

It a little bit of a cheesy story but there is a story about a vacuum salesman down in Tennessee. He was out in rural Tennessee. He had his vacuum cleaner and all of this tools and everything, and he went out there and he told a lady, "I've got the most exciting vacuum cleaner you have ever seen. It will clean your house from top to bottom...you only have to pay so much down." And the lady said, "It sounds real good." He said, "You see that big pile of dirt right there on the floor with all those fur balls and bugs and things." He said, "My vacuum cleaner will just pick up all those things up just like that and if they don't, I'll eat it." She said, "well you might as well get your knife and fork, because we do not have any electricity out here!"

The moral of this little story is simply this: You and I will be sucking up dirt the rest of your lives if we don't have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us.

I am going to talk to you today for a few minutes about the Holy Spirit. After Jesus resurrection from the dead He encountered His disciples and He talked with them about many things. Then He reminded them of something He had been telling them just before He was crucified and killed. He reminded them about the Holy Spirit.

And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." Luke 24:49 NLT

For many people when they think of the Holy Spirit they think of power but the power of the Holy Spirit is no explosive nor is it often dramatic in the sense of the spectacular.

The power of the Holy Spirit is not just for salvation, but transformation, a process that might be slow and gradual. The difference might look like this:

You can take ten gallons of gasoline and release a tremendous amount of power and energy by just dropping a lighted match into it. It makes a dramatic onetime impact. But there is another way to release the energy in that gasoline. Place it in the fuel tank of a new automobile, designed to get 30 miles to the gallon. The high tech engine will use that ten gallons of gasoline to take a person 300 miles or more.

Explosions may be spectacular, but the sustained, controlled burn has staying power. You don't want to be a flash in the pan, you want to make a difference in this world over time. You want to last for the long haul. You don't want the Holy Spirit to just save you for heaven, you want Him to use His power to transform your life. You want Him to use you in this world for kingdom purposes

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is a person: He is not an "it" The Holy Spirit is a person and not only is He in relationship with us but He is also in relationship with God the Father and the Son. This is a powerful connection that radically affects our lives when we live in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God: He is not a lesser representation of God. ³ *Peter said to Ananias, “Why did you let Satan fill your heart? He made you lie to the **Holy Spirit**. You kept back part of the money you got from your land. ⁴ Was not the land yours before you sold it? After it was sold, you could have done what you wanted to do with the money. Why did you allow your heart to do this? You have lied to **God**, not to men.”* Acts 5:2-4
NLT

The Holy Spirit prays for us: This is what we read in Romans 8:27, ²⁷ *And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers^[a] in harmony with God’s own will.”* The Holy Spirit praying for me adds a great degree of comfort and meaning to my life. I am not a perfect person. I am vulnerable and susceptible to the ups and downs of life and to know that the Spirit is praying is beyond value to me.

The Holy Spirit has emotions: In Ephesians 4 we read that we are not to grieve the Holy Spirit. How could you or I grieve the Holy Spirit? It would seem to be impossible to offend God. Remember it was God who created feelings and emotions and the Holy Spirit is grieved when there is a breach in our relationship with God or for that matter with other people. When we are disunified, unloving, hateful, jealous, gossipy or a host of other things we shouldn’t do or be. I believe that the Spirit of God is moved more deeply by these things than we could ever imagine.

The Holy Spirit is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient: There you have three theological words that mean simply that the Holy Spirit is all powerful, always present and all knowing. These are things that are almost impossible for us to grasp as human beings. In fact the prophet Isaiah wrote, *“Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor?”* Isaiah 40:13

Can we take a few moments and look at the verses and teaching that Jesus did shortly before His crucifixion?

“If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. John 14:15-17 NLT

Phrases from Jesus teaching:

He will never leave you
He will never leave you.
He leads into all truth.

Look at that last sentence: You know Him because He lives with you now and later will be in you.

He lives with you
He might live in you

Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. John 14:24-26 NLT

He will teach you
He will remind you

“But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. John 16:6-7 NLT

It was the departure of Jesus from this world that ushered in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

¹² “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’ John 16:12-15 NLT

He will guide you into truth
He will tell you about the future
He will tell you what Christ told Him

What is an Advocate?

The Greek word translated "Comforter, Counselor or Advocate" is "Parakletos" as found in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7. It can properly mean only "one called to the side of another," and that with the secondary notion of counseling or supporting or aiding him.

The contexts in which the word "paraclete" occurs in the New Testament lead to the same conclusions as the form and the independent usage of the word. In 1 John 2:1; the word "Advocate" alone suits the argument, though the Greek fathers explain the term as applied to the Lord in the same way as in the Gospel. In the Gospel again, the sense of Advocate, counsel, one who pleads, convinces, convicts, who strengthens on the one hand and defends on the other, is alone adequate. Christ as the Advocate pleads the believer's cause with the Father against the accuser Satan.

Think of the high profile court cases you might have witnessed. The defense attorney works so hard to find every way to advocate for the person they represent.

Likewise the Holy Spirit works on our behalf to make sure that we love God. That we serve God with our whole heart.

Who is our Advocate?

Jesus was very clear in His teaching to the first disciples. There is someone coming. You need to get ready. He told them that they would have a mission but not to go until they had encountered the Holy Spirit.

It was this final instruction that sent the disciples into an upper room where they waited and tarried until the Holy Spirit came and descended into their hearts and souls.

Based on the scriptures from John and the conversations of Jesus just prior to His death I want to try to build a quick profile of just who is this Advocate and what does He do.

Profile:

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| Revealing | He is always revealing the Father and the ways that we are to live our lives. |
| Redeeming | Without the Holy Spirit we would never know our need to come to Christ for redemption. |
| Indwelling | One of the most sacred of His duties is to indwell within us. We must be inward clean for the Holy Spirit to live within. |
| Transforming | You cannot have the Holy Spirit of God living in you and not be transformed. |
| Filling | This means simply that the Holy Spirit will fill us with the presence and power necessary to do God's will. |
| Gifting | The gifts of the Spirit come from the Holy Spirit. |
| Sending | He is the agent that sends us out to do the will of God. |

Let me address the sending part for a moment or two. As a church we are going to respond to God's call to go and tell. Go and preach and go and make disciples.

Many times we express a desire to know God's will for our lives and often our desire is rooted in fear of failure. We are scared to make a mistake so we fret over figuring out God's will. Frances Chan wrote about this:

“We forget that we were never promised a twenty-year plan of action, instead, God promises multiple times in scripture to never leave us or forsake us. God wants us to listen to His Spirit on a daily basis.

To say that we are not called to figure out “God’s will for my life” does not mean God doesn’t have purposes and plans for each of our lives or that He doesn’t care what we do with our lives. He does. In both the Old and New Testament He tells us that this is true. The key is that He never promises to reveal these purposes all at once, in advance.”

Listen very carefully to this. We do know that we are called to keep in step with the Holy Spirit. In Paul’s letter to the Galatians we read, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. . .If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:16,25)

The phrases keeping step with the Spirit and walking with the Spirit are most likely familiar but do they affect your life in a practical and meaningful way?

It’s a whole lot easier to have safe conversation about God and His will for the future than it is to jump into it with both feet. Thinking, questioning, and talking can take the place of letting the Spirit affect our immediate actions in radical ways. God want us to stake everything on His power and presence in our lives.

Chan also writes this, “Nowhere in Scripture do I see a “balanced life with a little of God added in” as an ideal for us to emulate. Yet when I look at our churches that is what I see; A lot of people who have added Jesus to their lives. People who have asked Him to join them in their life journey, to follow them wherever they feel they should go rather than following Him as we are commanded.

The God of our universe is not something that we just add to our lives. The Holy Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead is not someone we can just call when we need a little extra power in our lives. Jesus Christ did not die in order to follow us. He died and rose again so that we could forget everything else and follow Him to the cross, to true Life.”

If all you want Jesus to do for you is give you a get out of hell free card than you have sadly missed to entire plan of God to change the world.

Yet so many people in our churches today are doing so little to engage the presence of God through the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. In fact most of us would rather not think about it to be honest. To think about it would change so much about what we do and say. To think about the Holy Spirit controlling our lives is almost too much to process because we have it going on and we are making life happen.

Stop for a moment and think. Is it possible that are living so far below the lever of God’s will that we can’t even see it?

One pastor shared the following story:

Years ago, when a random thought came into my head, I decided to share it with my wife. "Have you ever wondered what caterpillars think about?" I asked. Not surprisingly, she said, "No."

I then proceeded to tell her about the confusion I imagined a caterpillar must experience. For all its caterpillar life, it crawls around a small patch of dirt and up and down a few plants. Then one day it takes a nap. A long nap. And then, what in the world must go through its head when it wakes up to discover it can *fly*? What happened to its dirty, plump little worm body? What does it think when it sees its tiny new body and gorgeous wings?

As believers we ought to experience this same kind of astonishment when the Holy Spirit enters our bodies. We should be stunned into disbelief over becoming a 'new creation' with the Spirit living in us. As the caterpillar finds its new ability to fly, we should be thrilled over our Spirit-empowered ability to live differently and faithfully. Isn't this what the Scriptures speak of? Isn't this what we've all been longing for? I don't want to keep crawling when I have the ability to fly.

The first disciples gathered in a room for about 10 days to wait for the Holy Spirit to come. And then it happened. There was a blowing and there were flames of fire that rested on each of them. And when they came out of that room they literally turned the world upside down.

They were empowered by the Holy Spirit's power.

I just wonder today if there is someone in this room that would be honest enough to say, You know what, I am tired of crawling in the dirt. I want to fly. I want to live my life empowered by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and today you are willing to step out and come and kneel and pray. I usually give you an out by saying you can pray at your seats but this is serious business and if you want to do go on record today that you are hungry and ready and waiting to be filled with God's Holy Spirit.

When you hunger and thirst for God like you were hungering for air you will find Him.