

**Sermon File # 452**

**Scripture Text: John 14:15-27**

**Sermon Title: *What Jesus Says about the Holy Spirit***

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## ***What Jesus Says about the Holy Spirit***

### **Introduction:**

Open your Bibles with me to John 14. Today is Pentecost Sunday and also the Global Day of Prayer, and for that reason I want us to look together at what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit, whom he promised would come in power on that Day of Pentecost, after a period of prayerful anticipation (also Luke 24:49).

Today we look at a portion of Jesus' instructions to his disciples about the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, who would come upon the church at Pentecost and into the life of every believer. Earlier in this 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter Jesus told his disciples that they would be empowered to "do even greater things than these," i.e. the miracles he had been doing (verse 12). No doubt the eleven disciples were overwhelmed to think that Jesus promised that they would be involved in doing even greater things than he did in his earthly ministry.

The greater things/dimension would be possible because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross and the power given by his resurrection and by the outpouring of the Spirit that would come on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus' glorification. Jesus was giving them a task far greater in magnitude than he was able to do in his earthly ministry. The church worldwide would continue his work and do works greater in quantity because each believer would be an extension of his presence. Jesus then, in verses 13 and 14, said the way his

incredible work would be done would be through prayer in his name, i.e., with his authority and according to his will.

Now, in our text, Jesus tells them in greater detail about the Holy Spirit, who would be the one who would enable their task and even their praying. He also would be the one who would keep them from feeling abandoned after Jesus would return to heaven to be with the Father in his glory.

Follow as I read **John 14:15-27**.

Today is Pentecost Sunday, the day when many churches around the world celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the church and when churches in 219 countries around the world are engaged in the Global Day of Prayer.

As I think of my years growing up in a Baptist church in Ohio, USA, I remember having heard very little preaching about the Holy Spirit. Because of some excesses and controversies about the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, faith healing, and other phenomena, there seemed to be a fear of broaching the subject of the Third Person of the Trinity. Ironically, my home church in Columbus was split over the doctrine of the Holy Spirit when my pastor, who had for so long avoided teaching about the Holy Spirit, became a somewhat militant charismatic and led a large group away from our church to form a Pentecostal congregation. I saw the pastoral leadership in my home church swing from “charis-phobia” to “charis-mania.”

Jl Packer, evangelical Anglican theologian, says that for whatever reasons, Christians today are in a complete fog about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The late James Boice said that for the average Christian, the Holy Spirit means little more than the spirit of Christmas! It’s time for us to get over our neglect of and fear of teaching and preaching about the Third Person of the Trinity. We should no more fear learning about the Holy Spirit than we do about fearing to know more about the Father and the Son, since these are all the One God who is mysteriously in three persons.

What is important is not the controversial teachings and interpretations of people, whether Baptist, Pentecostal or other evangelical pastors or theologians. What is crucial for our understanding is what Jesus in the word of God says about the Holy Spirit. If we are to be a part of the continuing work of Jesus, as we see him working in the Book of Acts, and if we are to be used mightily of God in doing our mission in the Great Commission we must take seriously what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. In our text we are confronted with some essential teaching of Jesus about the Holy Spirit.

Note with me, first of all, what Jesus says about...

### **The gift of the Holy Spirit**

Jesus reminds his disciples about the inextricable connection between loving him and obeying him. And to those who know him by faith that generates love

and obedience, Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit (verses 15-17). Later, after his cross and resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples before his ascension back into heaven, and then said he would send them what the Father promised. They would be clothed with power from on high, which is from the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49).

In our text Jesus says he will ask the Father to give us another Counselor, literally, The Paraclete, which in the Greek means the one called alongside to help (The *English Standard Version's* "Helper" is a better translation than "Counselor" or "Comforter").

*The Message* says the Holy Spirit is Jesus' "parting gift" to his disciples and to us. It is important to understand Jesus is saying the gift of the Paraclete/Helper is...

### *God the Holy Spirit*

Contrary to the way many speak of the Holy Spirit, he is a person and not an impersonal force or entity we can refer to as "it." Although the word "trinity" is not in the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity is throughout Scripture. God is revealed as one God who has made himself known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is one in nature, purpose and will, yet he manifests himself in three ways. None of these persons of the Godhead ever contradicts the other and all bear witness to each other.

As we note in verse 28 of this chapter, Jesus alludes to an order in the Trinity. All three are the same God, yet the Father is first in glory and power and authority, and the Son is second as he obeys and glorifies and perfectly reveals the nature of the Father in his incarnation. The Holy Spirit is God who reveals and glorifies the Son and works on earth in the hearts of God's children.

In verse 16, Jesus says the Father will give us "another Counselor." This translation (NIV), according to DA Carson, makes the Holy Spirit appear to be a therapist of sorts. The word Paraclete is better translated helper, and is also like an advocate in court. In fact, 1 John 2:1 speaks of Jesus as our advocate "who speaks to the Father in our defense" whenever we sin and are in need of forgiveness. Here in our text, Jesus says the Holy Spirit is "another Paraclete/Helper/Advocate in our defense. He is God who stands with us. He is God, who right here on earth is alongside us to help us in our defense.

He is *another* helper. The Greek for "another" used here is more precisely "another of the same kind" (There is a different Greek word for "another of a different kind"). Kent Hughes says we can speak of another apple of the same kind when we speak of two Jonathan apples. But when we speak of a Jonathan and a Winesap, we are speaking of another of a different kind. But the Holy Spirit is of the same nature and character of Jesus.

In verse 23 Jesus equates the coming of the Holy Spirit as his and the Father's coming to live in us. And also, Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as

being “Christ in you” and of our having the mind of Christ and of being led by the Spirit of Jesus (Colossians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 2:16; Acts 16:7). So, we don’t have to worry about being too precise even as we address God in prayer. We can call upon the Holy Spirit and upon Jesus (as did dying Stephen in Acts 7:59), and upon the heavenly Father and still we are calling upon God. Personally, I think we should follow the model Jesus gave us for praying to the Father (Matthew 6:9).

The Holy Spirit is fully divine and is as much God as is Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. He is the present, Holy God who is...

#### *Given to believers*

Jesus qualifies the promise of the Holy Spirit as being for those who love him and are prompted by love to obey him (John 14:15-16).

Simon the Sorcerer is like some New Age people today who seek spirituality and supernatural powers apart from a love/faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Like many people today, Simon didn’t understand that the Holy Spirit is given and not gotten. Seeing Philip do great signs and miracles, Simon the Sorcerer offered the apostles money in order to purchase spiritual power. Peter soundly rebuked him and warned him to repent before God’s judgment fell upon him for thinking he could buy the gift of God with money to use for his own purposes (Acts 8:9-24).

The Holy Spirit is given to believers...

#### Who are converted

True conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus told Nicodemus, we must be born “from above,” given new life by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8). Since the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, all the truly converted who believe in and commit to follow Jesus are immediately given the indwelling Holy Spirit. Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a sinner turning him or her toward God. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit produces the initial obedience of faith and repentance of sin, and results in conversion, a change of mind, heart and life (Titus 3:5).

And Paul says we cannot claim to be children of God if we do not have the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9). In fact, what Jesus says in verse 23 has been called the believer’s “Private Parousia” (George R Beasley-Murray, in his commentary on John in the *Word Biblical Commentary*). Jesus promised in verse 3 that he will come again to receive us, which is a reference to his glorious Second Coming at the end of time. Here in verse 23 he speaks of his and the Father’s coming to us through the Paraclete, our Helper, who is God with us right now on earth. We who are truly converted have been given the sign and seal of the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 John 3:24; Ephesians 4:30).

Jesus says that the truly converted will give evidence on the day of judgment that we belong to him because we have produced fruit, which is the fruit of the

Holy Spirit, those virtues that give evidence of conversion (Matthew 7:15-20; Galatians 5:22f). And, the gift of the Holy Spirit is given to believers...

Who are to obey

But now that we have received the Holy Spirit, he must be given control of our lives, involving us in "*The Church's Amazing Task*" (verses 12-14. See sermon manuscript from 21 November 2004). He is also at work every day to make us like Jesus. But we must obey him and not resist him. The degree to which he uses and blesses us is dependent on our willingness to love and obey him.

When we disobey and resist his will, we grieve him (make him sad) and put out the flames that would otherwise bless and empower us for mission (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians. 5:19).

In the Old Testament we read how the Holy Spirit came upon God's servants for special tasks and occasions. Earthy and carnal people like Samson and King Saul received anointing for the tasks that God gave them, yet it appears the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from them, as their ungodly character seems to attest.

In contrast, we as children of God, John writes in his first letter, have all received and anointing from the Holy One (1 John 2:20). We have been born of the Spirit and the Holy Spirit has come upon and even into us, which is what Jesus says literally in the verses of our text. So, the Holy Spirit is in us to stay! As children of God, we don't need more of the Spirit; we need to give him more of us!

And we either honor, please and allow him to work through us to the glory of the Father, or we grieve him (Ephesians 4:30) and quench his work in and through us (1 Thessalonians 5:19), to his dishonor and the detriment of his kingdom. To be given the Holy Spirit is to be given a great trust and responsibility, to live in a way that honors him and that honors the Lord Jesus, which is what the Holy Spirit is all about. This is his work and purpose, to reveal and honor Jesus, and we must be careful to not oppose the divine will and purpose.

Jesus says something important also about...

### **The work of the Holy Spirit**

The verses of our text must be seen in their context, which includes verses 8-14. Here Jesus describes "The Church's Amazing Task." The Holy Spirit is the one who...

*Enables for mission*

That incredible mission is to join with the Father and the Son, enabled by the Holy Spirit, in doing his kingdom work which Jesus began in his earthly

mission. That work is to make disciples and worshipers in our sphere of influence where God has placed us in Brussels, and wherever he might send us into the entire world. For many of us, the first place we need Holy Spirit enabling is in our ministry in our own homes, with our spouses and children.

We cannot be effective as disciple makers unless we are living holy lives before Holy God. Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that “It is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22).

He is the helper who enables us to become all Jesus has saved us to be. This is the doctrine of the sanctification (the “being made holy and set apart for God), the teaching that we are commanded to become more holy as we surrender more of our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 12:14). He produces in our lives daily, and in increasing measure, the fruit of the Spirit, listed in Galatians 5:22-23 and 2 Peter 1:5-8). We the people of God are daily, as the Holy Spirit continuously works in us, becoming more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18). As our Teacher, the Holy Spirit also gives a greater and growing understanding of the teaching of his word, the Scriptures (John 14:26).

The disciples in Corinthian were a gifted church, and the more ostensibly gifted members were flaunting their gifts and minimizing the importance of those given more inauspicious spiritual gifts. So, in the midst of his discussion of spiritual gifts used in the church and its worship, Paul gave the love chapter, reminding them that spiritual gifts that enable the church to do its work are useless and even harmful without the gracious fruit of love (1 Corinthians 13).

The Book of Acts shows us how the Holy Spirit allowed Jesus to continue his mission through his church, and during this year we have noted that Jesus’ ongoing work is the “amazing task of the church.” As we read and study Acts, we have been impressed with how the church never prayed for God to protect the apostles from persecution, but to grant them boldness to continue preaching and sharing the gospel to the end that God would be glorified through the expansion of the kingdom. The boldness the Holy Spirit gave the first church is the same boldness he gives us. It’s not to be aggressive and pushy with people, but rather it’s the freedom to speak naturally and comfortably with those whom the Spirit has brought to us. When I prayerfully make myself available to the Holy Spirit, it’s amazing to see how God works to use me, just by simple encounters. And I realize these are not forced, but are directed by the Father, who has ordered them long in advance.

In John 16:5-11, Jesus explained how the Holy Spirit will enable their gospel mission by bringing conviction to the hearts of unbelievers. This widespread work of the Holy Spirit is part of the “greater things” Jesus said would be done after his return to the Father (John 14:12-14). After the release of the Holy Spirit through the witness and preaching of the post-Pentecost church, many of the same religious leaders who had been Jesus’ avowed enemies “became

obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7). Our mission is simply to follow and serve Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. We don’t convert anyone. We simply announce the Good News to those with whom the Holy Spirit is at work. We join Jesus in his work as he lives his life in us and as us.

He enables us for mission and also the Holy Spirit...

*Helps in time of need*

How helpless and perhaps even desperately anxious the disciples felt, realizing their Lord was leaving them. They would be vulnerable to the same enemies that dogged Jesus’ steps and who would eventually crucify their Lord, taking him from them. But Jesus gives some powerful and encouraging words to them and to us. The Paraclete is the Helper. Jesus assured these disciples they would not be left unprotected and vulnerable like orphans, who were the absolutely weak and defenseless of Jesus’ day (verse 18).

What comfort and strength these words have been to me during times when I have felt especially weak and vulnerable. As New Testament scholar Gerald Borchert says, these chapters in John 13-17, what have been referred to as “The Holy of Holies” in the Bible, address particularly the issue of loneliness in the minds and hearts of the disciples. They had forsaken everything to follow Jesus, and had become dependent on their love for and companionship with Jesus. And in our impersonal culture of alienation, loneliness is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Holy Spirit is the answer to the problem of loneliness, being the embodiment of the Father and the indwelling Holy Spirit.

I was encouraged as I read about David, who was being pursued by King Saul, who was in a jealous rage seeking to kill David. Repeatedly David’s covenant friend and Saul’s son, Jonathan, came to David to warn, protect and encourage him. I love the way Jonathan helped David find strength in God (1 Samuel 23:16). He was a mediator and protector between David and his enemy, Saul.

Nancy and I are encouraged by all the ways God is affirming our calling to this place, even in the smaller details of our lives. The Holy Spirit is graciously at work even in the ordinary and everyday. For example, the neighborhood where we live was assailed by a series of burglaries several years ago. The usual method that this thief used or those thieves used to gain entrance into houses was to drill a hole in the door and use a devise to turn the door handle on the inside. The house we are renting has only one door where this method could possibly be employed, and that’s the back door leading outside onto the patio. But I had thought the handle on that door was simply too heavy to be turned from the outside.

After we had lived here in Belgium for about a year, on a Wednesday morning I arose very early in order to have a quiet time of personal worship before departing for a downtown outreach breakfast. But in the wee hours of the morning I was awakened by a loud male voice, saying “Roger!” Usually when I dream things like this I struggle to answer in my sleep, as Nancy can testify.

But this voice clearly awakened me, and when I awoke I answered, "What?" Not knowing "what," I got up and used the water closet and returned to bed to sleep. When I awakened at 5:00 I went to my chair near this back door where I have my quiet time, and discovered the door was open. A hole had been drilled, and the handle turned upward, and the door opened. As I shared with the police, evidently the burglar had heard my stirring, or even the same voice that sharply called to me, and was frightened away. In any case, I sensed we had been visited by an angel of the Lord, who protected our belongings and perhaps us as well.

As Nancy and I reflected on this experience (And, by the way, the landlord made repairs and added an additional security bolt!) we gave thanks for God's protection. This doesn't mean those of you who have been robbed are not better Christians than we are! Nor does it mean that God promises we will always be sheltered from robberies or even physical harm. Only our faith relationship with Christ Jesus is guaranteed full sheltering from the Enemy and his devices. But our little episode was a reminder of how God is able to protect. He is worthy of our full trust. The Holy Spirit is our constant Helper.

Then I read in Proverbs 18:24 about a friend who sticks closer than a brother. Jesus is that Friend above and beyond all other friends and brothers (and my immediate family, biological brother and other Christian friends have been great encouragers throughout difficult times). Jesus is more than a Jonathan. The Holy Spirit is Jesus in us, within us, to protect us. As our Paraclete/Helper, he is Jesus who comes alongside us. If we have fallen and are too weak to get up on our own, he lifts us up. If we are weary in running the race, or are feeling weak and vulnerable to temptation, he comes along side to put his arms around us and run and walk with us, and separate us from the Tempter, Satan, who would harm us.

I remember helping our two children ride their first bicycles after the training wheels were removed. Like a Paraclete/Helper, I would walk alongside them and steady the bike until they could "get the hang of it," and ride off on their own. Sometimes I would then have to run to them and pick them up after their fall. But the great thing about the Holy Spirit is that he is always alongside us, and never lets anything touch us apart from his permission.

He even helps us when we pray, as Paul and Jude both remind us (Romans 8:26; Jude 20). He is God within us, helping us to pray to God above us, the Father, and in the name and authority of Jesus, the Son. Sometimes we don't know how and for what to pray, but the Holy Spirit gives us prayer language, groanings that we cannot articulate (Romans 8:26).

I pray you will join me in a fresh awareness of the Spirit's presence and willingness to come alongside us to enable us in the work of serving and simply living.

Finally, note what Jesus says about...

## The fellowship of the Holy Spirit

In verses 23 and following, Jesus is speaking about the fellowship we will enjoy with him and the Father through the Holy Spirit. As Paul prays for the Corinthians in his benediction, “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Jesus says that the believer who loves and obeys him has the joy of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Every truly converted person has the Holy Spirit. If we are not loving and obeying God, then we are grieving (making sad) the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

This says something important about...

### *His home, our hearts*

In the second verse of this chapter of John, Jesus promises a place he is preparing for us in his Father’s house. And there are many rooms (Greek *mone*) and one for every child of God. Jesus desires us to be with him in heaven (John 14:4). But in the meantime, he desires to be at home in our hearts (John 14:23-24). The same word for “home” (*mone*) is used in both these verses.

What a tragedy that even believers/Christians ignore the presence of the Holy Spirit in us! How sad that we find substitutes for his presence in earthly pleasures and even in trying to do kingdom work in the world’s way! The Apostle Paul says that instead of grieving the Holy Spirit we must be continually filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). The Apostle tells the church that the Spirit-filled life is the only life that can fulfill the requirements for living in *God’s New Society* (John Stott), the church, which Paul describes in Ephesians.

To be filled with the Spirit doesn’t mean we need more of him. It means we allow him to rule in all of our lives (mind, body, spirit, emotions, and thoughts), filling all of us with himself. This continuous appropriation we need to practice from morning till bedtime, “24-7.” It means to surrender to the Lordship of Christ and believe he answers us when we ask him for his Spirit to empower and to bless us (Luke 11:13). We don’t need to “get more of him.” We need instead to allow him to have more of us.

The prophet Jeremiah expressed this lament over Israel when he said they had committed two sins:

“They have forsaken me,  
     The spring of living water,  
 And have dug their own cisterns,  
     Broken cisterns that cannot hold water” (Jeremiah 2:13).

We are all broken cisterns. We leak. Thus we need the continually inflow of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said “streams of living water” will flow from within us, and he was referring to the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39).

In the US there was a member of a small, country church who was infamous for his inconsistent living. Everyone in the church knew that periodically he would make a great display of repentance, coming before the church and confessing sin and praying for God to once more fill him with the Holy Spirit. This went on as a pattern for years. He would get right with God, and almost immediately fall away from church and back into some very publicly known sins. On one particular Sunday he returned to church and, and true to form, came to the front to pray aloud, confessing and saying so all could hear, “Lord, fill me with the Holy Spirit! Fill me with the Holy Spirit!” This time one of the deacons had heard this enough from this man, and he prayed, “Lord, don’t do it! He leaks!”

Although the Lord wants us to be more consistent than this man was in our obedience and walk with Jesus, yet we too leak, and always must be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are broken cisterns and need the constant supply of living water. He desires to be in us a stream of living water, as we note in chapter 7:38. He is to give us the flow of his love, grace, and peace.

How he desires to live in and rule and bless us! There is no substitute for his glorious presence as our Helper. How tragic also to offend his royal presence and his perfect love by sinful behavior, attitudes and thoughts. In 1 Corinthians 6 we read about the incongruity of allowing these bodies of ours, which were purchased by Christ to be temples of the Holy Spirit, to be united with someone in a sinful, adulterous relationship.

The Holy Spirit is God at home in our hearts to be our strength and our wisdom as our teacher, as Jesus says in verse 26. In times of difficulty I have never ceased to be amazed at the way the Holy Spirit faithfully teaches and encourages me with truths and promises from God’s word (Romans 15:4). And his presence in me gives peace that transcends all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

By being justified we have peace with God (Romans 5:1). As we live in step with the Holy Spirit, we have the peace of God that Jesus speaks about in verse 27 and Paul describes for us in Philippians 4:7. Jesus says the world, which often promises peace and holds world peace demonstrations, cannot give the peace that God can give. In Paul’s word to the Philippians, he says the peace of God will guard our hearts and minds like a garrison, a sentry, a bodyguard.

The world tries to broker, offer, and even demand peace. Yet the world is powerless to give the peace God alone can give, which comes with the forgiveness of sin and the assurance of God’s control over our lives. There is great peace in knowing the Sovereign God of the universe is living in our hearts. That assures us that nothing can happen to us without getting past the Holy Spirit, our “Bodyguard,” as it were (Philippians 4:7).

Again, the Holy Spirit is at home in our hearts to watch over us and to walk beside us.

And, the question is, are we at home with him?

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit means we are...

*At home with him*

The Holy Spirit desires to be at home in our hearts. The glorious God over all his creation desires to live and rule in our hearts! Are we treating him as the honored guest so that he is at home in our hearts?

Amos the prophet says that two cannot walk together unless they agree to do so (3:3). I know that I can't be unfair with and unkind to my wife and then ask her to take a walk with me before getting things right with her. She's liable to tell me to take a hike! We can continue to coexist in separate parts of the house, but we can't walk together and abide and truly live together unless we are on speaking terms. Paul speaks of our need to walk in step with the Holy Spirit in order to be out of step with the sinful nature and in order to be in step with Holy God. If we live surrendered to his will, and seek to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, God through the Holy Spirit will produce through us the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25). And we will enjoy his delightful presence and fellowship.

The Holy Spirit is "God with us" and "Christ within you." He who lives within us is no less God than the Father who created and who watches over us and the Christ who died for us and is now reigning at the right hand of God the Father. He is Spirit, but spiritual reality is no less real than the material we touch and see. Just as in his resurrection body Jesus was able to pass through the stone over the tomb and through the door of the Upper Room, so the Holy Spirit came to dwell in us the moment we prayed to trust and follow Christ as Savior and Lord.

God the Holy Spirit is also the one who can unify and empower this church as his body and his kingdom army. Paul admonished the church to "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). He appealed to the church to "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace" (Colossians 3:15).

Such unity is possible only as we treat the Holy Spirit as an honored guest in our hearts and also in our fellowship as a church family. Let him rule in our hearts and his reign over us will be one of peace.

Are you right now at home with the Holy Spirit? Are you comfortable with the thought that Holy God is in you?

## Conclusion:

If you have never repented of sin and trusted in Christ as your Savior, you could never be at home until you repent. He will then convert you and come into your life by the Holy Spirit. God will come into you and give you eternal life and a home in heaven (John 14:4).

There is danger in resisting the Holy Spirit, which Jesus described as the process of becoming an “unpardonable sinner,” in Matthew 12:30-32.

If you are a child of God and are not walking with him, then you are grieving the Holy Spirit. Hopefully you are miserable being out of step with him, not allowing him to walk alongside you to help you. If you are not miserable, that may be a sign you are not converted. In any case, like David you can call on God to not take his Holy Spirit from you (Psalm 51:11) and give you or restore to you the joy of his salvation.

Those of us who know him, how we desperately need to be in step with him, and to depend on him to steady us, teach us, and give us strength and balance for godliness and fruitful service.

Today we need to ask, are we serving the Lord Jesus because we love him and are being filled with the Holy Spirit? A lot of work needs to be done, and each one of us needs to examine how we are serving the Lord in this place. Our text began with Jesus’ saying, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (verse 15). We will do only so much out of duty. What we will do out of love for Jesus has no limit.

I realize how I totally depend on him to strengthen my ministry in this place. What he wants to do through my life, only the Holy Spirit can do.

May God help us to believe what Jesus says about the blessed Holy Spirit. I pray we will all hunger for him to fill us and take control of us.

As someone said, we don’t need more of the Holy Spirit. We already have him, and he is God, in all his sovereignty, wisdom and power. The fact is, he needs all of us in order to bless and to use us for his glory. How we as a church depend on the Holy Spirit to use us and make us fruitful for his name’s sake. Would you commit to join me in prayer that the Holy Spirit will come upon us, individually and as a body?

In Luke 11, I am reminded how we are to keep on asking, seeking and knocking in order to receive God’s blessings; and the greatest gift the Father gives is the Holy Spirit, who is the key to every other spiritual blessing (Luke 11:9-13). The command Paul gives in Ephesians 5:18 is that we “keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.” We must live each day in a spirit of desperate dependence on the Lord Jesus, and are to live as though our lives were a continuing prayer for the Holy Spirit to keep on infusing us with divine power and wisdom and grace for all the fruit of the Spirit. Every day we need

what the Holy Spirit alone can give us—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, self-control, wisdom and perseverance.

I have never liked the term, “Spirit-filled Christian,” which implies that being filled with the Holy Spirit is a permanent condition that someone achieves and is elevated to a higher category than us ordinary Christians, who are not Spirit-filled. Some days I live in the fullness of the Spirit’s presence, and give him full control, and enjoy the abundance of his fruit in my life and allow him freedom to do Jesus’ work in me and as me. Other days I am almost totally oblivious to him. And on those days I am bereft of the fruit of the Spirit that is to be the norm for my life.

I invite you to join me today in a new commitment to believe what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit, and to seek all that he means to be in us and do for us. Does the Holy Spirit live in you? Is he at home in your heart? On this Pentecost Sunday, let’s examine where we stand with the Holy Spirit. For unbelievers, this could be the day when the Spirit of God remakes you and then fills you with the fullness of God. For us who already know him, let’s invite him as our honored guest as we submit our hearts to his control through the abiding Holy Spirit.

### **Questions for personal reflection and/or group discussion:**

1. Would you agree that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is often neglected by Christians and by churches? If so, why do you think this is true?
2. Do you agree with the phrase, “The Holy Spirit is given and not gotten”? Why or why not? When is the Holy Spirit given?
3. How is the Holy Spirit grieved? (See Ephesians 4:30). How is the fire of the Holy Spirit extinguished? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:19).
4. The Corinthians seemed to value the gifts of the Spirit to the neglect of the fruit of the Holy Spirit, so Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 13 in the middle of his discussion of the gifts of the Spirit. Why do you think the fruit of the Spirit, especially love, is more important than the gifts?
5. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “another Helper” (verse 15, NIV: “Counselor”). In what ways does the Holy Spirit help us? How has he helped you, first: come to faith in Christ, and secondly: since you have become a Christian? How has he helped you lately?
6. Ephesians 5:18 literally says we are to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. Are you daily seeking to live in his fullness and are you depending on his power? How is the believer to be filled daily?

7. Would you be willing to quietly pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and take full control of your life?

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