

By My Spirit, says the Lord!

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Some of you have been here quite a while. Some of you have been here for a long, long time. You might even remember this song from Zechariah 4:6.

“Not by Might, nor by Power but by My Spirit says the Lord. This mountain shall be removed. This mountain shall be removed. This mountain shall be removed, by My Spirit says the Lord.”

In the old days we used to sing that over and over and over again. It reminds me of once when in the car with Daphne, my granddaughter, and I wanted to introduce her to more classical music, so I put on the CD of Handel’s *“Messiah.”* If you know anything of that work, it takes a scripture from Isaiah and sings it over and over again. After she listened to that for two or three songs, she said, *“Grandad, that’s a little repetitive!”*

There is nothing wrong with being repetitive. How many songs we love are like that? We want to sing them over and over again. On the first go-around we just sang the words. The second time through we are drinking it in more. But then the next time, we are really grabbing ahold of what it is saying to us! Maybe by the fourth or fifth time we sing it, we are just *consumed* with worshipping the Lord. Right? I can remember being so lost in worshipping the Lord in tongues that 45 minutes might go by.

There were young people’s meetings that we had down at St. Mark’s Church in Kingston years ago. We would hold one chord for 45 minutes or more! I turned to my friend, Don Rumble, and said, *“You know we haven’t sung even one song yet!”* We were just worshipping the Lord. A lot of times when his dad, Dale, would come with sermons, he would start by saying, *“If you really want to see how the Spirit is moving today, you should go to the young people’s meeting.”*

What God is doing in this day and hour is similar to our Friday night prayer meetings. I see the same kind of thing happening . . . the Spirit of the Lord taking over! The Spirit of the Lord in all of His power and glory.

Introduction

I’d like to read with you some scripture in Zechariah chapter 4.

“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel:

4 ⁶‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts. ⁷ Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone with shouts of “Grace, grace to it!” ’ ’ ”

⁸ Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

⁹ *“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands shall also finish it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. ¹⁰For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”*

Don't you love how the Lord puts little quips like “day of small things” right in the middle? What? What does that have to do with anything? Well, what the Spirit does in our life is not always grandiose and wonderful so that everybody can see it. But rather, it is the small things that you grab ahold of and are able to plant your feet upon as a foundation of what God is doing in your life. The Spirit of God does that.

“For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. . . .

So what is the plumb line? The word of God, the Lord Jesus Himself.

. . . They are the eyes of the Lord, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth.”

Remember the eyes of the Lord in the New Testament which says that they scan to and fro looking for true worshipers. You can worship in Spirit and in truth. That's kind of neat. This Old Testament scripture has a lot of New Testament truth in it.

When you talk about the Spirit of the Lord, He isn't held to the Old or the New, He moves when He wants to move. When you look at Job's three friends, particularly his last one Elihu, the scripture begins by saying, *“And Elihu, FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT began to speak these words.”* If you read what he said, they definitely were God and the Spirit of God. Not the spirit of the law which brings condemnation, which brings guilt, which brings reticence, which brings hesitance. We need to be delivered from all of that.

Zerubbabel here is a type of Church government, oversight like the elders we have here at the Fountain of Life Church. He was the governor under King Darius of Persia. He was always associated with the high priest, Joshua, who was a type of Christ, the prophetic voice to the Jewish people. It is interesting that many times Zerubbabel tried to rebuild the temple but *failed again and again*, even though he possessed the decree from the king, even though he had the people's consent. There was always something thwarting him until the prophetic brothers came along and encouraged him. It is the same when our prophetic brothers in the Church come along and encourage the body of Christ through prophecy. And, prophecy is?? The Spirit of God. Only then was Zerubbabel finally able to return from Babylon and rebuild the temple.

The message here is that without the Spirit there is only frustration. Without the Spirit of our Lord you are only “digging in your heels” and saying, *“I'm going to stand on the word of God! I know the doctrine of the Trinity. I'm going to stand on that.”* Etcetera. This path will only lead you to frustration just like it

did for Zerubbabel without the Spirit of God. The Spirit breathes into us, LIFE! Not just life but power.

John Chapter Three

Here we see Jesus describe the Spirit in a way differently than He does anywhere else in scripture, an aspect that is not defined in any other way in all the New Testament and no where else in the bible.

John 3⁵ “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.⁷ You should not be surprised at My saying, ‘You must be born again.’⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

This is what Jesus wants us to know. It isn’t just a list of things to do. It isn’t doctrine. It isn’t just making the right choices. He says, *“The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it but you cannot tell where it has come from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* What? I want order in my life! I want to just stand on doctrine. All of that is good. I want order and I still want the doctrine. However, I’m telling you, unless I am led by the Spirit I am missing something. A born-again factor is not really resident in your walk with Christ unless you are born-again in the Spirit! That Spirit doesn’t really have to take into account what you have prepared, what you have thought was going to happen or what you think might happen.

Remember when He told His disciples, *“When you go before the Sanhedrin or whomever, don’t prepare what you are going to say.”* That would be like telling Trump’s legal team, *“Don’t prepare!”* But you know in the Spirit we don’t have to prepare. I don’t remember how many Board meetings I have gone to and the Lord said exactly that same thing to me. *“Peter, you have all the data worked out. Look at your charts but I don’t even want you to go there in your thinking. I want you to listen to My voice. Listen to those who are speaking to you and work at convincing them the truth of what is going on.”* They had to deal with Medicare issues and other things they didn’t want to see. They were blind to the changes in Medicare, changes in Healthcare, mind boggling. If I had come to them with just the data, they would not have understood it. But if I come with the heart and Spirit of the Lord they might. They have a good chance it will happen. Some will be “captured.” They won’t be captured by doctrine and facts and truth, but they will be captured by the love of God which is resident in the Spirit of God, in the Trinity.

The Trinity as a doctrine is sterile. But the Trinity as a work of the Holy Spirit in the Son, as He goes to the Father and sends down the Holy Spirit is life itself. Something awesome happens there. We don’t just know about Christ. We haven’t just felt and touched Jesus like His disciples. Suddenly, we are IN LOVE with Him! Suddenly we don’t care what happens next. *Let the wind of the*

Spirit blow us where it may! Maybe we'll find ourselves in a place where we are very uncomfortable in the natural, but in the Spirit we are fully equipped.

Spiritual Warfare

This is a key to spiritual warfare. The enemy looks at the Church doctrine, looks at the Church's weekly bulletins and says *"I know what they are going to do"* And he does. However, a Church that is led by the Holy Spirit? He hasn't got a clue! Not a clue because he isn't led by the Spirit. He doesn't know the Spirit. He is clueless about what is going to happen next when you start walking that way. When you pray in the Spirit! Wow. Things can really happen.

Let's jump ahead a little bit to the concept of missing the mark and ending up regretting what you are doing. For example, someone comes up for prayer and the Lord gives you a prayer for them. After you pray, you may sit down and say to yourself, *"Boy I really love that brother or sister but I wonder if that prayer was really effective. I wonder if I could have prayed differently. I prayed that way but maybe I should have gone in a different direction."* What is that?

In the economic world, it is called "opportunity costs." Whenever you take a direction, whenever you choose an object, whenever you do something, you have taken advantage of the opportunity and you have paid a cost, a price. Now, people who sell you expensive items know that. . . cars. I remember my first large purchase was a Sony reel-to-reel tape recorder. Remember those? Here it is. You pay a lot of money for a Sony reel-to-reel! Wow, the sound even today is uncompromised. After you buy it, they send you a little letter (no email in those days) saying, *"Congratulations. You have chosen the most superior product you could possibly buy."* Now why did they say that? Because they know there is a guilt factor involved. You paid a lot of money and the first thing you think when you go home is, *"Oh boy, why did I do that? Did I really need to hear music all that well?"* If you buy a new high definition TV, same problem. You buy the Jeep but maybe you should have bought the Subaru instead. *"Maybe I would have been happier if I had held out for another year and bought a Lamborghini?!"*

There is always something. Everybody is faced with this! For example, if you were in a prison in which there was only one window and there are five other prisoners with you, there is an opportunity. You could move closer to the window where you could have more light. Once you got there you might have thought you'd made the wrong decision. *"Maybe I should have been by the door so when the food comes in I will have first choice. Or maybe I should have stayed in the dark so other people would know that I am a compassionate person."* All of these things are THERE so you can be led by guilt or not by just knowing if you did things right or not.

Here's the clue. When you are led by the Spirit all that disappears. So, you might come up front of the Church and you want to pray or prophesy in English. You should do so and I encourage you to do it. But when you pray in

tongues, in the Spirit, there is no opportunity cost. You don't even know what you are praying. You might say, *"I don't even know if it was the right prayer."* And the Lord will say, *"Oh yeah! I know what you prayed and it WAS Me!"* There is no opportunity cost at all.

The Apostle Paul says, *"I pray in the Spirit more than you all. I don't have any guilt about that."* This is the same Spirit that Jesus is talking about that blows around with the wind is part of who you are. When you are filled with the Spirit, you can come up and pray in English and with understanding, doctrine and everything else. If it is in the Spirit, you KNOW it is in the Spirit. You can walk away and say to yourself, *"I don't have to question it. It is God."* Stand on the word. Stand on the leading of the Spirit. What an awesome thing.

The Holy Spirit Promised, Our Source of Power

Beside the fact that Jesus died on the Cross for our Sin as the lamb of God, dying He then went to heaven and sat at the right hand of the Father, but then He sent His *Holy Spirit*.

Acts 1⁴ On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, "Lord, are You at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

So this is a commandment the Lord gave to them. He should have given it to all the Churches, Protestant, Catholic or any of them. And He did. *"Don't go out just thinking you know it all. Don't go out just knowing doctrine. Don't go out just knowing about Me. You need Me IN you! Wait for the promise of the Father which,"* He said, *"You have heard from Me."* *"Really, we did? Yes."* He did talk to them about it.

⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

It's going to be a lot different. Do you want to know where people get the word and the rhetoric of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit?" There it is directly. You shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. When you are baptized in water you are submerged. Everything you are is now wet. You know you've been baptized. You get up needing a towel to dry off.

Just so when you are baptized in the Spirit, things happen in your life and you need a "towel" to dry off. The Glory of God is leaking out all over. But it is more than that.

⁶ *Then they gathered around Him and asked Him, “Lord, are You at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?”*

They sure missed the meaning of what He was saying here, didn't they!

⁷ *He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by His own authority.”* ⁸ *But . . .*

Here's what's going to happen. Another words waiting for the Holy Spirit isn't about solidifying the government or solidifying the government of the Church, or the Kingdom. The King was already there. Rather this is the true power.

*. . . you will receive **power** . . .*

Let's stop right there. Power. What is power? In our mind power is an explosive force. It also has a negative connotation, somebody overpowering another person. But it is not about that. Power of the Holy Spirit is about accomplishing the purpose, the will, the intent of the heart of God. Without the Holy Spirit it is not going to happen, no power.

*. . . you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you;*

So He didn't say anything about speaking in tongues there. But He was talking about the ability of accomplishing His will, the ability to understand all that He has taught you, to receive the doctrines correctly in the word of God, to be able to drink in His presence, all of that comes through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Before this time the disciples knew Christ. Before this time He said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” So they had a measure and a portion of it before Pentecost but they weren't yet **baptized** in the full power of the Holy Spirit. It wasn't just an increasing process for them, though it is with us. It was a one-time event that started that day of Pentecost of which even the Protestant and Catholic Churches still celebrate. “*. . . and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

Wow. Do you want to know what the power of the Church is? There it is! Do you want the power that God has in you? There it is. We sing these songs this morning. We can sing just the words but they are not just words. They are LIFE. They breathe life into us. Not only in worship but even when we share our lives with each other in the testimonies we have; they are encouragement to one another. That is the Holy Spirit, breathing life into us, “*. . . to overcome by the blood of the Lamb, the word of our testimony and they loved not their own life even unto death.*”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:4 outlines the nine gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes people talk about the gifts and they are referenced in other places differently but in the Pentecostal mind-set the nine gifts of the Spirit are found in this particular pas-

sage. There are nine of them, nine gifts as there are nine fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22.

1 Corinthians 12 ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

*⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of **wisdom**, . . .*

Wisdom is listed first because more than anything else we need more than just the facts. We need how to apply them through the Spirit.

*. . . to another a message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, . . .*

That means supernatural understanding of what's going to happen. Have you ever experienced it? It has happened to me many times. The Lord says, "*You know when you go into this meeting or you're going to go down this road, this is what is going to happen.*" I had no way of knowing that ahead of time. In order to apply that knowledge appropriately I also needed a word of wisdom from the Lord. You see, we *need* the Spirit.

*⁹ to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another **miraculous powers**, . . .*

What would we do without the ability to actually know that people are going to be healed and do miraculous works of God? See, we don't just pray for each other in a sterile way. We pray for each other in the Spirit. Faith is sparked up within us. I know sometimes when I'm laying hands on someone, whether at home-group or up front in Church, or anywhere, the Holy Spirit is coming down through me and I know there is an impartation of life to a person's joint that needs mending, to a cold that needs to be healed, to cancer that needs to be gone, the working of miracles.

*. . . to another **prophecy**, . . .*

In this Church we don't have any problem understanding what prophecy is. Prophecy is not what the *world* would say it is. A prophecy in the world's point of view is predicting the future. That is so almost unimportant to the prophetic unction of God's people in the Spirit. It isn't so much about predicting what is going to happen as much as explaining what *God* is doing. The prophetic word often is, "*I see the Lord doing such and such in your life, brother or sister; things that you cannot see with your own eyes, things that only the Holy Spirit knows. And, here they are.*" There will be tenderness and kindness that comes from your heart. It will not be one of judgment and condemnation or for your own aggrandizement. I can prophesy that statement right now in Jesus' name!

*. . . to another **distinguishing between spirits**, . . .*

Well discerning of spirits is a good one. In the old days of the baptism in the Spirit, this only applied to *evil* spirits, as in if someone needed to be deliv-

ered from a demon. But this discernment also applies to the spiritual realm in a good way, when you see the angels of the Lord, when you see the Spirit of the living God doing something in your midst. *“Oh boy, I could feel the Lord Jesus! Amen.”*

*... to another speaking in different kinds of **tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues** ...*

Now it is interesting to take special notice when the Apostle Paul said, *“I speak in tongues more than you all, but I wish you would all prophecy.”* There is an understanding in Paul’s heart that we need to know what the Spirit is SAYING to us not just in an unknown language which is edifying to one’s person, but also to our intellect so we can understand what God is saying. We know that to be true. God wants us to understand. That is why He gave us our mind and our intellect, as when Jesus told the parable of the sower and said, *“I want you to understand what is going on.”* Then Jesus stopped and explained it to His disciples in detail. Why? Because He wants you to understand. The Holy Spirit hasn’t changed from that time until today. Amen.

Prophecy and Tongues

1 Corinthians 14¹ Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.

I’d say the same thing today. I am impressed with the gifts of the Spirit but when prophecy comes, it says in the book of Revelation, *“The testimony of Christ IS the spirit of prophecy.”* That means that really knowing Jesus has a prophetic overtone that you cannot deny. You pray to Him. He’s going to answer you: that is a prophecy. When you pray to Him you receive an understanding of how He is going to do something in a particular circumstance. It isn’t just, *“Whatever You say God”* and then walk away. That would be such a frustrating way to live your Christian life. Billy Graham knew better than that. Yeah. That is not a way to have a relationship with Christ. Relationship has to be a dialogue, the spirit of prophecy. Amen

Nine Fruits of the Spirit

Galatians 5²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, ...

The first three. We all seem to understand what these are but the enemy is about to rob, steal and diminish. That’s where the “guilt strategy” comes in. *“Boy, that meeting was really good but it could have been a lot better.”* You know this is not about meetings! *“Let’s have the best meeting ever.”* If that is our goal, we have missed the mark. Our goal is that we should drink in the love and the joy of the Lord no matter what happens. **Peace** of God. The peace of God is not just about feeling peaceful. The peace of God is something which comes down from heaven by your relationship through Christ with the Father. The angels said, *“... peace on earth, good will towards men.”* Why? For the first time ever man could communicate directly with Father God. What a comforting

place to be. Snuggle into Father God in the Holy of Holies. Snuggle in when you are hurting. When I've seen people dying of cancer and the pain is too much for them, they want morphine after morphine. So snuggle in. *"There's not much I can do for you but I can pray."* Then I can see them saying to themselves, *"Yeah."* I'm right there in the Holy of Holies. I'm going to snuggle in.

The Father takes you under His wing. No matter what. The peace of God passes every understanding.

The fruit of the Spirit, knowing the Spirit, having the Spirit work through you, and number four we have ***longsuffering*** or endurance, patience. Our American society has little understanding of this. Here everything wants to be instant, instant popcorn, instant transactions. It doesn't take long now to buy things with Amazon. No long suffering here. It will be there in a day and a half, reporting how far away the item is and when it's coming. *"The truck is now arriving. It's here. It's been delivered, etc."* Good grief!

We need to realize there probably will not be mobile phones in the Kingdom of God, in heaven. There is probably not a lot of young kids interested in Christianity today just because of that! No cell phones! But these kids need to hear something that is not about doctrine. They need to hear about the Spirit of God, something that is actual REAL life, not virtual life but real, not a movie about all the action that can happen in a video game. They need something that will tear you away from the world and bring you into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. Wow, then they wouldn't care so much about those cell phones or laptops.

Next number five, ***kindness***. Do we need to be more kind? Absolutely. Sometimes people come into the elders' meeting and they are expecting the leaders to really come down on them because of one thing or another. BUT, that is not the role of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is to bring forth kindness, six- ***goodness***, seven- ***faithfulness***, eight- ***gentleness***, and nine- ***self-control***. Apostle Paul says, *"There is no law against such things."*

Somebody recently said, *"We're moving out of New York state."* Somebody else says, *"As a sanctuary city, New York has no hope."* I said this in a Tweet and a reply on Facebook, *"Just so you know my house is a sanctuary for the Holy Spirit and I live in New York."*

Key to Understanding the Gifts and Fruits of the Spirit

Often times now we get filled with the Spirit and understand and even speak in the gift of tongues or prophecy through all these current events. However we should be aware that there is another issue the enemy has concerning the judgment and control of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit.

Matthew 7 ¹⁵ “**Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly (the intent of their heart) they are ferocious wolves.** . .

What do they come to you with? Sheep’s clothing. That means they look like regular sheep. They look like born-again believers. They look the same as you and me, but deception lurks inwardly in the intent of their heart. So how are we to discern? Inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

¹⁶ . . . *By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?* ¹⁷ *Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.* ¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.* . .

There doesn’t seem to be any mixture in the spiritual realm.

¹⁹ . . . *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire (the coming judgment).* ²⁰ *Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

When I first read that scripture I thought, “Really?! If they look like sheep and act like sheep, how do we know?” Since I really want to know, this is not helping me to understand. There really is evil in this world. There really are men and women who come into the Church with wrong motivations. They have another idea, their own agenda, their self-aggrandizement, their own will, not the Spirit of the Lord.

It is interesting that in this same chapter of Matthew 7, Jesus says:

²¹ “*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

So part of that fruit thing, the inward thing, is DOING the will of the Father. I think that is pretty discernable. If you have watched a television mystery series, it is interesting to see if you can discern the intent of the person’s heart that did the murder. It isn’t just the clues and the circumstances. It is seeing the intent of that person. In the end when you find out “who did it,” you also understand the intent and the reason they did it.

However, our intent and our purpose is to do the will of the Father. Why? Because we love Him not just because He said so. Because that Holy Spirit which was sent down from heaven on Pentecost filled us with a fire which can no longer be kept in. Because of that we WANT to do the will of the Father. It is our desire!

Here’s the wolf in sheep’s clothing description:

²² *Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name . . .*

So, we can have the gifts of the Spirit.

. . . drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’

More gifts of the Spirit. This means that the gifts of the Spirit are given without repentance. They are just given out by the *grace of God* but people have to respond appropriately to the Spirit of the Lord! You cannot make it a doctrine and somehow manipulate it to do what you want it to do. Many men and Churches do precisely that! Sadly. However the Lord is going to present to Himself a Church without spot or wrinkle or shame or guilt. We sang a song like that this morning.

²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers, you who practice lawlessness!'

That lawlessness means that they are not really “linked in” to the Spirit of God because the law is not the law of the Old Testament. The law is the law of living by the Spirit. Lawlessness means you are not being led by the Spirit. Even though you may be prophesying, casting out demons and doing great works, unless you are doing things in the purpose and intent and heart of God, you missed it! You missed it.

You missed it if you have gifts without fruits, rooted and grounded in the foundation of seeking and knowing the purposes, the heart and intent of Father God.

Summary

Romans 8 ¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, . . .

Years ago, when I was playing softball for the Church league in New Paltz, everybody could pick the number they wanted on their shirt. All the guys might have wanted to choose numbers of famous baseball stars or heroes. The number on my jersey was “81,” for Romans 8:1. Therefore if I struck out, there was no condemnation! I could miss the fly ball, no condemnation. That’s because I wasn’t there to win. I was there because Jesus wanted me there. The friendships we made on that team are eternal. Many things will disappear on this earth but the friendships you make won’t. They will be eternal. The things you plant in other people’s minds, the love that you have for Jesus cannot fade. Amen.

*⁴ . . . in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who **do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***

There is no condemnation because now you are married to Christ. That’s what chapter seven is all about. There is no condemnation because now you don’t have to worry about the guilt of following after the law. Every time there is a law, I miss it! I want to do one thing but I end up doing the opposite. All right. How many have been on diets? I haven’t been on a diet yet where I haven’t “cheated.”

Once you make a law, a regulation, you are setting yourself up for failure. I’ve shared this before. When I had around twenty-two career women working

for me, which was not easy, there were a lot of rules and regulations. The gals would come to me and say, *“What do we do, Peter, when they call us up at 2 am and say the rules say this or that? But I don’t think it is right. What do I do?”* I would say, *“If you were a professional, not just a clog in the wheel, if you were not just a government employee, but you were a person with human compassion and understanding and knowledge, and if you think it is right, I will stand behind you one-hundred percent. If that rule needs to be broken, break it.”*

One time I had to do that. Washington sent down a rule saying, *“Every time you make a long-distance call for whatever reason, even if it was from Fishkill to Poughkeepsie, you must go through the Washington operator.”* So here it was three o’clock in the morning and I found I needed to make a call. The Washington operator hung up the first time. The second time I was referred to another operator. The third time I was lost in operator heaven! Then I said, *“That’s it. I’m breaking the rule.”* I called up my wife and told her to call the state police. Since it was also a long-distance number I couldn’t even call that! *“Cheryl, call the state police and have them come to this certain lab and pick up the blood from Vassar and deliver it here. I will stand behind it.”* You see, this guy was bleeding out in the ICU and he needed six pints of blood. I got four that night and I went home a “happy camper,” knowing that maybe I didn’t save his life but I had something to do with his welfare.

The next morning arriving at work, I got to my desk and there was a call from the director of the hospital. *“Peter, what are you doing?!”* I said, *“Well, there was just no other way I could get the blood here on time. The important thing is this guy is alive. That’s the important thing.”* He changed his tune and said, *“Good work. I’m behind you 100 percent.”* End of problem.

We, as Christians, cannot be driven by the law, by rules nor the traditions of men. We are to be motivated by the heart of God and that can only be expressed through the power of the Holy Spirit. See, that’s where the power is. I had the power to save that man’s life through the Holy Spirit because the Spirit said, *“Break it.”* So I did. I was never arrested. I was never given a reprimand. I was encouraged instead. And so it is with the Spirit of God.

8 ¹*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, . . .*

When we pray, we pray according to the Spirit. What He says in Romans 8, sometimes with “groans too deep for words,” with groaning an expression of God that cannot be understood in the English language. That makes sense. Even Einstein understood that there are things that cannot be explained in the microscopic, atomic world. These things just couldn’t be expressed in the English language. From what I’ve heard, Einstein wasn’t that great a mathematician. Really! He was a lot better than myself. He invented algebra after all!

However, I don’t have to worry or feel guilty that I didn’t get another degree. I don’t have to feel guilty that I didn’t do this or didn’t do that. I am FREE from guilt. *“There is therefore NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Je-*

sus. ” Come on! There is no condemnation. There is no guilt. The enemy cannot come to me or you any more and say, “*You didn’t pray the right prayer. You didn’t have enough faith. You didn’t go to the right people. You are not going to the right church. Look what’s happening, ‘everything is falling apart.’*” Frustration, guilt, every thing follows that. Sometimes people end up leaving a church and never coming back. After a while we could ask if they are still saved. Who knows. They might say, “*Uncle Phil died, my mom died. I don’t know if I even love Jesus anymore.*” Whoa. The enemy or what?!

This is not something that we can just pass off as optional. This isn’t something we can pass off by saying, “*Well if I need to be a better Christian, I need to be baptized in the Spirit.*” No. This is something that is ESSENTIAL to our growth in Christ. It is the Spirit that brings to us understanding. Isn’t that what Jesus said in John 14, 15, 16 and what chapter 17 is all about? The Spirit guides us into all truth. And furthermore, because truth can sometimes be painful, He is our Comforter also.

Sometimes at night I will be praying in the Spirit and then the Lord comes and shows me something and I feel really hurt. He is right there. Come on. Come to the Lord. Give Him an embrace. You don’t have to worry or feel guilty about embracing God. It is not weird; it is wonderful. To be in love with Christ is a love affair that goes beyond the description of marriage. Marriage is a type of that but this goes way beyond.

Without the baptism of the Holy Spirit there can be no power. That’s why Jesus told His disciples not to do anything until you receive the power from on high. Don’t do it. You will be in trouble otherwise. There will be frustration and ultimately guilt and condemnation, even to some, suicide. I’m not just confronting the lack of truth. I’m confronting the enemy’s gates right now. He is the one who brings death *anywhere* he can find it. He is the one who brings death anywhere he finds a toe-hold to do so. He is the very spirit of Death, darkness, evil. Let’s confront him. You are not going to be able to do that by just knowing doctrine or memorizing scripture. You need to have the life of Christ within you through the Holy Spirit.

That is exactly why Jesus admonished His disciples to wait in Jerusalem. Amen.

Let’s Pray: Father, we come to You this morning. Some of us may have been baptized in the Spirit but are not walking in the gifts nor the fruit of it because we haven’t seen why it is so valuable. But now, Lord, we do. That joy that we have been missing, that love and peace and the ability to be overcomers, the ability to really be gentle and kind, doesn’t come from just wandering into it. It comes from the Spirit of God Himself, resident in the heavens, from the very throne of the Father.

Just like that day at Pentecost, I pray that You would breathe down from heaven a fresh outpouring of the Spirit on this Church, us as a people,

our home groups, whenever we are gathered together in friendship or conversation. I pray it wouldn't be trivial but that there would be an anointing of the Holy Spirit. There would be a quickening, to be made alive together. There would be a rejoicing that is so deep, deeper than we've ever known. Lord, we have only tasted the Kingdom and we want more. We want more of what Your heart means to us personally in the circumstances that we find ourselves in. We confront those who bring death and destruction in this world whether it be in our life personally or in the country, or in this whole world. How many have desired to kill just for the sake of killing. How awesomely crazy is that?!

And into this craziness, Lord God, we bring sanity. The only sanity we have is not the sanity of just understanding but the understanding in the Holy Ghost! Breathe into us, Lord Jesus, the breath of life, in Jesus' name. Amen.