

# MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

## WE ARE TRADERS POINT | WE LIVE LIVES FUELED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT RYAN BRAMLETT | NOVEMBER 26, 2022

Traders Point, how are we doing? Hey, so good to be with you. Everyone at the campuses and watching online, welcome.

Before we get started with the message today, I just have one announcement, one thing I want to put on your radar, and that is our Christmas Impact Project. Here's what we are doing this year. We are partnering with Shepherd Community Center.

And maybe that name sounds familiar to you, maybe it doesn't. Shepherd is located on the near east side of Indianapolis, and they've been serving there faithfully for years.

Here's what they do. They serve families that are in generational poverty. They come alongside of them, and they serve them in a way that brings dignity and hope and helps them in that process.

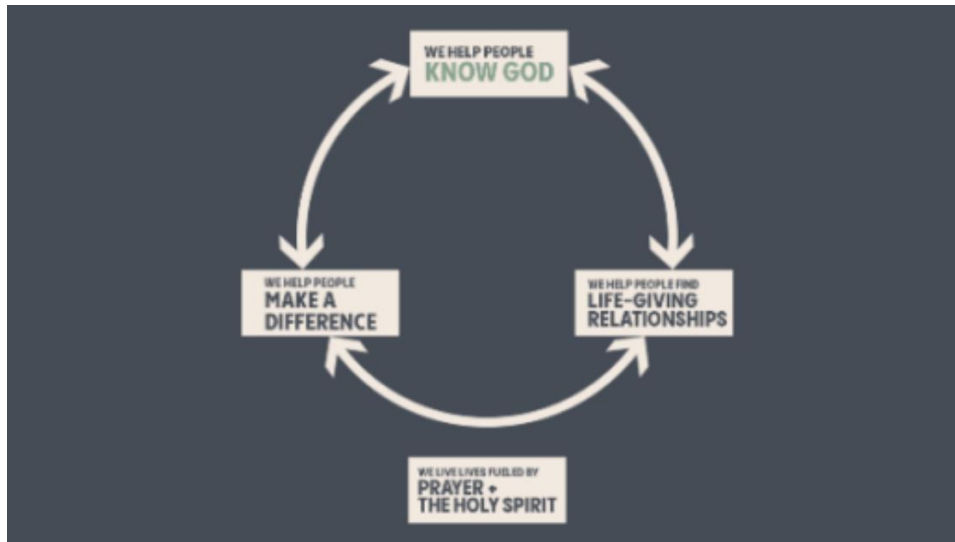
So this year what we're going to help do is.... They put together a Christmas store every year. And what they do is they pack it with presents and then they invite the neighbors to come in so that parents can actually pick out gifts for their kids and then take them home themselves. It's a way that brings dignity.

And what we're doing, as a church, is we are committed to filling that store. Right? We want to fill that store with little presents, big presents, and everything in between. And you can go to our website. We have a link right there where you can go and see a list of all of the things that we are gathering, and you can buy one item or 100 items.

Then over the next few weekends from now until December 11, we're going to pack these bins and then take them down there to fill that store. I mean, it's an amazing thing that we get to be a part of. My family does it every year. You guys in on this? Let's do it. Let's fill that store. Man.

Today I am also excited that we get to finish up our series *We Are Traders Point*. And what we've been doing in this series is looking at the Great Commission—the commissioning that Jesus gave all of His followers and the church. If you remember this, this is in Matthew 28 where Jesus, right before he ascends into heaven, said, "Hey, all authority has been given to Me. So what I want you to do now is go. Go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to obey all that I have commanded. And be sure of this. I will be with you until the end of the age."

So we know that that is the commissioning, that is the mission of all churches. And we've been saying is that, as a church, Traders Point, we break that down in a unique way. It's something called the Great Commission Engine. We take that commissioning and then put it together.



So every week we've been looking at this and saying, "Hey, this is what we are here to do as a church." A part of that commissioning—we're here to help people know God; we're here to help people find life-giving relationships; we want to help people make a difference—and I don't know about you, but I've been loving this series. Anybody else been fired up with this series? It brought you in on something.

And what we're going to do today is to look at this and say, if this is an engine, then, like any engine, it needs fuel. Right? And this engine, specifically, is fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit and only prayer and the Holy Spirit.

I don't know if you know this but there is actually a different kind of fuel that you can put in there that will actually bring a lot of damage and pain. We know this. With any engine you can, hypothetically, put the wrong kind of fuel into the engine and it will create all kinds of problems. Have you ever done that? Have you ever put the wrong kind of fuel into your car?

[Ryan holding up a gas can] Don't get nervous. It's water in here. They would not give me real gas. And I'm not going to spill it or drink it. Actually, this would be the splash zone right here [the front row]. No.

Go ahead. Ask me if I've ever put the wrong kind of gas in my car. Yes, yes, I have. I'm telling you; you guys don't want to play never have I ever with me. I have done so many dumb things. But this one wasn't all my fault. Right? We lived in this small town on the

southeast side of Indy. And they didn't have a gas station. They had a gas lot. Right? It was just a gravel lot with a few dispensers where you could get gas. Unmarked for the most part. At least I couldn't see anything marked.

So I pull into this place, and I get to the fueling station and I'm trying to figure it out. I'm like, "Okay, I don't know." And I grab one and here's the first sign that should have told me—I don't know if you've ever used diesel gas before, but even the handle is different. It won't fit into your car.

But I'm just thinking this old, abandoned station—it was just all jinxed. So I'm turning sideways and lifting it and trying to shake it in there. And I got as much of the diesel fuel into my Grand Am as I possibly could before I just gave up. I was like, "You know what? I'll just deal with this later. I'll get some more gas later on." I did not get gas later on. I had to get the tank drained. I had to do this whole thing. It was a mess of a situation.

Here's the truth about the Great Commission Engine in a church. There is a version of the church that is not fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit. It can be fueled by pride. It can be fueled by fear, by human strength, and cold religion. And there is a version of me and you as well that isn't fueled by prayer and the Holy Spirit.

And just like me putting diesel into my Grand Am, the same thing is going to happen to the Great Commission Engine because God has set it up in a way that it can only be fueled with one kind of fuel. And when we try to apply our own fuel to it, it's just a matter of time before it gets all gummed up and seizes. And I almost sound like I understand engines at this point. But I don't.

Here's the good news. It's God's commissioning. It's God's engine, God's church. And here's the thing:

### **GOD HAS PROMISED TO FUEL HIS MISSION.**

It is not on us to create something. It is not on us to go find something. God has promised to fuel His mission. And it's a powerful, powerful fuel. So powerful that Jesus knew this to the point that He wouldn't even allow the church to get started until the fuel came.

Do you guys know this? This is after Jesus was crucified, murdered. They see this man thrown into a tomb and then He resurrects, and He comes back, and He says, "I'm going." He gave that whole commission speech. But He said, "You wait here until the fuel comes. You wait here until the power comes, because I've seen you guys on your own and you will not stand a chance here without My power. So wait for it."

Look at this. This is what He says in Acts 1. He says:

*"Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before."* Acts 1:4 (NLT)

This gift is something that Jesus hinted at over and over again throughout His ministry and now the time was here. This gift, this fuel, was going to come. It was going to allow His church to be like nothing, like anything the world has ever seen. And Jesus said some pretty wild things about this fuel, about this gift. Look at this one in John 16. He says:

*“But in fact, it is best for you that I go away,”* and this is Jesus speaking. *“it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come.”* John 16:7 (NLT)

Do you know how good something has to be for Jesus to say, “Hey, it is better that I go, and this gift gets to come, than if I stay”?

That’s the level of fuel that we are talking about. That’s the power that we are talking about. That’s how good it is for me and you and for the existence of His church to move forward. It’s actually better for Jesus to go and for us to receive this gift. What is this gift? What is this fuel that Jesus is talking about? He lays it out for us in John 14. Jesus says:

*“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. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth....”* John 14:15-17 (NLT)

Now, here it is. The Holy Spirit. This is the gift. This is the fuel. This is what is going to empower us, equip us. It’s the only thing that will take this impossible task of keeping this giant engine running and going forth and going so strong that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It’s the fuel that God Himself would have to give. It’s so expensive that God Himself would have to finance this fuel. And what He says in He’s an Advocate who is the Holy Spirit.

I don’t want to get too caught up in the word *advocate* because *advocate* is just one of many words that are used to describe the Holy Spirit. We see *advocate*. We see *helper*. We see *counselor*. The word I want us to focus on when it comes to the Holy Spirit is *another one*. D. J. Collin’s voice *another one*.

There is another one who is just like God the Father. There is another one who is just like Jesus Christ the Son. There is another one and His name is the Holy Spirit. And what we’re hitting on now is what’s known as the doctrine of the:

## **Trinity**

Which may be one of the hardest concepts to grasp. But this is our way of trying to understand who God is. And in just a moment I’m going to try to explain a little bit about the Trinity and who God is and how we can know Him.

I would say that the only thing harder than trying to describe the Trinity to someone who doesn’t know is like trying to describe Euchre to someone who has never played.

So I thought, let's just go double. Let's double down. So I'm going to talk Euchre, explain that for those who don't know and then we will do Trinity. Alright?

For those of you who don't know, Euchre is a made-up game that we play here in the Midwest with rules that you cannot comprehend unless you've grown up with them.

I was sitting down this summer to play Euchre. There were a few of us from the Midwest and one guy from California. He was a Californian. And we sit down, and we were like, "What game are we going to play?" And one guy said this (from the Midwest): "Let's play Euchre. We can teach him how to play really quickly." I said, "That is the biggest lie I've ever heard you say in your life."

For those of you who don't know, Euchre is a game you play in teams. You have a partner playing against another person and his partner. And the way that it's going is that you are trying to win as many hands and as many books as possible. And the way you win is if your team has the highest card on the table, you win that trick.

Now, in some ways this makes sense. It follows most orders of games in the sense that you know 10 is better than nine. Right? King is better than queen. Ace is better than king. And you follow that.

The other layer to this that you have to put out there is trump, trump. Now, where this differs from most games that I've played like Spades—everyone loves Spades. Spades is a fun game. Spades makes sense. A spade is always a spade. A spade is always trump. In Euchre, the trump changes every single hand. Either you call it, or you pick it up, and I'm not even going to go into that. But those are some of the rules.

So I just want to put a scenario out there for you who have never played Euchre based on what you know. Say the hand goes. It's dealt out. Diamonds are trump. What is the best card that can be played? People who have not played. I understand if you have played, and you understand the rules.

Yes. The highest card is a jack. There is no other game where a jack is the highest card when an ace or a king or a queen exists. The only time that happens is if you've lost the king the queen and the ace when you are playing with a small deck.

Now, you guys got that one. That one was easy. Now, for those who have never played, what's the second-best card that can be played? Diamonds are trump. You guys are not listening. Yes, it is the jack of hearts. The second highest card is the jack of the suit that matches that color.

And you think I'm making up this game right now because it's a made-up game. And you sit down with a real person, and you try to explain it to him? This is the game we're going to be playing tonight. Good luck.

Look at the Trinity. Just like Euchre, very confusing. But once you get it, it's tons of fun. That might be a stretch. But here's the concept of:

## **The Trinity**

It's this idea:

### **God eternally exists as three persons: Father, Son, & Holy Spirit.**

So think about this for a second. It's not that we believe that there are three Gods. It's one God in three. It's not that it's one God who shows up in three different forms like God shows up as the Father, God shows up as the Son, God shows up as the Spirit.

No. Somehow, God in and of Himself, is three persons. God has existed within this trinitarian relationship for all of eternity, before time and space, God existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit living and loving in this community. Gratifying and lifting one another up. Glorifying one another.

Here's why that is important. If that's true, then that means that God within Himself was a complete community. That means God in and of Himself is sufficient and complete.

So when He went to create you and me, we were not created out of a need. God did not create us so that He could have someone to worship Him. God did not create us so that He could have someone to have community with. He already had that. Which means God created us out of a want. And that's a different kind of fuel.

God created us because He wanted us to be able to experience that kind of love, that kind of perfect love that existed in the Trinity for all of eternity. He wanted to welcome us into that community. That's a beautiful, beautiful thing.

Look at Jesus' prayer for us in John 17. He says:

*"I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me."* John 17:21 (NLT)

And that they may be in us. What a God. A God who just wants us to be with Him. A God who wants us, not more for what we can do or what we can provide—we provide nothing. What He wants is for us to be able to experience this kind of love. That is why we were created.

That is why you are here—the possibility that you would accept that invitation. That's what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. That you would get to experience this trinitarian love that has existed for all of eternity. You get wrapped up in that. That is what it means to be filled with the Spirit.

What's been going on for all time is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been pouring themselves out into one another, living in perfect community where this love is

always reciprocated. And what Jesus is saying is, “I want to bring you into that. I want your existence to be here. I want your identity to be found here. I want your worth and your value to be found here.”

And then did you notice when He said why? “Why do I want them to be in us? So that they can go and so the world will know that We sent them.” It’s always back to His Great Commission. All things are going back to God’s plan and Him restoring the rightful order of things.

And we see that. In the book of Acts, right after Jesus said, “Wait for it. Wait for it,” finally the day comes when the Spirit falls. We call it the day of Pentecost. Look at this. It says:

*“On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.” Acts 2:1-4 (NLT)*

Imagine being there. You’re in this house. You’re waiting. You’re waiting, wondering, “Are we going to miss it?” They already had calm and then a hurricane is formed on the inside of this house. This mighty, rushing wind. And then a fire follows. And it begins to separate, and it lands on top of every single one of their heads before it is completely consuming them, and they are filled with the Spirit.

What was the next thing that happened? The Holy Spirit led them to their commissioning, led them to begin the mission of the church. They were given the ability to be able to speak in languages that they did not know. Why? Because the city was filled with people from out of town who could not speak their language.

From the first moment that the Spirit falls they are filled, they go out and they begin speaking in languages that everyone around them can understand. They preach the gospel so that people can hear it and they believe. And they are cut to the heart. And they are filled with the Spirit. And they are baptized. And God’s church begins to move.

And the people became unrecognizable. It was clear that they had been with Jesus, that they had been filled with His Spirit. Men and women were filled, and they changed the landscape of the known world. They were filled.

We talk about what this fuel is. It comes from a filling of the Holy Spirit. That’s the only thing that will keep the engine going. That’s the only thing that we can put in there. And I would say that that is not even the full picture. I’d say that if we broke it down into two spaces, that would only be part one.

## **PART 1: BE FILLED**



Part one is be filled. Part one is wait for the Holy Spirit. Part one is don't try to do this on your own but let God do what only God can do.

But then there is a part two. And part two is what I want to focus on the rest of this time.

## **PART 2: REMAIN FULL**

Part two is remain full. Remain full. If you read the New Testament, the second half of your Bible, that's the majority of it. It's this idea of, "Hey, hey. Remain full. I know that you were once filled with the Holy Spirit, but, wow, how quickly you forget where you came from. How quickly you forget what I've done for you. How quickly you forget that the very Spirit of God is inside of you. Start living like that's true."

So much of the Scripture is pointing back to the Trinity. Its writing, reaching out saying, "Guys, listen, you're fading away. You're falling back. You're being filled with the things that you used to be filled with. No. No. Come together. Remember that you were created in the image of God. You have the Imago Dei on you. You were created in His image. Remember that the Son sacrificed Himself for you. He poured out His blood to show how valuable you are to Him. Remember.

"Remember that even after all of that He sealed you with His Spirit, making it very clear that you were made in His image, you were bought with His blood, and you have been sealed with His Spirit in the sense that nothing could ever take you from Him. Remember that when you go. You have been filled."

And you get this idea through Scripture of:

### **Continuous Replenishment**

It's not this one and done type of thing, "I prayed that prayer once before back in the 80s," or, "a year ago." Whatever it was for you. It's not this idea that, "I was filled," but, "I'm being continuously filled."

Maybe you can think about it like this. Maybe it will make more sense. Think about your car. Think about your car. The day you bought your car you probably filled it up with gas. Right? It would be crazy to think that you would never fill up that gas tank again, that you could just be one and done and that is going to survive for the rest of your car's duration. It's not going to happen. No. What do we know? We know that we have to be constantly filling the tank.

Now, I say that, but I'll also say that I think there are two different kinds of people when it comes to filling up your tank. Here's the real bummer. You're married to each other. Right?

### **EMPTY // FULL**



There are some people here that this is what your tank looks like [always full]. Your car has never made it past the half-way point. What kind of heathen would allow his car to get that low on gas? No. No. Every two days you're filling the thing back up and back up again. This is my dad. No. No. "You can't let it get down to the E because then it sucks up the dirt into the engine." I'm like, "Yeah. Yeah. Okay."

That's one person. Here are the other people [fuel light on]. You live with that light on. Listen to me. There are some of you right now, your car is parked in the parking lot of this church and your light is on right now. You are truly living by faith like, "God is going to get me to the gas station. I'm going to be alright." You have it down to a science, "I know I can get 20 miles when that light comes on. I'm going to be alright."

But I will say that I think there are some of us who live like this spiritually. We're constantly living with the light on. And here's the idea that a lot of us are living with this concept: Just enough. "I need just enough. I need just enough Jesus to get me from here to where I'm going next." "I need just enough Jesus that I can get on Sunday to get me through until I fall back with the light on coming back the next Sunday."

You know the problem with this concept of just enough Jesus? It is not in Scripture. Jesus is not willing to share the tank with any other gas. He is the only fuel that goes into the tank. And here's the thing. We don't have to live with the light on. We don't have to live just barely making it through.

We don't have to wait until we can get to the next station and the next station and the next station. We live with the station. We live with the gas station inside of us. We live with a God who knows no bounds, who has no end, who is constantly pouring Himself out into us. This is the God we live with. This is the God who wants to fill us with His Spirit so that we can have a life and light to the full.

We see a picture of this continuous replenishment in Ephesians, chapter 5. Take a look at this, then we'll break it down. He says:

*"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts. And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Ephesians 5:18-20 (NLT)

So what's he doing? He's comparing and contrasting two different things. He says, "Don't do this. Do this." He says, "Don't be filled with wine. Don't be filled with alcohol." Because he says, "When you do this it actually ruins your life." It deforms. It does not create the true image of who God is instilling in you and who God is molding and forming you to be. It deforms you.

And if you've ever seen this... I think this is why Paul uses the language of wine when he could have used so many different things. The wine, the alcohol is such a clear picture

of it. It's a quick process. You fill yourself, literally, with this liquid and in a short matter of time you surrender yourself to this bottle and it takes over.

I hear some people talk like, "No. When you drink, that's the real version of you." And I'm like, "That's the real version of you? You can't even speak. You're slurring. You're saying the same thing over and over again. You were once standing and now you can't even stand. You think that is.... No." Alcohol, when it takes over, it poisons you.

Like I said, the problem isn't alcohol. In other parts of Scripture alcohol is, in and of itself, not a bad thing. It's when it is consumed, and you surrender yourself to it. It is when you look to it to fill you. He could have used money. He could have used sex. He could have used any other thing. But I think that alcohol gives us a really clear picture of what this is.

But then he contrasts it, and he says, "No. No. Don't be filled with wine, don't ruin yourself," but he said, "fill yourself with the Holy Spirit." And instead of deforming you, the Spirit is actually going to form you. Instead of poisoning you, the Spirit is actually going to give you life, and not just any life, but a life that only God can provide for you, to be continuously filled with His Spirit.

Those are the choices that we have. And you're sitting there right now and you're like, "Okay. How? What does that look like? What is the thing that I can do that I need to be aware of that I could actually stop the fuel from coming in, that I could stop the Holy Spirit from running over into my life? And what are some of the things that I can do in my life right now that I could just have a fresh pouring of the Spirit over and over and over again?"

That's what we're going to look at here because the Bible gives us two clear ways when interacting with the Holy Spirit. Two things that you and I have within in us. Freedom to choose. And here are the two options we have. We can either:

### **Grieve the Holy Spirit**

**Or**

### **Yield to the Holy Spirit**

Grieve or yield. And I think this is.... Trying to understand God will blow your mind. Think about this for a second. God. All powerful, all creating God humbles Himself to a way that makes Himself accessible. He cares enough about us, loves us so much that He gives us the power to grieve Him. He gives us the power to deeply sadden Him.

He chooses to come live within us but not forcefully, He doesn't control us. He guides us. He prays for us. He leads us. But He won't control us. Why? Because He doesn't want slaves and He doesn't want robots. He wants sons and daughters. So that's the

only way He can get this. He submits Himself to us and allows us the choice of choosing Him over and over again.

This is the same paradigm that we see in the Garden. God created all things. All things were good. And God gave Adam and Eve the opportunity, the choice, to stay with Him, to live in harmony with Him, to live in harmony with His creation or they could choose to live how they wanted. And they grieved Him. And He gives you and me the same opportunity with His Spirit.

### **How do I know if I'm grieving the Holy Spirit?**

So how do we know? How do I know if I'm grieving the Holy Spirit? I'd say that there is one big way that we look at our lives and we ask the question: Am I grieving the Holy Spirit in this season?

Go back to the Great Commission. The Holy Spirit, existing within the Trinity, is not focused on Himself, but each one of them is focused on the other, constantly lifting up the other, making them the most important. The Holy Spirit is not introducing anything new. The Holy Spirit is constantly pointing to Jesus, pointing to what Jesus commanded, and helping us fulfill that mission.

So one way to know if I'm grieving the Holy Spirit is that I have isolated and removed myself from three things.

If I'm in a season where, if I'm being honest, I don't want to know God, I don't want to go to church, I don't want to read my Bible, I don't want to know anything more about God, I'm grieving the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit wants you to know more and more and be with God over and over and over again.

If you don't want relationships, life-giving. You don't want any new friends, "I don't want to meet a new person. I don't want to go to anyone's house for dinner. I don't want to do anything. I don't even like the old friends that I have. I have separated myself from relationships."

Or, "I'm isolating myself from making a difference." You're not serving anywhere. You don't want to serve somewhere. You don't want to do anything. You might not even believe that you are in a place where you could actually help someone out. You are grieving the Holy Spirit.

Or maybe you only do those things when they make you feel good. You do things when that light kicks on and there is this little part of conviction like, "Okay, maybe I should do something. Maybe I'll serve once." Or, "Maybe I'll give a little bit here, do a little bit there."

“Maybe I’ll read my Bible. I’ll come to church on Sunday after a really hard week. But if it’s been a good week, Sunday is mine.” These are just the different ways that we are grieving the Holy Spirit.

I would say if you find that to be true, if you don’t want to know God, if you don’t want to be in relationships, you don’t want to serve, you don’t want to make a difference, you can probably be sure that you are being fueled by something else. It is not the Holy Spirit and it’s not prayer.

So what are our other options? The other option is:

### **Yield to the Holy Spirit**

Yield to the Holy Spirit. Here’s what that looks like. In Galatians, chapter 5. He says:

*“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.”*  
Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

Follow Him how? Every part of our lives. I give my entire life. I surrender everything. I surrender my time. I surrender my treasures. I surrender my talents. I surrender all of the ways that I used to live. I surrender it all to God. There is no such thing as just enough Jesus. It is every step of the way. I yield to the Holy Spirit. I don’t jump ahead. I don’t do what I want to do. I yield.

And here’s just a prayer that you can pray a thousand times a day. It’s:

### **Holy Spirit, You have the right of way.**

Holy Spirit, You have the right of way. At every intersection in life, when I wake up, when I go to work, when I get paid, with my relationships, with dating, with my marriage, with my kids—every opportunity that I have to make a choice, instead of acting on instinct, instead of acting on what I want to do, I surrender, I yield.

When I come to this intersection I say, “No. No. No. Holy Spirit, You go first. I want to see how You would handle this. I want to see what You would do in this situation. I yield to You.

And I’m telling you, this is one of the most rewarding yet painful processes that we will ever experience. And it’s one that you don’t graduate from. I’ve met people in their 70s, 80s, 90s who are still dedicated to this idea of, “I want more and more of You, Jesus. I just want to yield to You, to Your ways. I want to know You. I want to do life how You designed it.”

But it takes making intentional choices every day, yielding at every intersection saying, “No. No. Holy Spirit, You go first. I don’t want to handle things the way I used to. I don’t want to run this thing like I used to. I don’t want to handle my life like I used to. So, God, I just completely surrender to You.”

Do you know what we call this? We call this worship. Worship is not just a few minutes of singing on a Sunday. Worshiping is ascribing ultimate worth to something. It's not just lip service. It's living as if it is true. It is yielding to the Holy Spirit.

Here's what happens in this process. The biggest problem with humanity from Adam and Eve to now is when we put our wants above God's commands. When we know what God has called us to do, we know how God has called us to live. And we say, "No. I really want to do this." And this trumps that.

What worship does is it puts things back in their rightful order. It puts God's wants and God's desires, God's commands, over what I'm feeling in the moment. And I learn to trust Him with everything. I completely surrender myself and I come into alignment with Him. What He loves, I begin to love. What breaks His heart begins to break my heart. What He has commissioned me to do is what I do with my life. And there is nothing that gets in the way of that. It is this ultimate form of worship.

And I'm telling you, you want to know what that looks like when you're worshiping God, when you're yielding to the Holy Spirit? Go back to the Great Commission Engine, "All I want to do is know God and help people know God. I have jobs. I have responsibilities for sure, for sure. But at the end of the day what fires me up, what fuels me, what I get excited about is that I get to spend some time knowing the Creator of the universe. He truly bends an ear and listens and communes with me. He wants me to know about Him. I come to church, and I just want to know more about Him.

"I want to be in life-giving relationships no matter how hard and messy they are. And no matter that that love is not reciprocated I want to love them because I believe through my act of obedience of loving them, there is an opportunity where they will get to know God and their relationship with Him will be solidified. I want to be in relationship.

"I want to make a difference with my life, and I know it's not on me and I know I'm showing up dependent upon God because I have nothing to offer to the person in front of me unless God shows up. So I'm praying. I'm praying, 'God, fill me. God show me. God help me with this relationship. God help me to see Jesus.'"

You know what a life like that does? It pulls you back into:

## **PRAYER**

Where you go out and you're commissioned. You go and you live, and you serve, and you do all of those things. And you realize how short you fall at everything. And you go running back to prayer saying, "God, would You fill me? God, I can't do it out there alone. I don't want to know what it's like to be fueled by anything else. God, I want to be in this relationship, but I have nothing to bring.

“God, fill me with Your spiritual fruit. God fill me with love. Fill me with kindness. Fill me with gentleness. Fill me with self-control. Fill me with faithfulness. Fill me with patience. Jesus, I just want to know what You want from me.”

Prayer is a beautiful, beautiful thing. I remember sitting down with a volunteer at the Downtown campus. She wanted to join the Prayer and Response team. So we sat down on the stage, and I just said, “Tell me why you want to join the Prayer Team.” Here’s what she said. She said, “My default response to life is prayer” (Tiffany Munsell).

That’s when I knew that we were sitting on the wrong side, “You should be leading this conversation right now. I should be on your Prayer Team.” I said, “Tell me more about what you are talking about.”

She said, “When I drop my daughter off at school and she’s walking up the stairs, I pray for her. When I’m driving down the road and I hear a siren, I don’t even know what’s going on, but my instinct, my default response to any situation is to pray. When I go into work, whatever is ahead of me I don’t know, but I pray that I could follow the Spirit’s leading in everything that I do.”

That reminds me of 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5. It says:

*“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)*

So many times we try to make God’s will so small that it becomes painful, “Is God’s will for my life to work at Lilly or Salesforce?” I’m going to shoot straight with you, I don’t think He cares. What He does care about—the will of God is that you would follow Him, that you would be filled with His Spirit, that you would yield to Him, that you would give thanks in all circumstances, that you would live as a living sacrifice on His altar.

A life of prayer. And through a life of prayer you will come face to face with the presence of God. That was where I experienced a filling of the Holy Spirit.

Some of you guys know my story. I didn’t grow up in the church. I was 21 before I ever came through these doors. And I didn’t come to just any church, I came to this church. I sat right over there [to the right of the stage].

I understood the doctrine of Christianity before I understood how to live it out. I come from a very blue-collar, hard-working family. So I saw the commissioning. I saw what Jesus had asked me to do. And I went to work. I came. I got baptized. I started serving. I started a group—not just join one, I started leading one. I had no business leading a group. I was learning stuff one day and sharing it the next day like I had been holding on to the truths my whole life. But I was hungry.

I remember the group I was leading; we were going through this series by Francis Chan called *Basic*. Every week it was a different concept of God and community and all of

these things. Then I hit the week on the Holy Spirit. And it just punched me right in the head. He started talking about this supernatural element of Christianity. We don't do this on our own, but we are fueled by His Spirit.

And I thought, "Man, that would make things a lot easier." And then he threw out this question. He said, "Isn't it the same Holy Spirit that was alive then that is alive now? Isn't it the same Holy Spirit that was doing miracles then who is doing miracles now? Isn't it the same Holy Spirit who was filling men and women back then the same one who is filling them now?"

And I was sitting there. I was on my bed. My wife was already asleep. It was just me and Chan and I remember, in my bed, I just started praying. I just prayed, "God, I want that. God, would You fill me with Your Spirit? God, I want to know what that is like. I want to know that supernatural power because I'm barely into this thing but I'm at the end of myself. I know I can't do it alone."

I'm telling you, I'm praying this prayer, "Fill me with Your Spirit. Fill me with Your Spirit." And then, in a moment, I can't completely explain it to you, I'm sitting on the bed, and I was completely filled. It's like I didn't know how empty I was until I was filled, until I saw how much space that was there that I wasn't ever aware was there before.

And it just completely consumed me from my toes to my head. This warm feeling. No words. But it just pushed over me like this wave of love. I was completely loved. I was brought up into that Trinity of love. There was this outpouring on me. God was showing me how much more of Him there was to know, how much of more of Him there was to experience. And I wasn't reminded of my sin. I wasn't reminded of the bad I've done. It was this complete and utter love that washed over me.

And I began to change my prayer from, "God, fill me," to "God, don't let it end. God, don't let it end. Don't let me forget this moment." And it could have been 30 seconds, it could have been two hours. I don't know how long it lasted but it did dissipate.

I think about that sometimes. Why did God give me that? And I think, one, He gave it to me just to truly show me that He loved me. But I also think that it was two-fold. It was for me to stand in places like this and tell people that it is the same God who is alive and active, it is the same God who is filling men and women with His Spirit, with a love like you have never known that will wash over you and remove everything that doesn't belong. It will truly fill you.

I can't explain it. I did try to draw it. I have this doodle where I tried to make sense out of what I experienced. And I'm telling you, the only thing could mimic it, explain it, was— have you ever seen a cartoon where Bugs Bunny takes the hose and puts it into Elmer Fudd's mouth and then his whole body begins to expand? It was like that. Every part of me was filled and I was just raised out of there.



I'm telling you, what I felt in that moment, the overwhelming love, if that is a glimpse of what heaven and all of eternity with God is like, I just want to tell you today, my testimony, everything you experience will be worth getting that. If that was a glimpse of it and that's going to happen for all of eternity, joining in over and over again in that state....

I'm telling you, as hard as it sounds, as much pain as we've been through, I'm telling you there is coming a day when God will fill His people, when He will be done with this place, when there will be a new heaven and a new Jerusalem and a new creation where we are filled, and we are constantly in His presence. And I believe it's going to be like that.

So I just want to put that out there to everyone today. If you've never experienced that filling of the Holy Spirit, now is the time. And here's what you do. You believe. That's the whole point of this. You are being filled with something that you can't create. That takes faith. To believe that you are going to step out there and pray and believe that God will fill you. God will do what only He can do. What we have to do is make ourselves available.

I just want to put that out there to you. Here it is. It's the gospel. God loves you. God created you. All of humanity has sinned against God. We chose to have our own way. We chose to put Him in the back seat. But God didn't give up. God pursued us. God hunted us down with His love. He even sent His only Son. Emptied heaven for me and you.

Jesus would go to a cross. He lived a perfect life that we could never live. He died for all of that sin. He died to all of that shame. He died to all of that condemnation and rose. He rose, coming out of the other side saying, "Follow Me and I will fill you with My Spirit. I will fill you with My love. I will fill you with My grace. I will fill you with My fruit. And you will be sent. And you will go to the ends of the earth. And you can be sure of this. I will be with you always."

We're going to have time here where you're going to be able to pray that prayer for the first time, "God, fill me with Your Spirit."

And for others of us, I want to say there might be a time, right now, where we need to drain the tank. We've been fueling with a whole bunch of stuff that God is not trying to fill you with. We've been leaning on a lot of different things to bring us fulfillment. We're coping in a lot of different ways. We're searching for contentment and satisfaction in all of these different ways.

And God is saying, "No. I need you to surrender that and surrender to Me. I need you to lay down that life of sin, because My Holy Spirit is not going to go that way. I need you to repent. I need you to drain the tank and I need you to have a fresh falling of My Spirit on you." You get an opportunity to do that.

I want to end with this verse. It comes right after the one we looked at with what the will of God is for our lives. It says:

*"Do not quench the Spirit."* 1 Thessalonians 5:19 (ESV)

Meaning if God is convicting you right now, if God is pulling at your heart, you're almost bringing yourself to that spot to submit, to surrender, to ask to be filled with His Spirit, but you're saying, "I just don't know if I'm ready. I have a lot more that I want to do. I'm worried about what this will mean for my life." I just want to say, "Don't quench the Spirit."

One of the biggest lies that adults tell ourselves is that we'll get gas tomorrow. All that does is prolong the problem. All it does is create more problems. And what terrifies me is that if you are here today and you're feeling that conviction, you're feeling that compassion, you're feeling God bringing you in to experience His love, and you push back, and you harden yourself. Who's to say that same conviction will come back tomorrow?

So, what we want to do right now is create a space for worship, to create a space to commune with God, a space to ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you.

And we're going to take communion and we're going to sing together. But here's the thing. Do not let your worship end when the sermon ends. Take the gas with you. Take the fuel with you. Yield to Him every single step of the way.

One of the ways we do that is by taking communion. We take a moment when we pause and we believe that, in this moment, all of us as we sit here, believers in Christ, when we sit and we remember the elements of Jesus' blood and body that this is truly a moment of worship where we are communicating with God, where God is bending down to be with us in this moment.

So right now we're going to take this little piece of bread which represents Jesus' body, it was broken on our behalf, and we remember the sacrifice that He has made for us. He didn't give us just enough Jesus. He gave us all of Himself. We take the bread together.

And then we look at the sacrifice of Jesus spilling His blood for you and for me. He is a good God killed by evil, but He went willingly. He chose to go through all of that so we could now have what He has, so that we could experience that kind of love, so that we could live in a community where God would be with His people again. So we take the juice, and we remember the sacrifice that He made.

One last call. I just want to paint this as clearly as I can, specifically for those who have never received the Holy Spirit, who have never given their life to Christ. I want to close with these words from Jesus, when He was talking about the Holy Spirit. And I want you to hear His language and know that this is for you. It says:

*“On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowd, ‘Anyone who is thirsty may come to me.’”*

It is not anyone who is perfect. Anyone who grew up in a family like that. Anyone who has a clean history. Anyone who is ready. You can't be ready for this. It's overwhelming. You can't even know exactly. You've just got to know enough, just a little bit. You've got to be thirsty. That is the word that He says. That's the only prerequisite. You've got to want it.

And He says, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me. Anyone who believes in Me, come and drink.” The Scriptures declare: “Rivers of running water will flow from His heart, they will be My people and I will be with them, and My Spirit will dwell in them.”

So, no matter where you are I just want to encourage you to take the next little bit to pray that prayer, “God, fill me with Your Spirit.” Keep praying. Ask not and you will receive not. The time is now.