

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT | RED LETTER TALKS

AARON BROCKETT | MARCH 17, 2024

Well, it's good to be with everybody today. I want to welcome you at all of our locations and those of you joining us online. We're so thrilled that you are here with us.

I know that we may have a number of people who are joining us on spring break, All you spring breakers out there if you are joining us from a warmer climate just keep that to yourself. We really don't want to know. But we are glad that you have joined in with us. Today is a great day.

If you have a Bible go ahead and get over to John, chapter 14. John 14 and chapter 16 is where we are going to be camped out today. So go ahead and get that ready.

Today is an incredible day partly because our Midtown campus just got the keys to their brand new digs. Can we put our hands together and celebrate Midtown? There will be a few pictures of our Midtown campus scrolling behind me. They just moved in. Today is grand opening day at 62nd and Keystone. Phenomenal facility.

It used to be a grocery store. I haven't walked through there since it was a grocery store. So, Thursday of last week was kind of a community gathering, open house. And I was just astounded. Every turn I was like, "Man, that is incredible. It's amazing just walking through the building. Touring it. And then I went into the bathrooms.

If there was a contest for best bathroom across all of our campuses, Midtown wins by a mile. So, the bathrooms are phenomenal. In fact, if you are at Midtown today, first of all let me just say, "Welcome home. We're glad you're there. Glad you're visiting with us today. Make sure you go to the bathroom before you leave. It's phenomenal."

I didn't go into the women's restroom so I can't speak to that, but the men's was incredible. So, I just have major bathroom envy. Now that I've talked it up so much, you probably are going to walk in there and not think that it is all that great. That's kind of how that works.

If you are just now joining us, we have been in this series called Red Letter Talks. We're leading up to Easter. And red letters, if you're not familiar with them in your Bible, in the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and the very last book of the Bible, Revelation, you'll find some red letters.

Now, the red letters, here's what they mean. These are direct quotes from Jesus. These are not words about what Jesus said, these are words that Jesus spoke directly. And there is power in them.



So, we've been in John 14 through 16, mostly, over these last several weeks. This is oftentimes known as the Final Discourse. So, these are the final conversations, final things that Jesus is saying to His closest friends, the disciples, before the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. And, primarily, in these passages, Jesus is talking about this power that is available to all of us if we would only plug in and access it.

When I was in college I drove a 1996 Honda Civic five-speed with a spoiler on the back. I know you guys are really jealous of that. I don't know if you guys remember the first Fast and Furious movie where they drove those black Honda Civics, it was that. I never hijacked a semi-truck in it, but every time I would pull up alongside of one I would imagine that I would. That was the car that I had.

Now, that car had a major defect. I was working at a grocery store bagging groceries and I came out of work one night, dark parking lot, got in that Honda Civic, turned the key—no power. Now, I knew it wasn't the battery because it wasn't even trying to turn over. It was just completely dead.

I don't know a lot about cars, but I got out, popped the hood, got a flashlight and was just looking around the engine and just by chance I saw this dangling wire. And I thought, "Well, that can't be good." I grabbed it and I literally just plugged in and it started right up. All I had to do was plug my car in. And this was decades before electric cars were a thing. The power was there, it just wasn't plugged in.

Now, I had a lot of fun with that because when Lindsay and I started dating I'd pick her up and I'd unplug it. We would get in the car and it wouldn't start. So, I'd look at her and I'd be like, "Give me a second." And I'd get out. The key to this is you don't fix it right away, fellas. You mess around a little bit. You say, "Try that." It didn't work. "Well, let me check the flex capacitor. What about now?" And then you plug it in and then it would start up. And she thought that I knew a lot about cars, until she didn't.

The power was there all along, it was just that the connection to the power wasn't there. The same thing is true in your life and mine.

Have you noticed that we live in a day and age right now where we're all kind of tired, run down, low energy and we're looking for the next thing to power us up—whether it's your caffeine fix... I'm looking around the room, seeing the number of people with coffee cups in their hands. Don't hide them. I see them.

You pull into the gas station, pick up one of the five-hour energy capsules that are at every register. Nobody walks into the store thinking, "I've got to get a five-hour energy thing, but we buy them because they are right there by the register, "Oh, that sounds good. I need a little pick-me-up."

Have you noticed that in recent years the number of energy drinks has skyrocketed—it's just ballooned. Used to be that Red Bull was your only option.



Now, I'm actually old enough that prior to that it was just soda. Then we went to Red Bull. Now you just take your pick: C4 Rain, Bang—all of the energy drinks that are out there. Why is that? Well, because we're run down. We're tired. We're exhausted. We've got so much coming at us. We're all looking for the power that we need.

Well, in these passages that we are going to walk through today, Jesus is talking to the disciples and He's talking to you and me, and He's going to tell us how to plug into the power that we are all desperately looking for. And, by the way, the power has been there all along. The question we have to ask is: Are we connected to the power?

Now, in chapters 14 and 16 I want you to just notice this as we get into them, Jesus is going to mention the Holy Spirit for the first time in chapters 14 and 16. And He has the most to say about Him. He tells us who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, what He says, how He works.

And sandwiched in the middle of 14 and 16, in chapter 15... Do you remember this? Two weeks ago Jesus gave the metaphor of the vine and the branches. He said, "I'm the vine, you are the branch. You just be the branch. You stay connected to Me. That's the power that you are looking for." And sandwiched around that is this talk on the Holy Spirit.

It's so important that we look at this because the Holy Spirit is oftentimes confused—He's not confused, we are. We confuse the Holy Spirit and we misrepresent Him. When it comes to the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—we kind of know what to do with the Father and the Son but what do we do with the Spirit?

I always get a kick out of talking to people who have a church background but they move here or they come here for whatever reason and they are trying to figure out what kind of church we are. Do we have a denominational background? Where do we come from?

So they think, "Maybe you're... You use a lot of Bible in your teaching. Maybe you're Presbyterian." And I'm like, "No."

"Well, I see how much you invest in global missions. You guys must be Baptists." And I'm like, "No."

"Well, I see how many hands are raised in the air during worship. You guys must be Charismatic."

"No."

"What are you? Presbapticostal? What are you?"

And oftentimes we don't really know what to do with the Holy Spirit.

Now, some of you are actually going, "Yeah, by the way, I am kind of new around here, what kind of church are you?" About 18 months ago I gave this diagram of these three

concentric circles. It's probably time I bring that back out again, either to remind you or because so many of you have come since then, to kind of describe what kind of church we're trying to be.

It's not so much about denomination affiliation as much as it is a reflection of the Trinity. So understand, those three concentric circles if you can visualize them in your mind: God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, which represents the Word of God, in God the Father; the mission of God, Jesus; the movement of God, the Holy Spirit.

What we're trying to do is we're trying to be a bullseye right in the middle of those three circles. We want to be a Word of God church, on mission with God, filled with the Spirit and movement of God as a church.

So, you need to understand who the Holy Spirit is. Some of you, though, maybe your experience or level of knowledge with the Holy Spirit is very similar to a group of people in Acts, chapter 19. You can read that later on your own, but in Acts 19 Paul is traveling through Ephesus and he crossed paths with some disciples. Now, not the original 12, but just some people who have submitted their lives to Jesus. They are following after Jesus.

Paul meets them and he asked this question in verse 2, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And here was their response, "Who's that? We don't know what you are talking about." And Paul takes that opportunity to explain to them who the Holy Spirit is and how to have a vibrant relationship with Him. And then here's what it says in the text. It says:

"At that moment the Spirit came upon them."

Now, maybe in a very similar way you have a church background, you consider yourself a Christian, and you've heard of the Holy Spirit, you're just not quite sure who He is, what He does, or what He is currently doing. In other words, you are not exactly sure what to do with Him.

When Lindsay and I started dating, we came from very different families. Her family grew up in the country. My family was in the city. Her family was into agriculture and farming. I mowed the yard. That's about my extent. Her family wore camo and went deer hunting and rode ATVs. At the time I worked in a men's clothing store.

And I remember we started dating and I would go with her to family gatherings and I'd get my plate of food and sit down at the table. I'd hear her aunts and uncles and cousins talking. They'd be talking about the eight point buck that they shot at the deer hunt last weekend. The only thing that I could contribute to the occasion is that there was a sale on khaki pants. They acknowledged me. They knew I existed. They knew I was there. They just didn't know what to do with me.

Some of us, that's how we treat the Holy Spirit. We believe in Him. We acknowledge Him. We know He's there. We're just not quite sure what to do with Him. He's sort of like the cousin Eddie of Trinity.

And the problem is that it is impossible to take the Bible seriously and yet still ignore the Holy Spirit. He's mentioned over 800 times throughout the Scriptures.

And maybe you have a good reason for ignoring or avoiding Him. You've got two really good ones. Maybe you're sitting here today going, "Well, A: It just kind of seems like that elaborate, unethical health and wellness platform where TV preachers talk a lot about the Holy Spirit. So, that's kind of why I stay away." And that's understandable.

Maybe you're like, "You know, Aaron. It's just the people who seem to talk a lot about the Holy Spirit..." there's just no easy or nice way to put say this so I'll just say it, "they are just weird. And because they are so weird it's made me uncomfortable talking about the Holy Spirit or raising my hands and all of that." And it's a false perception, that's what it is.

We have false perceptions of the Trinity. Sometimes when we read the Old Testament we get this perception that God the Father is kind of a cranky, mean one. And then we read the New Testament and we're like, "God the Son, Jesus, He's the nice, gracious one. And then the Holy Spirit, He's the weird one.

And what Jesus is going to do in this chapter is He's going to clarify the misrepresentation. So, let's get to work. Chapter 14, look at verses 15 and 16. Jesus is talking to the disciples. He says:

"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate..."

This is the first word that Jesus uses to describe the Spirit. I'll define the word later, "to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of," say the word, "truth." John 14:15-17a (NIV)

The Spirit is marked by truth. I love the fact that Jesus describes the Spirit as an advocate, but not only that He says, "Another advocate." Meaning that we have two. So who's our first advocate? Somebody just say it out loud. Jesus. Yeah, that's right, man. By the way, nine times out of 10, when I ask you a question and you say Jesus, you'll be right in church. You just stay confident, "Jesus."

Jesus is our first advocate. Jesus is advocating for us. Where is He right now? Well, the Bible says He's at the right hand of God the Father advocating, mediating between us and God. I love that image. Meaning that if you've responded to Jesus, your life is hidden in Him, you've received Him and you're following after Him, and you confess your sins and you repent and you're seeking after Him with all your heart, when you mess up,

when you sin, Jesus looks at God and says, “Yeah. You saw that too? I’ve got that one.” Advocating.

Now, He says you have another one. You have another advocate in the Holy Spirit and this is the Spirit of truth. And the reason why that is such good news and is so significant is because we have unholy spirits, the devil and the demons, that are deceiving us—father of lies, author of confusion, getting in there to confuse and deceive. We need the Spirit of God to help and to guide us in all truth.

Jesus says in verse 17:

“The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” John 14:17 (NIV)

Now, I want to reread that sentence and I want to emphasize all of the pronouns. Jesus says:

“The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

Why emphasize all of the pronouns? Well a lot of people in society today are making a big deal about their pronouns, let’s be sure to get God’s right. The Holy Spirit is not an it. The Holy Spirit is a person. The Bible never refers to Him as an it. What’s the big deal about that? Well if you don’t see the Holy Spirit as a person, you’ll never develop a personal relationship with Him.

And maybe for some of you, part of the problem is that you kind of see the Holy Spirit as some sort of impersonal, mythical, ethereal being, Sort of like Obi One Kenobi telling Luke to use the force. But the Holy Spirit is not a thing. He’s not just some sort of ethereal power. He is a person with an identity. That’s what Jesus is saying.

In John, chapter 16 the disciples are so confused. They are grieving. They are getting angry and anxious because Jesus keeps talking about going away and they just don’t get it. So, Jesus drops these words in verse 7. He says:

“But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate,” He’s referring to the Holy Spirit, “won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.” (NLT)

So, in other words, Jesus is saying this, “It is to your advantage that I go away. It is better for the Spirit of God to be in you, than for Me to be with you.” That’s astounding. Think about that for a minute. It’s better for Jesus to leave? How is that? How could that be better?

Think about that for a minute. Think about how great it would have been to walk around with Jesus for three years during His earthly ministry. That would be like touring with the

Beatles. It would be like, "Man, I've got a theology question." Bam, Jesus is right there to answer it. You don't have to go to Google. You've got Jesus.

If you are at a party and you run out of food, who needs Door Dash? You've got Jesus. Chick-fil-A is closed on Sunday. Man, if God can move mountains and part the Red Sea, He can open Chick-Fil-A on Sunday and work a miracle. He could do that.

Your dog dies, He'll resurrect the dog. Your cat dies. He'll help you dig a hole to bury it. Cat people, we love you, man. And quite honestly... I have to be honest about this. I've cracked cat jokes for years. By the way, it never gets old. It's so much fun. But we got a cat about two years ago, and I've got to be honest I am a cat person now. I love this cat, but only because it acts like a dog. That's why. That's why.

Did you know that the word for spirit in the Old Testament is translated like this:

Ruach

Just say that with me out loud. Ruach. You've got to say it kind of like you hawking a Louie. If you don't you're not saying it right. Ruach. So, literally this is a wind or a breath, but not a normal breath. It's not like a little puff. It is a violent exhalation. It's a blast of breath. The Holy Spirit comes with power.

In the New Testament the word for spirit is translated this way:

Pneum

And it means something very similar. It's a wind, a current of air; it is a blast of breath.

And can I tell you this? You may not see the wind. You can feel its effects. Last week we had some thunderstorms and tornados. Have you ever been in a hurricane? You can't literally see the wind. You can see the effects of this violent wind.

And Jesus says there is breath, a blast of air, the person of the Trinity who wants to be in you, "And it would be better if I go away, because if I don't then the Spirit won't come to be in you."

Well, how could it be better? Logically, just think through this. When Jesus was on earth He was fully God and fully man, in human form. He could be beside only one person at a time. But the Spirit can be inside of every Christian everywhere helping everyone. It's better. It's better.

Now, I want to circle back to this word advocate. Jesus mentions it in John 14, 15-16:

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you." (NLT)

Let me define the word.

Advocate/Helper—paraclete

The word advocate comes from this word paraclete which also means helper. Now we don't really have a good English word for it. It's made up of two Greek words para which means to come alongside of and kletos which means to come.

We see the word parable. Para, come alongside, balla, to throw. So when Jesus would teach a story called a parable, what He was doing was throwing a story along side of the truth. In English we have that prefix para in front of other words like paragraph. What that means is it is writings alongside of each other.

So, Jesus says you have the Spirit of God who comes alongside of you and the word is translated in various ways to help us understand. He is a Consoler. He is an Intercessor. He is an Advocate. He's a Comforter. He's a Prompter.

Any of you have anybody in your life who is like your greatest fan? Man, he is like cheering you on. Every time you talk to him, he encourages you. He out encourages you. You see him, you know that he is going to encourage you, "I'm going to encourage him," and he says, "I'm going to out encourage you." It's so annoying.

But he believes in the best version of you. You know every time that you're going to talk to him, he is going to fill you up, not suck energy out of you. So when he calls, you answer. You never send him to voicemail.

That's the Holy Spirit. He is advocating for you, championing you, cheering you on. He believes in you more than you believe in you. And He wants to help. Well, how does He help? Well, Jesus mentions this in verse 13 of chapter 16. It says:

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you," we all need to be guided right now, "...he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own,"

That's just a reference to He's going to reiterate what God has said in His Word. None of this, "Well, I've got a special revelation." That's awesome. Does it jive with this? He's not speaking on His own:

"...but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future." (NLT)

So, if you're jotting down notes, let me give you four quick ways, practical ways, that the Holy Spirit helps. Here's the first one:

One of the primary ways in which the Spirit helps us is to speak

The Holy Spirit helps us to speak. He's speaking. He's mentioned 59 times in the book of Acts. In 38 of them He is speaking. And right now He continues to speak and He wants to speak to you. The question is: How do you turn down the other noise in your life so that you can hear Him?

He has spoken. He is speaking. He will speak. The Spirit is not speaking on His own. He's just discerning the truth of what God has said in His Word and He's helping us to understand all truth.

The book of Romans says in the end days the prince of darkness will continue to deceive us so that we'll call good evil and evil good. And that's happening. We see that there is an ideological war that is taking place and more and more we need Christ followers tuned in, plugged in, filled by the Holy Spirit to guide us in all truth.

I don't blame people who are apart from Christ being deceived by the prince of darkness. What really grieves me is when people who call themselves Christians buy into the false ideologies. Because, honestly, you've been disciplined more by culture than you have by the Spirit of God.

So, right now we're in an election year. You guys all know this. I just want to be very clear with you. I don't necessarily have a sermon series planned to help prepare us for that. What I just want to do is every week kind of continue to prepare us and ready our feet for all of that.

I want you to know what kind of a church you are a part of. We will never advocate for a certain political party from this platform, but we will speak to the ideologies behind the politics. Why? Because the Bible does.

Some people would say, "Well, keep the Bible out of my politics." I say, "Keep your politics out of the Bible and I will." I'm not talking about politics. I'm talking about the ideologies behind politics. And please don't get sucked into the division. Please don't get sucked into the culture wars. We need to be guided by the Spirit of truth.

Another thing that the Spirit does is:

The Spirit helps you know what to say

He brings to your mind the truth that you need in the moment. Most of us are not really good on our feet. Have you ever had conversations with yourself after, and you are like, "Oh, man." You nailed it. You won the argument. You made the point. But in the moment you are like, "Ahhh." You know? And this is where if you know that you are going to have a heavy conversation, you know you're going to have a critical, crucial conversation. You stop and you're like, "Spirit of God, would you please give me the words to speak?" And He will.

In sermons, man, this is a regular occurrence for me. I'm not one of these guys who thinks I'm going to get up here and just kind of shoot from the hip and it's all going to be... No, man, I believe that the same Holy Spirit can work in the preparation as He does in the delivery. So, I'm going to prepare by reading myself full, writing myself clear, preaching myself empty. And the Holy Spirit is going to be involved in all of that.



I get up here and I'm prepared. I've got notes up here. But it's like a pivot foot. I pivot. The Spirit of God can help me do this. I'm kind of anchored to the preparation and, "God would You please speak? Would you please bring something to mind?"

And here's how I know that it happens. Sometimes... By the way, I'll get up here and I'm all ready to go and it feels like I'm riding a lightning bolt. And other times I get up here and it feels like I'm sitting on a dead donkey. And I'm like, "Oh, man. You can show up any time, man." I'm prepared but ain't nothing happening.

Sometimes I'm up here preaching and I'm talking so fast that I can't even think what I'm talking about. That gets really scary. Words are coming out. Kind of like right now. I'm speaking and I'm like, "I didn't even know that I knew that." That's the Spirit of God.

Here's how I know. Oftentimes I'll get done preaching a message. I'll bump into one of you out in the lobby, out in the parking lot, at the store and you'll walk up to me like you've just seen a ghost. And you are like, "How did you know that? Are you reading my mail? How did you know I was asking that question? How did you know I'm dealing with that?"

And I what I always say is, "I'm just that good." No, I don't say that. I don't say that. I just say, "That's the Holy Spirit, man."

By the way, the Holy Spirit doesn't just work in the preparation and delivery, the Holy Spirit works in the way you receive and listen. So, this is where you are kind of half here half not here. You're sitting here but your mind is somewhere else. You're on your phone. Drinking your coffee. You're online.

I'm not taking shots at online people; I think that's the front door to the church. But maybe you've got it on in the background casually listening. You've got to lean in and the same Holy Spirit who wants to help you receive it is the same Holy Spirit speaking from the platform. So, you get out of the sermon what you put into it.

Here's another way that the Holy Spirit helps:

The Spirit helps you know what not to say!

Any of you like me? You've got a knack for putting your foot in your mouth. I deal with this all of the time. And here's what can happen. You're talking and there's this check in your spirit, "Ah, man. Just because I could say that doesn't mean I should. Just because that's true doesn't mean that I need to say it."

And in an age of anxiety and anger we've got to remember, we can actually be right about something, but be wrong by the way that we say it. So, we've got to understand the tone. And here's the other thing. When you are speaking out of anxiety or out of anger or out of fear, chances are that you are saying it in the wrong way.



Man, you just sit down on the inside, take a deep breath, “God is still on His throne. It is not my job to do God’s job. God is in control. And you know what? It’s not my job to convince anybody of anything.” You don’t do the convincing. The Holy Spirit does the convincing. So, you just take a breath.

Finally, let me just say this:

The Spirit helps by convicting you when you need it most

Jesus references this in verse 8. It says:

“And when he comes,” referring to the Spirit, “he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness,”

I love that. It’s not just sin, He’s also showing us, revealing to us, God’s righteousness.

“...and of the coming judgment.” (NLT)

I don’t know how that hits you when it comes to the word conviction. Depending upon your church background, maybe you grew up in a heavy-handed, legalistic, shame-based kind of church environment where...

This is part of the reason you stopped going, because you were like, “I don’t really want to feel bad about myself anymore. And every time I go I kind of feel like I’m getting my hands slapped. And I feel like God is a big traffic cop in the sky saying, ‘You know, you’re messing up.’” And, “God is going to get you.” You’re just tired of hearing that, so you bailed.

And that is the wrong view of conviction. There is a difference between conviction and condemnation. The Holy Spirit is not condemning you. The Holy Spirit is convicting you and that’s different.

Let me see if I can unpack this a little bit further. In verse 9 Jesus says this:

“The world’s sin is,” not that it does bad things, but “that it refuses to believe in me.” (NLT)

Now, that word believe is not just believing that He exists. That word is believe by trusting that He is who He said He is. He is the Son of God, “I’m going to believe Jesus is who He said He is and what He’s done on my behalf. And what He is currently doing.”

Listen, man. Some of you might be like, “You know what? I don’t know if I need all of this stuff. I don’t need all of this religion stuff. I believe in God.” Well, even the demons believe. That doesn’t mean they are saved.

When Jesus says this, He just means, “Man, are you trusting in Me. Are you taking Me at My word?”

If you would allow me, let me just take a couple of minutes and kind of go theology nerd for a second. So, put on your theology thinking cap. I want to show you the connection between the Old Testament law and the first time the Holy Spirit comes with power on the day of Pentecost. And there is a parallel to this.

So, the first time the Holy Spirit falls and descends on a group of people is in the book of Acts, which is short for action. So, the Holy Spirit is an activator. It was a day that was called Pentecost. Why? Well, Pentecost was a feast.

The word penta means five, so think pentagon. Cost is a Greek suffix. This is all pointing to fifty. So, why was the feast of Pentecost called fifty? Well, it celebrated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. Some of you may know your Old Testament history. You know what I'm talking about. Others of you, maybe you saw Charlton Heston in the movie.

So, Moses comes down from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. That all happens fifty days after the first Passover. So, God, intentionally, is connecting the giving of the Law that convicts of sin with the presence of the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost.

Here's what I mean. On the original giving of the Law on Sinai, here's what happened that day. There was a loud noise. A cloud descended. There was fire. God wrote His Law on tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments, and 3,000 people died that day as punishment for their sins, because, if you recall, Moses came down from Sinai and they were all worshipping a golden calf. And God struck them dead.

Fast forward to Pentecost in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit falls and they are celebrating that. And notice what happened that day. Notice the parallels. There was a loud noise. The cloud of the Spirit descends. Tongues of fire came to rest on the apostles. God wrote His Law, not on tablets of stone, but on men's hearts and 3,000 people were saved that day.

Don't tell me the Bible is not cool, man. You see this connection with the Law and the connection of the conviction of the Spirit. So, why is He doing that? Here's why:

Until you see your sin, you'll never see your need for a Savior

Why does the Holy Spirit convict you of sin? Not to make you feel bad. Not to shame you. Not to condemn you. But, so that you'll run to Jesus and be free. The Puritans have a saying. They said this, "Till sin be bitter, Christ be not sweet."

So, here's how you know Christ is sweet. When you sin, does it bother you? Or have you grown so accustomed and calloused to it, it no longer convicts? The Holy Spirit... I've heard it put this way. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He's not going to kick down the door of your heart and force His way in. He's just speaking. He's just prompting. He's convicting.

And every time you adhere to the voice of the Holy Spirit... It's kind of like speaking to someone when you're learning a different language. The more you speak it with that person, the more fluid you become in it. But the less you speak it, the more you don't know—maybe you don't even know what he is saying. The same with the Spirit.

Now, for a while the Spirit of God... He's still talking. He's still convicting. It's just that you no longer hear it or receive it because your heart has become like stone.

When we see that we are great sinners, that's when we see that He is a great Savior.

Listen, man. Nobody ever just decided one day to follow Jesus. There is not anybody listening to the sound of my voice right now who one day just kind of did some reasoning and some reading and some concluding, and was like, "You know what? I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Today I'm just going to decide to give my life to Him." There isn't anybody who came to see that in their own power.

The reason why I can say this so confidently is that there is a word that is used to describe the way that we were in our sins in Ephesians 2. The word is called dead.

You were dead in your sin. Dead people don't respond. What happens is you are dead in your sin, and the Spirit of God is chasing you down. The Spirit of God is wooing you. The Spirit of God is prompting you.

We try to ignore Him by saying it's our conscience. It's the Spirit. And He's helping you to see your sin. And He's helping you to see your need for a Savior.

Part of the reason why some of this stuff doesn't make sense to you, especially if you're kind of intellectual, kind of smart, is that you're not allowing the Holy Spirit to speak. Because there is only a certain amount of things that you can see until the Holy Spirit opens your eyes. You've been trying to look at it purely in the flesh.

And what happens is the Holy Spirit brings you to this place of conviction when you recognize that there isn't any amount of work that you can do to save yourself and you respond to Jesus and His work on your behalf.

So, pop quiz. Nine o'clock failed it. So, don't do the same. Don't say yes too quickly. Are we saved by works? Yes. You guys did it too. Just not ours. We are saved by the finished work of Jesus.

I don't know why you guys don't trust me. Nine o'clock did that too. Don't say it. And you did. You are not saved by your works. But you are saved by works. It's just Jesus' finished work on your behalf. And the Spirit is the One who helps you to see it. And the Spirit is the One who helps you respond to it.

And, man. If you've got family members right now, or a friend who is far from God, and you already invited them to Easter, and right now you're just like, "Ah, man. I'm hoping so much. Aaron, I need you to show up at Easter and I need you to do your thing. I just need

you just to get up here and I need you to karate kick them with the Spirit and help them to see. I invited them. You save them.”

That’s not how this works. That is not how this works. Right now, what you need to do—here’s what you need to do. If you’ve invited that friend or family member to Easter, for the next few weeks you fall on your face and you ask the Holy Spirit to hunt them down. You just sick the Holy Spirit on them like a sleek Doberman, man.

You just pray, “God, would You just hound them. Would You just make them uneasy. Make them receive. God, would You just chase them down?” Because it’s not your convincing. It’s not my convincing that crosses anyone across that line of faith.

It’s not an argument. If you argue somebody into the faith, all it’s going to take is a better argument to argue them out. It’s the Holy Spirit. And that’s what we need to be praying for.

So, the Holy Spirit convicts you of the need for a Savior. You respond to that. The Holy Spirit enters in. Now, here’s what the Spirit does post conversion. Once you receive Him, He reminds you on a regular basis of your right standing with God.

All of this negative self-talk, and doubt, and shame like, ‘Oh, man. I’m just no good. God probably loves me but I don’t think He likes me. Because I just keep messing up.” The Holy Spirit is reminding you of how you are a valued son or daughter of the King. And you have a right standing with God. The Holy Spirit helps you to see God rightly. He also helps you to see yourself rightly. You are part of the redeemed.

So the Holy Spirit comes and helps us to know this. Satan, who is an accuser, by the way, and a deceiver, has had all of his authority stripped away. Verse 11 says this:

“Judgment will come because the ruler of this world,” that’s Satan, “has already been judged.” (NLT)

I’ve heard it described this way before. Satan is kind of like a rabid dog and he’s chained up, and his chain only goes so far. So, our job is to say out of the radius of how far the dog can run. He’ll bite anybody he can if you get close. But he knows that his future has been sealed and one day he will be fully dethroned.

And if you are part of the redeemed, if the Holy Spirit has been marked upon you, then you are no longer under of Satan’s authority. You are part of the redeemed.

Some of you are like, “Man, I hear all of that Aaron. That sounds awesome. That sounds great. But I still feel kind of uncomfortable with all of this because so many people who I bump into who talk a lot about the Holy Spirit, they are just so weird.”

Listen. The Holy Spirit isn’t weird. The Holy Spirit is God. Those people are weird. And, by the way, they would be weird without the Holy Spirit. So, don’t let the weirdness of weird people weird you out about the Holy Spirit. You can tweet that if you want.



Think about it for a minute. If that is all true, who do you think would want you to be skeptical of that? Satan. If all of that is true, who do you think would want you to be nervous or to kind of shy away or to ignore that? Satan. Because he knows how powerful the Spirit of God can be. He knows that when the Holy Spirit falls freshly upon an ordinary group of people like you and me, tremendous things happen and he gets upset about that.

In Acts, chapter 2 people were filled with the Holy Spirit and if you read that passage you'll see that there were others that day who were mocking them. And every time there is a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there are two groups of people. Those who experience and receive Him and those who reject Him and mock Him. And people who mock Him never experience Him.

By the way, I know who you are talking about—the weird people. Some of you, honestly, today are like, “Weird people. I don’t understand.” That’s weird. Just an observation.

So, I understand some people can get kind of weird when they talk about the Holy Spirit. Here’s the test of whether it’s really the Spirit or not. Where does all of the conversation point to? It should point to Jesus. And if it’s pointing to Jesus, it’s not weird. It’s of the Spirit.

I love what Dale Bruner says. He says, “The Spirit withdraws from sight and points to Jesus saying, ‘Notice Him. Listen to Him. Pay attention to Him. Fall in love with Him. Be preoccupied with Him.’”

I think A. W. Tozer said it this way. He said, “The Holy Spirit wants to be wanted. And He points to Jesus.”

If you’ve got anybody who is ever using or leveraging the Holy Spirit as a platform for themselves, that is not of the Holy Spirit.

The whole ministry of the Spirit is bringing you to a saving relationship with Jesus.

Can I just wrap up this way? Imagine one day Jesus returns, the kingdom of heaven is restored, we’re walking around. It’s going to be an awesome day, man. I hope that you are there. It’s going to be awesome.

We’re walking around the streets of gold and you see somebody—you see one of your favorite Bible characters across the street. And you start fan boying or fan girling over them, “That’s Ruth!” “That’s Noah!” “That’s David!” Whoever your hero is in the Bible.

And you run over to them. And you go, “Oh, can I have your autograph? This is so amazing.” And you say to them, “Man, what was it like?” “What was it like to take down a giant?” “What was it like to walk on water?” “What was it like to be in the belly of a big fish?” “What was it like? Tell me what it was like.”

And I think they will probably answer. And then I think they will turn the tables on you because God was with them, but He is in us. And I think they will look at you and say, “It was awesome and all. But, man, can you tell me what it was like to have the Spirit of God in you? What was it like to have the Spirit of God speaking through you? What was it like to have the Spirit of God guiding you in all truth?”

And I don’t want to look at them with a blank stare and go, “I don’t know. What are you talking about? I didn’t know that we could do it. I thought it was weird people who liked the Holy Spirit.” In that moment, I want to be able to respond out of experience. And I hope you do too.

See, many of us are not going to be able to tell them because right now we are disconnected from the power source that has been there all along. Some of you are going through life and you feel all alone. That’s really a shame because you have an advocate. You have two.

You have a Helper. You have a Comforter. You have a Convictor. You have an Encourager. But you’ve kind of muted Him.

Or, you’ve got this device in your hand and you’re constantly filling your head with what it is saying. You have the volume on this turned up so loud that it could even be that today what you need to do is turn the volume down on your device and turn the volume up on the Spirit, because He is alongside of you in a world that seems like it’s lost its mind and gone off of the rails.

The Spirit of God is here, guiding you into all truth, is with you no matter what. So, when you are standing at the gravesite there is One who is alongside and within, the Spirit of God. When you go to the doctor and he can’t find a heartbeat on the ultra sound, there is One who is alongside and within, the Spirit of God.

When you are heartbroken, signing the divorce papers—a divorce you never wanted—there is One who is alongside of you and within. When you’ve been told that your job is eliminated and you don’t have any other options in front of you, there is One who is alongside of you and within. When somebody accuses you unfairly and ruins your reputation, you have One who is alongside of and within advocating for you.

When the anxiety is unbearable, and the rage is unmanageable there is One who is alongside of you and within. When you stand there trembling as you talk to your neighbor about Jesus, there is One who is alongside of you and within you.

You are not alone. He has promised the Holy Spirit. The question is, are you listening and are you connecting? So, today—this next week, here’s your homework.

When you wake up in the morning before your feet hit the floor to the god of the coffee machine (I do too, no shame in it)—but before you do that, take a deep breath, and invite

the Holy Spirit in, "Hey, Holy Spirit. I've got a big day. Caffeine is going to give me a boost, but I need Your power. Would You just fill me up?"

When you get ready to go into that meeting, and it's going to be a hard conversation with a co-worker, take a quick few seconds, take a deep breath, "Holy Spirit would You please fill me and give me the words to speak. Would You please give me the discipline to know that I don't need to say everything I'm thinking."

When you have a challenging marriage, a challenge parenting, "Holy Spirit, come in. Would You please guide me through." When you are watching what is happening in society with the election and you are tempted to have a spirit of fear, anxiety, or rage, "Holy Spirit, I know that is not of You. Would You please calm me and remind me that God is sovereign and in control."

Let's be a church, let's be a people who connect to the power that Jesus died for us to have and stop ignoring it because He's there and He wants to be wanted.

Father, that applause is for You. Because we point to You, we look to You, we seek You. Today, wherever we may be watching from or listening to this message, we just want to take a few moments and invite Your Spirit in, to speak, to take the gag off of His mouth, to turn the volume up on His voice and turn the volume down on all of the other voices so that He may guide us in all truth.

God, some of us need to connect to the power. Others of us need to yield to the power.

Right now we've been holding on too tight and we need to let go, surrender our lives to You, trust that You are who You say You are. We've been convicted. We've been prompted. We've been ignoring it.

Today, no longer. No longer. We're going to yield and when we do we pray for more of Your power. We pray for an outpouring of Your Spirit on us as individuals, on our families, on our church, on our society because You are our only hope.

So, God. Would you please meet us right we are. We need an Advocate. We need a Helper. We need a Comforter. We need a Consoler. We need a Convictor, One who guides us in truth and points us to Jesus.

Thank You. Thank You. We ask this in the name of Jesus. And all of those who are filled with the Spirit say: Amen.

