



Spirit Life (Part 5) – Fountain and Fire of God

Pastor Jerry Gillis – July 9, 2017

Alright, how many smart, anybody, this campus, Lockport, Cheektowaga, watching online, nobody is going to see you, but none-the-less how many of you by an uplifted hand are smartphone users? Raise your hand. Okay, so that's the vast majority of us. How many of you are non-smartphone users and you are willing to share that? Thank you, alright, cool. That's great. Hey, the non-smartphone users might be smarter than the rest of us. That's certainly possible. Now, how many of you that are smartphone users are good at texting, raise your hand. Okay. How many of you stink at it? Okay, that's fair enough. Alright, so we've got a mixed crowd, right? How many of you, when you text just use your pointer finger to text, how many, raise your hand. Alright. You should have gone to typing class. How many of you use two hands and your thumbs when you're texting, raise your hand. Okay, fantastic, you found your thumbs.

Here's the big question - how many of you, when you are texting, use emojis, raise your hand? Oh man, wow! Well, here's what I've got to say about that. Now if you don't know what an emoji is, welcome to 2017, good to have you. An emoji for you non-smartphone users or whatever is

basically an electronic image that portrays an emotion or idea. And by the way, those particular images, there can be lots of them all put together portraying kind of one big emotion or one big idea, and they don't all have to be the same. In fact, they can be unique in the way that you see them and all of a sudden you go "oh yeah, now I understand really what they're saying when they say that".

So, for instance if this were the text message right here. "Did you see that home run from Aaron Judge last night?" Aaron Judge plays for the Yankees, by the way. He's humongous and he hits lots of bombs. "Did you see that home run from Aaron Judge last night?" And they answered "yeah, it was fire, muscle arm, lightning, one hundred and a heart-breaker." Maybe he hit it to win the game or whatever, right? So you've got all of these, right? You've got fire, muscle, lightning, 100 and a heart-breaker all to describe the idea of how great Aaron Judge's home run was last night.

Now we have been studying the Spirit of God in our series. And when we study the Spirit of God, one of the things that we need to understand is that the Spirit of God is pictured in the New Testament in a number of different ways, not all of which are the same type of way. It's not saying that the Spirit is these things, it's saying the Spirit is pictured as these particular things and what I want us to do is I want us to take at least just a few moments so that we can understand a little bit about how the New Testament pictures the Holy Spirit. And there's a reason for this because it's important when we read the Scripture itself, we need to understand the pictures so we better understand the Spirit.

Let me give you just a handful. There's more than what I'm going to show you, by the way. I'm going to just kind of show you five in the New Testament that we can look at real quick. But there's more than that, but let me show you a few of those images of the Spirit. First of all the Spirit is pictured as a dove. Some of you may remember when Jesus was, at the time of His baptism when John said "Behold, the Lamb of God". And you know, they saw Jesus and He came and the Father spoke and Jesus was there in the water. And then notice how John records this event in chapter one: "Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on Him.'" So the picture there was a picture of a dove, the Spirit being pictured as a dove. Now, a dove in the New Testament and oftentimes in the Old Testament as well is kind of a symbol of purity and holiness. And that was kind of the picture of the Spirit of God, One who is holy and One who is pure in all things. But the Spirit is also pictured in a second way and that is wind.

So the Spirit of God is pictured as a dove and is also pictured as wind. If you remember the conversation with Jesus when He was talking with Nicodemus in John chapter 3, we'll pick up a portion of that conversation. It says, Jesus says: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Now this is important for us to remember because the Spirit is being pictured as wind. You don't know where it comes from, you hear its sound but you can't tell where it comes from or where it's going. This will be important for us in just a minute, I'll come back to that in just a second.

There's a third way that the Spirit is pictured and that is the Spirit is pictured as new clothing. Now you say "what is that talking about? I don't really understand that picture at all." Well, when you read what Jesus was talking about in Luke's gospel about sending the Spirit and how that was going to play out, and then how in Acts chapter 1 how that actually did play out, how what Jesus said before He ascended to the Father, you'll see the picture. Luke chapter 24 says this: "I'm going to send you" Jesus speaking, "I'm going to send you what my Father has promised." In other words He's referring to the Holy Spirit. "But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." And then you might remember the words of Acts chapter 1 verse number 8. Jesus says: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;" some translations "when the Holy Spirit clothes you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." So the Spirit is pictured as a dove, the Spirit is pictured as wind, the Spirit is pictured as new clothing that we are putting on, this new life and it's a life of kind of being clothed in power from above.

There's a fourth way the Spirit is pictured. The Spirit is pictured as water. Some of you may remember this particular picture because Jesus in John's gospel spoke to it on a couple of different occasions. In John chapter 4 remember these words: "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,' (when He was talking to the woman at the well), "But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." So Jesus is speaking about something different than what I have in my

hand. This is the kind of water that I drink and I'm glad that I do, that I drink but I will get thirsty again, right? This is the water He was talking about like water from a well. But Jesus says, "the water I give you will spring up from within you and you will never thirst again because this will be kind of a wellspring or living water inside of you."

In fact, in John chapter 7 Jesus came back to this same picture. "On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this He meant the Spirit, whom those who had believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

So we're told that the Spirit would be given once Jesus had died, risen from the dead and then glorified. Then ultimately the Spirit would be poured out, which we saw at the time of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. The Spirit would be poured out and would reside within those who had put their faith in Jesus. And what this resident life in them would be would be like a spring of water that is a continual source of life. Not just water that's sitting there that's called dead water, right? It's just there, but living water like a stream, like a river, like a waterfall. It has a source and it continues to flow out of us. Jesus promises that and that would be a picture of the Holy Spirit.

But there's a last picture that I'll bring up for our time together, it's not the last one that there is, but it's the last one that I'll bring up and that's fire.

The Holy Spirit is pictured as fire. You might remember in Acts chapter 2 when the Spirit was being poured out upon all the disciples as they were praying and seeking the Lord, Jesus had promised that this was going to be the case, that He was going to send His Spirit and He did. And listen to the description in Acts chapter 2. "They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them." This outpouring of the Spirit was kind of pictured as tongues of fire that came to rest upon them, and there are other places in the Scripture that kind of remind us of the idea of God's presence associated with fire in His Spirit.

So, all that said, you've got a number of these different pictures, they're not all exactly the same but they are giving us a picture of the Spirit. If we were looking at a present-day text message, where somebody said "So, what is the Holy Spirit like?" It might look like this: a dove, wind, clothes, water and fire. How's that for something you can remember? Some of you are going "can you text that to me"? That's not my phone, sorry, I can't do it, alright? So that's some of the pictures. Why do I bring that up? I bring that up because the pictures help us to understand the nature of the Holy Spirit.

But here's what I don't want you to miss. We talked about this in week number one. The Holy Spirit is not just a power, the Holy Spirit is not just a force, the Holy Spirit is a person. We cannot forget the personhood of the Holy Spirit. So what these do, these symbols that we're looking at here in the text, they point to His nature and to His character and we need to remember those pictures when we're reading and here's why. Because sometimes the writers of Scripture will teach us a principle about the Holy Spirit by referencing one of the pictures of the Holy Spirit in the command.

I'm going to give you one, because this is one that we're going to try and act on, kind of this is going to be really application heavy, I hope you're okay with that. This is going to be really application heavy for you today. And so I'm going to look at one passage in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. I'm going to look at the context surrounding one stark statement that Paul makes that we need to embrace and understand and act on. And I'm going to do that by taking that statement and looking at how everything around that statement in the context of 1 Thessalonians 5 helps us to understand how we obey that one statement that calls to mind one of these pictures.

Here's the statement, it's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verse 19. Very clear, "Do not quench the Spirit". Super clear. Do not quench the Spirit. Now that's the NIV version which is what use just from a teaching standpoint. It's not solely what I study from, but it's what I do in a teaching standpoint because it's easy for people to grab hold of and it's a solid record for us anyway. But this is the NIV newer edition. The 1984 edition translates this verse this way: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire." That's how it translates it. Why? Because the text itself when it's using the term "quench" or "extinguish" is actually referring to the picture of fire. So that previous translation and in some other translations that says "Do not put out the Spirit's fire" or "Do not quench, or extinguish the flame of the Spirit".

Now, it's fair for us to ask the question why would we want to extinguish the fire of God in our lives? Would anybody really when asked want to do that? Yeah, you know what, I do. I want to extinguish the fire, like put it out. Get that gone, right? Anybody that's following after God does not want that to be the case in their life, right? Does anybody actually want to build a

dam to stop the Living Water from flowing in your life? Does anybody actually want that? No, you don't. You don't want to extinguish the fire of God, you don't want to dam up the Living Water of God, right?

But yet we do, don't we? All the time. And Paul says "Do not quench the Spirit!" Which leads to the question, what does it mean to quench the Spirit? Because until we understand what it means to quench the Spirit, it's going to be very difficult for us to obey the command not to quench the Spirit. Right?

Now before I start unpacking what it means to quench the Spirit, let me tell you what it doesn't mean. And the reason I know what it doesn't mean is because one of the pictures that we have of the Holy Spirit. Remember Jesus talking about the Holy Spirit as wind? You hear it's sound, but you don't know where it's going and you don't know where it blows, right? In other words, here's the idea. You can't control the wind, so before we talk about quenching the Spirit, here's one thing that you need to know. The Holy Spirit is one of the personhoods of God. God the Father, God the Son, God the Spirit. That means that the Holy Spirit, because He is God, is sovereign. He is in control. You are not. You see, when we think to ourselves ah, I can quench the Spirit. Turn Him on, turn Him off. Turn Him on, turn Him off. Turn Him on, turn Him off. I'm in control. No, you're not. The Spirit is God, and the Spirit is in control.

But in His sovereignty, listen to this, in His sovereignty for purposes only known to Him, He does condescend to us and gives us the freedom to quench His activity in our lives from time to time. I don't know why. In His

wisdom He knows. I don't know why. But, we are not sovereign, God is. That's a fact about God, period that the Scripture teaches. And because the Holy Spirit is God, the Holy Spirit is sovereign as well.

So, when we talk about this idea of quenching the Spirit, we need to understand that in the sovereign purposes of God we have for some reason been given some freedom to be able to from time to time, quench the activity of the Spirit in our own lives. It doesn't mean that we stop the activity of the Spirit in the world. God has purposes going on that are beyond our calculation and understanding. But it does mean that we can effect negatively because of our choices, the work of the Spirit in our own lives.

So what does it mean to quench the Spirit? I'm going to give you a few things and we're going to run through these reasonably quickly. But here's the first thing that I would notice for you. We quench the Spirit when we dishonor people. Now hopefully you've got a copy of the Bible in front of you. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, and if you have a hard copy you can open that, if you've got a digital copy you can open up to 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, because that's where we're going to be looking in just a moment. But we quench the Spirit when we are dishonoring to people.

Let me explain what I mean. All through the context of Scripture here's what we're reminded, even at the very creation of human beings, that human beings are created in the image of God. Male and female He created them in His image, right? That's in Genesis, early on, right in the very beginning. And we're reminded all through the context of Scripture and

into the New Testament that those who are created in His image bear with them a certain dignity because they are created in the image of God.

Therefore we should not be someone, particularly as followers of God, as people of Jesus, as people led by the Spirit, we should not be people who are dishonoring people as a matter of course. Because this begins to quench the activity of the Spirit in our own lives.

Now the text that we're in in 1 Thessalonians 5 actually talks about a few different categories of people and so let me lay those out for you real quickly. Here's the first category, spiritual leaders. In other words, don't dishonor those who are spiritually leading. You say, well Jerry that's easy for you to say because you're one of those, right? Look at you, Mr. preach about yourself, you know. My job is to actually teach you the Scripture. And when it pertains to me I talk about it. When it pertains to you I talk about it. Normally it's pertaining to all of us very specifically and we talk about it. My job isn't to run from any of that kind of stuff.

In fact, if you look in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 beginning in verse 12 it says this: "Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. And live in peace with each other." Now, this is consistent in fact with what the writer of Hebrews said about those who are in spiritual leadership as well in Hebrews chapter 13. "Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

You see, we quench the Spirit and when Paul wrote that phrase right there, he didn't write it just standing alone by itself, he wrote it in the context of other things. He's helping us to see kind of arenas in which we quench the Spirit. And when we dishonor those that are spiritually leading, it quenches the Spirit in our own lives.

Now let me pause right here and say this. For those of you that are at The Chapel, whether you're at the Lockport Campus, or the Cheektowaga Campus, watching online, here in this room, the East Worship Center, wherever you are, on Neptune, wherever you are. I can't tell you, it's the greatest joy of my vocational ministry life to be a pastor here. And I think I speak on behalf of all of the pastors that make up The Chapel. It's an honor for us to serve alongside people like you. You are so gracious to us, you're kind to us. Generally. Mostly, really. And I mean really, it's a precious thing for us and we're so thankful to you.

Can I say to those of you that may be watching this broadcast on television and you're a part of another congregation somewhere. Maybe you just watch us on Sunday mornings before you go to your congregation somewhere or maybe you stream us from some other part of the country but you're part of another body of believers. Could I say this to you, love those who lead you. Pray for them, encourage them.

You see, I know full well what ministries are like. I know what it's like, I know what it's like to carry other people's burdens. I know what it's like to be a black hole of information that I wish I didn't know, frankly, but I do. And that I'll go to my grave with. I know what it's like to be misunderstood

sometimes in leadership. I know what that's like. And I'm grateful to God that I serve in such a beautiful, wonderful place. And we thank you for your graciousness to us.

But I know that it's not that way in every context. And I have a heart for pastors, so if you're in another congregation and you've got a pastor who's not crazy, who's not asking you to drink Kool-aid, right? I'm not talking about that, like get out, like you need to get out if that's the case, right? It's like a bonfire with Kool-aid, we're all going to Mars. Get out, like check out. But as imperfect as they are, if they're really trying to serve Jesus and walk with God and they don't have it perfectly altogether, right, just like we don't have it all perfectly together, love them, pray for them, honor them because God will honor you in that process, alright?

So, we quench the Spirit when we dishonor people, particularly those that are in spiritual authority. Let me give you another group of people that are talked about here. If we dishonor our brothers and sisters in Christ, right? We shouldn't be dishonoring anybody and He specifically talks about in this passage those who are in spiritual authority and about brothers and sisters in Christ. Notice what the following verses say in verse number 14: "We urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, and be patient with everyone."

Now let's leave this here for just a second. Now we don't dishonor our brothers and sisters, listen to this. When our brothers and sisters in Christ are idle and disruptive, like if they're creating disunity or anything like

that, listen. We have a responsibility in love to help them, maybe by confronting them in love and in humility, but helping them now find their place in the right way in the body of Christ. We also need to encourage the disheartened, we help the weak and be patient with everyone.

Hey, listen. Life's hard enough, isn't it? Like the things that come at us in life, we're constantly bombarded by a world that's trying to feed us all kinds of lies. And sometimes we're buying into them. And sometimes we feel pressure in our lives and stress in our lives and the world is broken. Jesus said in this world you will have trouble. He's right! We have trouble. So we need to be cognizant of that with our brothers and sisters in Christ and those who are disheartened? Let's try and encourage them. Those who are weak, let's try and build them, right? Those who maybe are wrestling and struggling a little bit, let's show patience by the Spirit because when we do that we're not quenching the Spirit of God in our own lives.

There's a third category of people though. Everyone else. I'm taking those actually, you just literally won't believe how smart I am because watch this. Here's what it says in 1 Thessalonians 5:15: "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for..." Who? "...everyone else." Yeah, so I'm just stealing from the Bible, right. My job is plagiarism, that's my job. Literally, I want to tell you what God said. Make sure nobody pays back wrong for wrong. Live in peace with other people. What are you doing? You're honoring everybody, even if they've wronged you and you are trying to do good because of the life of Christ in you by His Spirit. What you're doing is you're leaving the

door open for the work of His Spirit instead of quenching the Spirit of God. Alright?

So one way we quench the Spirit of God is when we dishonor people. But let me give you a second way. We quench the Spirit when we don't rejoice, pray, and show gratitude. When we don't rejoice, pray, and show gratitude. Let me show you exactly what I'm talking about. Here's what it says in the following verses, verses 16-18 or our text. "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all kinds of circumstances. This is His will for us.

Now the reason that we can be people of joy is because here's what's happened. God has placed His Spirit in us to basically shed abroad in our hearts His love. That's what He's done inside of us. And do you know what, listen to this. Do you know what the Holy Spirit gives us? Hope. Because He's a down payment guaranteeing our eternal inheritance. We have a hope that brings us great joy because of the love of God that has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit.

In fact, Paul actually says that in Romans chapter 5 verse 5: "Hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." That's why we can be people of such great joy. And as people of joy, here's what we do. We pray continually. And as we pray continually, we are demonstrating our dependence upon God through His Spirit. And as we do that we will be people of deep, deep gratitude. You can't be in God's presence for very long

and not be a grateful person. Because if you are not grateful you've just been in your own presence, not God's.

So here's what I want us to do. On every campus, I'm going to put that passage up again for us on the screens and you're going to see it and what I want you to do is take a moment where you are to take joy in Jesus, to pray and to give Him thanks. Just right there in your hearts. For ninety seconds. Just do what the text says to do. Alright? Do that for the next ninety seconds.

Father, may we make it a practice to continually take joy in your presence. In your presence the Scripture says there is fullness of joy. And I pray that we would take joy in your presence as we pray and as we call out to you and spend time with you, and that our hearts would be deeply grateful for every expression of your grace that you've shown to us in Jesus Christ. The One who while we were yet sinners still died for us, paying a debt that we owed that we could never pay. Who rose from the dead, demonstrating the satisfaction of His sacrifice, the acceptance, Father, of His sacrifice on our behalf. So that now by faith in Him we can be indwelt by your very life because you've not left us as an orphan, but you have given us your Spirit. You have put your gifts inside of us. And you have allowed us to live a life where the well doesn't run dry, because you are Living Water, an eternal source of Life within us, a deposit guaranteeing the eternal life we have yet to come. We thank you for that, we take joy in that and we pray that we would be people who don't quench your Spirit, that we would be people who rejoice and pray and give thanks. In Jesus' name. Amen.

It's good to practice what we're learning sometimes, isn't it? Let me give you a third thing. We quench the Spirit not only when we dishonor people and when we don't rejoice, pray and show gratitude but when we despise Spirit-given gifts. I'm going to show you this in our text in just a second because right after Paul says our focal verse, "Do not quench the Spirit", right after that, here's what you find stated in verse number 20: "Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil."

See, what they had happening in Thessalonica was the opposite of what was happening in Corinth. In Corinth what was going on, the reason, part of the reason that Paul wrote to them and talked so much about spiritual gifts is because there was an abuse and a self-aggrandizement of the use of these gifts in Corinth. And so Paul was going no, this is not actually about you. This is about what God wants to do in and through you for the good of the body and for the sake of His mission in the world. Don't make this all about you. So they were trying to get a rein on the abuse and misuse of gifts in Corinth.

In Thessalonica, it was different. Because apparently somebody had gotten loose with some prophecies and apparently that didn't go very well in Thessalonica. And Paul says hey, don't treat prophecies with contempt, in other words, don't throw out the baby in the bath water. Don't do it all. But instead, here's what I want you to do. I don't want you to suppress these things, I want you to test them. That's what he says. And you hold onto what's good and what's of God, and you toss away what's not.

Because if you remember, when Paul was giving this instruction, the body of literature that we call the Scripture, was not fully complete at this point, right? He's writing them a letter, right? It was part of the compendium of what we call the Scripture. The Holy Spirit had not yet put together all of these books that we call the Scripture, which now we can look at when somebody says "man I've got a word from the Lord". Well, we can compare that with what the Word of the Lord actually says. Because that will not be inconsistent. The Holy Spirit will not speak double speak to us. He will not be in contradiction with Himself. He will not be in contradiction with His Word. So, we've got a measuring rod now.

So Paul was saying to them hey, also I need you to remember, because by the way in Corinth He talked about that the Spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets. In other words, if there's a prophecy, it has to be tested and those who also have a gift of prophecy which the Spirit of God gave to them prior to the full manifestation of the Scripture so that they could hear a word from God and they could be able to move in the direction God wanted them to move, he said you can't just do this like all by yourself. This is the Spirit of the prophets, it's subject to the prophets. In other words, this is something the Spirit testifies to in general. To other people other than you.

See, here's where it gets dangerous. Sometimes in the world that we live in, people will call themselves prophets and they say things that can't be tested and it becomes abusive. I've got a word for you. It's a very specific word. God wants to use all your money in your billfold in my life. In my ministry, right? And it's funny how they never actually point out, like a

college student who can't scrape together two bucks for pizza. So that can get abusive, right? That's why he says don't despise, don't suppress Spirit-given gifts used in Spirit-given ways but test them to make sure that they're of the Lord.

So I play in a lot of different fields because of my work, and we're a non-denominational church. People ask me "what does non-denominational mean?" It means I'm not mad at anybody, that's generally what it means, you know. I'm kidding, right. I've got people watching on TV and they're like, we're part of a denomination, we're mad. I'm kidding, I'm kidding, right? I love lots of different denominations, right? We've got lots of different backgrounds, all that stuff, and I'm in various conferences, I speak in a lot of these places, you know. And listen, I know how to speak Baptist, I know how to speak Methodist, I can speak Evangelical Free, I can speak Pentecostal, I am multi-lingual. I can speak in all these contexts. I understand what they're saying. And so I've got a bunch of brothers and sisters in Christ in a variety of places that hold to the truths of God's Word and hold to the truths of God as Father, Son and Spirit, as Jesus is the only means of salvation, and the Word of God as authority in our lives, hold to all of those things. We might see things differently in second or third order issues or whatever.

But so I'm in some of these contexts and I have seen both what I would consider misuses and I have seen proper uses of God-given, Spirit-given manifestations and gifts. So it doesn't matter when, if it was a week ago or twenty years ago, it doesn't matter where, whether it was in Buffalo or whether it was in Florida or whether it was in Georgia, it doesn't matter.

But these are real places with real people and places that I've been. So in one particular place, there was a person who went by the title of a prophet, they were called a prophet by the people that were there in this particular place that I was in. And they were given free rein to just share their word and they said you know, during this twenty-minute time frame of where something was going on in this particular service, the prophet said "I have a word from the Lord, all heaven is silent right now as we do this."

Here's what I was doing. I was sitting there and I went nah. I didn't say that out loud, right? I was a guest so I just kind of sat there, but here's what was going on in my head and my heart. Nah. Why? Because the world's a big place. And my guess is that somewhere, at someplace in the world, because I know that there are people coming to faith in Jesus because of the ministry of the Gospel all over the world. In different places, at different places all over the world. This is happening in a regular way all of the time. And I am not convinced that in that twenty-minute time frame there was nobody in the world who came to Jesus. Because when someone comes to Jesus, the Scripture actually tells us that there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels. That heaven is having a party, not silence, a party. And my guess is that during that twenty minutes, there were many people all around the world who had come face to face with the gospel, been taken from the kingdom of darkness, placed into the kingdom of Light and heaven was having a celebration. So, I wasn't buying.

I was in another place, doesn't matter whether it was in Buffalo, or Florida or Georgia, doesn't matter if it was last week or twenty years ago. I was in another place where a pastor at this particular conference that was at a

church had just finished preaching a wonderful message, by the way. He sat down and after he was done they were taking up an offering in the conference. And he pulled the pastor aside while they were taking the offering, very quietly, very kind of, you know, discreetly and just began to ask the pastor very graciously, submitted himself to the pastor of the church, because this guy was a guest. Which I thought, okay, I already like what's happening here, right, even though I didn't know what was happening. And he said to him, he asked permission, he said he felt like God had shown him something and it was for someone in here, it was very specific, it was very tractionable.

It wasn't one of those general, when you've got thousands of people listening to you and you go "the Lord's just shown me, there's some people that are going through some difficulties". For real, man. Like I'm talking to thousands of people here, like nobody's going through difficulties, like that, like I have to make myself look spiritual by saying that? Let's be honest. I mean now, if you're going to go like "you in the green, your right toe, next to your big toe, the long one, the really long one that you stumped on the curb outside in your flip-flops. I mean then I'm going, right? It's never that way, though.

So this guy asked permission, the pastor said sure. So he gets up and here's what he says. He says you know what, I'm sort of embarrassed he said, not really, but it's just kind of a push-pull. He says I'm not sure, he said I always feel like when God kind of gives me this impression, he said I'm not sure if I'm about to make an idiot of myself. And he said if I do just forgive me, we'll move on. He said if this doesn't apply then I'll just sit right back

down, and I'm sorry for wasting your time. He said but as I was sitting here he said the Lord showed me very clearly an unfinished porch. And so I'm listening, and he just says "could I just ask, does that mean anything to anyone here?" There was a couple of hundred people there, mostly pastors.

This husband and wife on the other side of the room from me, they look at each other, and they went, just put their hand in the air. And he said, okay, could you come up here and explain what that means? And he handed them a microphone and they melted in a pool of tears. They were young in the pastoral ministry, God had asked them to finish out their porch for ministry opportunity. They were going to meet there. And they got stiffed in the job. I think it was like to the tune of like twenty thousand. And it was unfinished and the contractors left. They got stiffed in the job, and they're out like twenty thousand dollars. And they're just crying. And the pastor says hm, that's it. He said so the Lord wants to supply that to you. And I'm going to ask us to take up another offering. He said now the Lord's told me specifically, me and my wife, I asked her before I said anything. When I sensed this the Lord told me to make up any difference, if there's any short-falling then I've got to make that up. I don't know if I can do that immediately or if I have to do that over a longer term, but the Lord's asked me to do that. So I'm hopeful that all of you pastors will be generous. That's what he said. It was great. And sure enough, they started passing an offering place around and you know what Uncle Jerry's doing? Reaching for his wallet. 'Cause I'm like this is the Spirit speaking and meeting a need right in our midst. He wants this done, and it's clear to us all. So, the

reminder. Don't repress the Spirit's gifts if they're done in a Spirit-given way.

Now, let me give you a last statement here of how we quench the Spirit. We quench the Spirit when we delay obedience. When we delay obedience. This is probably the most sure fire method of quenching the Spirit. Remember our text, kind of our focal verse. It simply says this: "Do not quench the Spirit." That word quench means to extinguish, suppress, to stifle, to put out. The idea that we can somehow delay our obedience or disobey when the Spirit speaks to us through His Word, that is the fastest way to quench the Spirit in your life. God reveals something to you in His Word, you don't do what it says, we quench the Spirit.

It's like Deone was talking about last week when he talked about how easy it is for us to operate under the system of the flesh instead of the system of the Spirit. And when we delay, when we delay obedience to the Spirit's leading in our lives, we just fall further and further down into the operating system of the flesh and it is very, very difficult to come back to a place of obedience. It's just hard.

I'll be honest with you. Countless times in my own life has the Spirit of God moved me, prompted me, spoken to me and I have put Him off. Have you ever done that? It's happened to me a million times. Maybe not a million. Hopefully not a million. I plead with you, not a million. It's happened to me plenty. And I wish that wasn't the case but it is. And it happens to all of us. But the Spirit expects for us when we hear His voice to listen to what He says and do it.

So it was maybe a year ago. It was a Saturday night and my youngest son was getting a good talking to from his father. I was frustrated with him and I was getting on him pretty hard. Now let me establish this. He deserved it. My frustration was warranted. But I moved beyond correction and started dishonoring what Paul, by the Spirit, told us. "Fathers, don't exasperate and discourage your children." I had moved beyond correction into exasperating and disheartening my son. Now, at the time I wasn't paying much attention to that, because I was frustrated with him, and rightly so. I remind you.

But I went to bed Saturday night, I got up and I don't know if you know this, I work on Sundays. It's a workday for me. I'm in my study, I'm preparing, I've got this great message, right that I'd been working on all week, and you know God had placed in my heart and I was ready to deliver for this place. And I was praying about that and I was praying over it and I was excited for what God was going to say. And I was talking to the Lord. And all was good man, me and Jesus, we were just having a great time. And then I came into the worship service and my family was sitting with me in the worship service, and we were singing songs. And I was like these are good songs man, I'm la,la, la la la. I'm giving it man, I'm singing it, I'm worshiping.

And in the middle of that, while we're singing, worshiping, the Spirit says "you dishonored your son last night". He reminded me of His Word. Don't dishearten him. Your correction was in order, but your exasperation wasn't. Okay, yes, you're right. Thank you. Holy Spirit you are welcome here, sort of. Please stop chastising me right now, please. And I'm just

sitting there listening, you know. So the Holy Spirit says, "you need to make that right with him now." And I said, "I will, after the services, when I'm at home eating lunch, when we're all at lunch I'm going to come clean and say, son, I'm sorry". And the Holy Spirit didn't seem amused. And really kind of pressed on my heart. "I want you to do this now". So, we're singing, they're standing next to me. I reach around my wife, grab my son's shirt, "come here". He comes over while we're singing and I reach in his ear and I said "I'm not proud of exasperating you and disheartening you last night. I shouldn't have. I was wrong. I'm sorry. Forgive me. I love you." He said nothing, which is what like fifteen and sixteen year-olds do, right? He kind of just grabbed me and he kind of nodded you know and he kind of punched me or whatever and that was I forgive you Dad, you know, it was that, right?

But I just realized there had been many times where the Spirit has prompted me to do things and I've delayed my obedience, and it's not what He's asking for us to do. When he speaks to us He wants us to respond. Then, not later. As long as we're able to do it in that moment. At the soonest possible opportunity. Here's why. Because the Spirit, whenever He's prompting you to do something, He's actively doing something in the other folks' lives. He's asking you to join Him.

So how about for you? What's the Spirit saying to you? Is it maybe possible that the Spirit is saying to you that you need to restore that relationship that has been broken. Is it possible that the Spirit is saying to you that you need to extend forgiveness that you have been unwilling to extend. Or maybe the Spirit is saying you need to ask for forgiveness because you've

been too prideful to ask. Or maybe the Spirit has prompted your heart to share the good news of Jesus with a friend or family member or a work associate and you've been putting it off.

Listen to me. If the Spirit is asking you to share with somebody it's because He's already at work in their lives. He's asking you to join Him in the process of what He's doing. It doesn't mean that they're going to respond glowingly. In fact, they might look at you like you're an idiot. But trust what He's doing.

So, let me finish this way. You guys have been so patient and kind and gracious and I've only got like forty-five minutes left. Alright? So, let me finish in the next couple of minutes if I can, okay? Let me say it to you this way. If you want something to kind of walk out on, here's the statement that I would give you to walk out on. It would be this. Don't quench the Spirit's fire, fan it into flame. You see, we've been talking about kind of what we would call the negative side. Don't do this, don't quench the Spirit. But there's also a positive side and that's this. Fan the Spirit's work in your life into flame.

Listen to what Paul told Timothy and we're almost done. Listen to what Paul told Timothy: "For this reason I remind you Timothy, to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands." Now listen to this: "For the Spirit God gave" did you catch that? The gift of God, the Spirit God gave "us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." I believe the gift that was in Timothy from the laying on of Paul's hands was the impartation of the Spirit of God, because you

remember that was going on in the lives of the apostles at that time. The gift inside of Timothy was the very Spirit of God that Paul says fan this into flame because the Spirit has not given you a spirit of fear or timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline or self-control or a sound mind.

You see, when we feed the life of the Spirit, ladies and gentlemen, here's what will happen. We will honor people and keep the door of the work of the Spirit actively open in their lives. We will be the kind of people who are joyful, not complainers and whiners and all those things. Why? Because we're constantly in the presence of God. We are taking joy in God and we are giving thanks to God with our very lives. It keeps the door of the Spirit open in our lives and in the lives of people that we minister to. We won't despise Spirit-given gifts done in Spirit-given ways, and we will be sure to obey whenever the Spirit prompts us we say yes with our head, with our heart, with our hands and with our feet. At the earliest available opportunity to say yes and obey we will do it. This is what it looks like not to quench the Spirit. Nobody wants to put out the fire of God in their lives. Nobody wants to build a dam to stop the flow of Living Water. This in part is how we do that. Don't quench the Spirit, fan it into flame.

Let's bow our heads together. Before we leave, if you're here and you've never entrusted your life to Jesus my prayer is that you would respond in faith to Him, turning from trusting in yourself and putting your faith and trust in Him. So that you can be born from above, born by the Spirit as Jesus said in John chapter 3. And if you want to understand more about what that looks like, when we dismiss in just a moment I ask you to come

straight out into the atrium and come by the Fireside room and let one of our pastors, our prayer partners talk to you about what that looks like.

For the remainder of us, Father I pray for us all, that as we hear your voice we will do what you say so that we will not quench your Spirit's work in our lives. May we be cognizant of your presence in rich ways and honor you as we allow your fire to burn in our hearts and your living water to flow and your life to come out of our lives so that people can see the beauty of Jesus. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Love you folks. Have a great week.