. But He hasn't done it. I mean, if you're honest, you have to admit, think of all the sermons you've heard in your whole life from the time you were converted.

Well, I think of most of the sermons I've heard in my life from the time I was converted 52 years ago. I would say pretty close to 95% of them were absolutely boring. They never inspired me.

They were like dead. Why is it like that? Some of them claimed to be anointed. But they bored me to death.

And if you're honest, you'll admit that as well. Why is it that God doesn't anoint more people? Because primarily He's not interested in preaching. He gives that gift to a few, but primarily He's interested the fragrance of Christ might come forth from our life.

Even in a few sentences that you speak. I've met a few people like that who are not great preachers. But there's a fragrance of Christ about their life.

Like it says about the godly woman in Proverbs 31, the law of kindness is on her tongue. A fragrance that comes forth from their life even if they don't open their mouth. There's something about their appearance and the way they say a few words.

It's like the perfume that some ladies have. You know, I sometimes sit in an airport and I suddenly get a perfume and maybe 15 feet away somebody's walking. Pretty powerful.

That lady didn't say anything, but I sensed there's somebody here. It's fragrance. That's what it means by fragrance.

The aroma of Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit has primarily come to give us. If you're expecting to be baptized in the Holy Spirit so that you can become a great preacher like Charles Finney or D.L. Moody, you're seeking your own.

And you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. But if you're seeking God saying, Lord, I want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit because I want the fragrance of Christ to be manifested first of all in my home that my wife can taste the fragrance of Christ that she never hears me grumbling, complaining, getting angry, bad moods anytime. Lord, please help me in that even if I never preach.

How many of you would want to be filled with the Holy Spirit for that purpose? You do not have because you ask with wrong motives. You want to be known in the church as a great preacher like somebody you admire. Boy, I wish I could preach like him.

Thank God He doesn't give you that gift. It would destroy you. It would make you proud.

Maybe that person you admire, God's broken him through many years before He gave him that gift. It would destroy you if you got it. But the fragrance of Christ in your home, you don't get any credit for that.

God will be glorified. How many of us are interested in that? That our children will taste the fragrance of Christ in the way we deal with them. That your husband will see the fragrance of Christ in your life, in your words.

A well springing up, satisfying you and overflowing. You see, in Jesus' life, I said the law of the spirit is life in Christ Jesus. And you look at Jesus' life and you see the perfect spirit-filled man.

I don't look at today's charismatics to see the perfect spirit-filled man. I have no respect for 99% of them. But I look at Jesus and I see the perfect spirit-filled man.

And I see that this man who is the perfect spirit-filled man, for 30 years he never preached. Even though he knew the Bible more than anybody in Israel at the age of 12. He didn't go around showing off his Bible knowledge.

He lived in obedience to his father. What was he doing for 30 years? 90% of his earthly life, he didn't have what we call ministry. Does the perfect spirit-filled man have no ministry for 90% of his life? Can you understand that? We think of spirit-filled only as ministry.

And Jesus demonstrated by his earthly life. Remember the law of the spirit is life in Christ Jesus. That means look at the way Jesus lived.

The Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus in Scripture and reproduces that in us. Why is it that 90% of Jesus' life on earth, 30 out of 33 and a half years, he lived in his home and in his place of work, the carpentry shop. And 10% of his life, just 3 and a half years, he had ministry.

And yet if you were to ask most Christians, I would say 99% of Christians, can you tell me some of the things that Jesus did? They'll immediately talk about feeding the 5,000 and walking on water and raising the dead and preaching the sermon on the mountain. I say, you're telling me about 10% of his life. What did he do the remaining 90% of his time? They don't even know.

They never thought about it. Jesus' ministry came out of his life. For 30 years, the well sprung up in him.

The life of God that was manifested in his home to his brothers who didn't believe in him. His brothers would irritate him and they would see the fragrance of God coming forth in response from Jesus. That's the preparation for ministry.

You want to have a ministry? Don't go to Bible school. It's a waste of time. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit so that he can manifest the fragrance of Christ to neighbors and brothers and believers who irritate you and trouble you and speak evil of you.

And you got brothers and sisters where you live in tight circumstances. Jesus was, I mean, humanly, the son of a poor carpenter living in a little house. He never had a room of his own.

Children who have a room of their own, they're living in luxury. When Jesus found life difficult, he couldn't retreat to some room and lock himself up there. There was no private room for him.

He lived, and this is how God allowed his son, in pressure. He never sinned. The glory of God was seen in Jesus Christ.

Full of grace and truth. That's what the Holy Spirit came to produce. You know, when John writes, when he tries to sum up his life, it says in John 1, we beheld his glory.

The glory that only begotten of the Father. Full of grace and truth. He doesn't think of all the miracles he did.

He thinks of his life. There was a fragrance about his life. And later on, when he writes his epistle, the same John at the age of 95, he's looking back 65 years to the life he saw in Jesus.

He wrote 1 John when he was 95 years old. And he looks back 65 years to the 3 years that he spent with Jesus. And he says, I want to tell you about this life, 1 John 1-2 that I saw.

I said, dear brothers and sisters, I want to tell you about a life that I saw, that I touched, that I handled. It's not his sermons. He says, that was eternal life, the very life of God that was manifested in a human body.

And he says, we are declaring that to you so that you can have fellowship with us, so that you can come into this life. This is the whole purpose of being filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's why Jesus, as I said, spent 90% of his life just living the life without healing the sick, without raising the dead.

Now most people can't understand that. Today we have so much pressure saying, the world is dying in need and there's so much need. People are dying in sin.

What are you doing sitting there doing nothing? What did Jesus have done if somebody put pressure on him when he was making stools and benches and planing wood in the carpentry shop in Nazareth when he was 25 years old and say, what are you doing with all this tremendous Bible knowledge when there's nations that need you? He wouldn't be disturbed. He'd just carry on making stools and benches and planing wood. You'd think he's pretty carnal, not concerned about the lost and the dying.

Look at all these people. I've come from a country where I've seen missionaries for 50 years. And I tell you, most of them, 90% of them, I never saw a godly life in them.

They had plenty of money because they came from Europe and America and Australia and New Zealand, but they didn't have a godly life. I heard them grumbling, complaining, competing with others. I said, why in the world did you cross an ocean to come here to manifest this life? Who's interested in your doctrine? It's a life that Jesus came to demonstrate.

That's what God looks for. But they came because they went to some missionary meeting where they were challenged about the lost and the dying in India that they must go and reach. What did they reach? I've seen the result of mission work in India all across the land.

It's not produced disciples. No. Many of you may be connected with different missions.

Tell me one place where you see disciples and a powerful local church built. I'd like to go and see it. I've traveled all across my country, a place where so much mission work is done.

I tell you who are the godly missionaries, all those who came to India before 1950. It's all tourists who come after that, short-term missions and all this type of stuff with plenty of money. And people here who never go there, supporting orphanages that don't exist and Bible colleges which are just to fill the pockets of people who run these institutions.

It's a racket. The money changers are back in the temple. The sellers of doves and sheep are back there in the temple.

There's nobody to drive them out. Because we have not emphasized the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire to bring a well that springs up within us to produce the aroma of Christ and flowing out from there into ministry. We have emphasized ministry, ministry, ministry.

Thousands are being saved here, thousands are being saved there. Saved from what? Are they saved from the love of money? Are they saved from anger? Are they saved from anxiety? Are they saved from bitterness? No! Where are they saved from? They've been told to say the magic words, Lord Jesus come into my heart and you're on your way to heaven. This is what people call ministry today.

Where is the result of it? I ask a lot of people who say they are engaged in evangelistic ministry. I say, show me one person in your church who came as a result of your evangelistic ministry. Show me your church.

If you were to go to the apostle Paul in the first century and say, where are these people you brought to Christ? He'll say, come here. I'll take you to Ephesus. Here's the church.

All these fellows I brought to Christ. He'll take you to Galatia, to the churches in Galatia, to Thessalonica. What about today's evangelists? Oh, they're somewhere.

Where? Somewhere. Probably on their way to hell. This is the deception of today's evangelism because it doesn't make people disciples.

It doesn't build them into local churches. Dear brothers and sisters, please remember one thing. You have only one life.

Don't waste it following the traditions of today's Christianity. Get back to the Bible. Read the way Jesus and the apostles did their work.

Seek to genuine fullness of the Holy Spirit with works from within. Gives you an overcoming life. Saves you from sin.

Puts the fire of God inside your heart. And then you can communicate that to others. And you'll no longer be interested in impressing people with your sermons or your preaching or your so-called ministry.

You'll want to build a church where Jesus is building. That's what the Holy Spirit came for. He's come here to carry on the work that Jesus came to do.

He said, I've come to build my church. And He said, I'm going to send the Holy Spirit. And that's what the early apostles read.

You read the Acts of the Apostles. That's the only type of ministry they engaged in. Let's turn back to Romans chapter 8. In Romans chapter 8, here's one very important thing.

When it speaks about the law of the spirit of life, if you want the Holy Spirit to operate freely in your life, there's one very important foundation. And that's in the first verse. Romans 8 verse 1. There is no condemnation.

It's very important. Now, this may be unnecessary for some of you, but I think it's necessary for some. Can you honestly say you're completely free from condemnation? No condemnation means zero condemnation.

I lived for so many years in my Christian life after being born again, with self-condemnation. Do you know how many Christians live with that? Self-condemnation. They're seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

I say, forget it. You cannot go to verse 2 before you get past verse 1. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. You have to come to the place where you say, there's nothing in my life that condemns me.

The devil can't condemn me anymore. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. So much of self-condemnation.

Some people think it's humility. Oh, I'm good for nothing, I'm good for nothing. You know what Jesus said? He said, learn from Me, Matthew 11, 29, for I am humble in heart.

He never told us to learn how to preach from Him or how to sing, but He did tell us to learn humility from Him. Don't learn humility from the dictionary. Don't learn humility from other believers who don't know what it means.

Jesus said, learn it from Me. I am humble in heart. So many Christians have got a wrong understanding of humility.

Do you find Jesus ever going around saying, Oh, I'm good for nothing, I'm useless. Where do you find Him saying that? Never. I say, that's not humility.

That's fake humility. It's a humility where you want to get honor for your humility. That's not humility at all.

It's just pride putting on the garb of humility. It's a deception. All of us like to get a reputation for humility.

Jesus never cared for a reputation for humility. He wanted to be humble. Learn from Me, He said.

There is no condemnation in Christ. We have to come to that place where I recognize that Christ took the entire punishment for my sin. I can stand before God, not only forgiven, but justified.

And there is a difference between being forgiven and justified. Forgiveness just deals with my past life. Now some people think, like I was saying yesterday, my sin is not covered, it's cleansed.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us. And that's why the spirit could not be given. Because the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in a heart that has not been cleansed.

And nobody's sin could be cleansed till Christ died on the cross and presented that blood before His Father. The blood of bulls and goats is only a temporary covering. The heart was not cleansed.

How could the Holy Spirit dwell inside that heart? That's why the Holy Spirit was not given, was just poured on top of the cup flowing out in ministry but could not come within. That's the meaning of John 7, 39. Spirit was not given because Jesus was not yet glorified.

But now, Christ has shed His blood and I can be completely clean in my heart. If I have honestly acknowledged before God that I am a sinner and don't blame anybody else, I can be cleansed and I can live without condemnation. Not just because my past sin is forgiven.

Do you know that if you have all your sins forgiven, you still can't stand before God? Because you got a thing which the Bible calls the flesh in which there dwells no good thing. A sinful flesh which is a corrupt nature. How can I stand? Even if all my past sins are forgiven, how can I stand with this corrupt nature before God? Impossible.

And that's why I have to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ which is what the Bible calls justification. I'm clothed. The righteousness of Christ is put to my account and that covers my flesh and then I can stand before a holy God and that's why I have no condemnation.

I don't sit. I remember the olden days when I thought condemning myself was humility or feeling guilty. I felt the most spiritual meeting was the meeting where I went away feeling guilty.

And because I had that idea, I used to preach like that too in the olden days. It's what I call guilt trip preaching. A lot of preachers engaged in that today.

Their whole aim is to make you feel guilty. You come to the church service and the preacher, his aim is to make you feel guilty about something or the other. And you sit there being hammered by the preacher and you feel little nice about it because you feel, I felt really guilty today.

That was a good meeting. Rubbish! There is no condemnation. I've told my own fellow elders with whom I work, I said, never engage in guilt trip preaching.

There is a need to expose sin. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin. Sure.

But there's a difference between conviction and making people feel condemned. God did not send His son into the world to condemn the world and He did not send the Holy Spirit to condemn the world. What is the difference? When the Holy Spirit convicts, He doesn't speak to us with words like, you're good for nothing.

That's the way some father, some good for nothing father spoke like that. Because he was good for nothing, he told his son, you're good for nothing. But a good father will never speak like that.

Never. Even if his son is useless, he'll give hope for him and say, you can still make something out of your life, my son, my girl. It doesn't matter how much you've fallen.

That's God's way of speaking. And He won't just generally say, you're useless. He'll tell you specifically, this particular thing that you did was wrong.

You can do it better. There's always hope. The Holy Spirit gives us hope.

And the illustration I have used in sharing with my fellow elders in India and teaching them how to preach, I say a preacher is like a surgeon who's conducting an operation in an operating theater of a hospital. You know how a surgeon has to... his hands must be absolutely clean. They scrub and scrub for so many minutes, you think there's no dirt there, but they're still scrubbing.

And then they wear these sterilized gloves so that there's zero bacteria and germs in it. Because they're dealing with a human body. They're putting their hand inside somebody's stomach.

And there better not be germs there. And I say, you are dealing with something more than that. You're putting your hand inside a person's heart.

And soul, you better be clean. Don't dare to stand in a pulpit if there's unconfessed sin in your life. Don't dare to stand in a pulpit if things are not settled between you and your wife.

Say you're not preaching that day. Where are the preachers who take that seriously? I yelled at my wife and I didn't set matters right with her yet. I'm sorry, I can't preach today.

My hands are dirty. That surgeon in the operating theater is more careful dealing with a human body than most preachers are today in dealing with souls. They watch internet pornography in secret and dare to get up in the pulpit and claim to be a man of God.

Hypocrites of the first order. That's the tragedy of Christendom today. Uncleaness, unrighteousness and money matters.

And they stand in the pulpit as men of God. I say it's a serious thing to preach God's word. It's more serious than a surgeon operating in a theater.

Now, once you've cleansed yourself and you do the operation, you cut this fellow's stomach open because there's a cancer inside. I'm not saying we pretend that there's no cancer. Of course we must expose sin.

Because sin is worse than cancer. So we cut the fellow open, expose the cancer. And then what do you do? Wheel him out? Okay, go home.

With the stomach open and the cancer exposed. That's how a lot of preaching is. Guilt trip preaching.

Exposing the cancer, cutting the person open and saying go home. I said that's not the way we should preach. What does that surgeon do? He cuts it open, he removes the cancer, stitches it up, gives the person a painkiller, a sedative, waits till he's awake, whispers words of encouragement to him saying, you're okay.

That's how he sends him home. I said, do the people who come to listen to you preach go home like that? Or do they go home feeling, boy what cancer I've got. With their stomachs open.

That's how a lot of people are going away. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. And if you listen to a preacher preach to you like that, I'd say don't listen to him.

Just turn off. And if you don't want to be rude and walk out of the meeting, go and open your Bible and read some other passage of scripture while he's preaching. Ignore him.

I've done that sometimes. I don't want to insult him by walking out of the service. So I say while he's going on, I'm going to do some Bible study here.

And something else which God's going to speak to me about. But I refuse to be condemned in a meeting. I refuse to ever be condemned.

Condemnation is from the devil. There is no condemnation. And I hope you will learn something today that will stand you in good stead all the rest of your life.

Condemnation is from the devil. It's not from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does convict.

But he always convicts with giving us hope that you can be an overcomer. From you where the stink of sin is coming out, the aroma of Christ can come forth. One last verse before we close.

Zechariah chapter 8. Here's an example of how the Holy Spirit speaks the truth and gives us hope. Zechariah chapter 8 and verse 13. And it will come about, says the Lord, that just as you were a curse in the olden days, I will so save you, not only that you stop becoming a curse negatively, but you will become a blessing.

So don't fear. Let your hands be strong. Can you get discouraged if you hear a message like that? It tells you the truth.

You were a terrible curse in your home. You were a nuisance in your church. You were not what you should be.

But I'm going to save you. And you will not only be freed from being a curse, you will become a blessing. Therefore, don't be afraid.

Let your hands be strong. That is how true ministry should be. And that's the type of message the Holy Spirit gives us.

And that's what you should be hearing. There is no condemnation. May the Holy Spirit apply to your heart in whatever way you need to hear that message.

Because I tell you, you can't get into Romans 8 verse 2 if you don't get past Romans 8 verse 1. That's so important. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us to come into this wonderful life, the wonderful salvation that Jesus purchased for us on the cross.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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