

HE WHO LIVES WITHIN US
THE APOSTLES CREED - Part 6
Dan Burrell

Good morning Life Fellowship. Do you believe that God has a reason for you being here this morning? I hope you do. One of the reasons I like to stand kind of far over there on the side during the music is so I can look at the screen, I can look at the platform and I can also scan the audience a little bit as I am trying to prepare my heart and my mind for the task that has been assigned to me for this hour. And as I was watching during that last song I was encouraged. I was encouraged because I saw gray haired seniors singing with their hands in the air worshipping. I was encouraged as I watched a teenage young man throw his head back and sing from his very heart. I was challenged as I saw several families who had a line of kids at various stages of growth and maturity who were paying attention. They were learning and they were together. My heart was encouraged because I looked on the faces of some of you and I know the lumps that are in your throats right now, and yet you are here. For some it is a lump of fear, for others it is a lump of loneliness, and for others it is a lump of uncertainty, but yet today you are here because you want to hear from God.

I just want to say if you are here on purpose, or here because it is kind of a tradition for you, or here because someone brought you, or here because you feel guilty if you don't attend; whatever reason you are here today I want you to understand this – God has something for you. I am going to pray for all of us now, but will you also join me by praying for yourself and asking God to let you hear from Him today. We are going to talk about His Holy Spirit, and one of the works of the Holy Spirit is that He lets you hear from Him. And I think if we will listen He has something for us to take home. So join me in prayer please as you also pray to Him.

Father, thank you for this hour that is set aside, dedicated, sanctified for you. And Father, I pray in my heart and in the heart of every person in this room that we would be willing, open, and ready to receive the message that you have for us whether it is a reminder, or brand new information, whether it is intellectual or practical, whether it is something that meets us where we are at right now, or something that prepares us for a day in the future, even if we don't always know what we need to hear from you. Father, for some of us we really need to hear from you today, so I pray that you will use your words and your Holy Spirit to speak to us. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.

We are entering the third part of our series on the Apostles Creed, so I am going to kind of go through it a little bit and then we will read it together in just a moment. But if you take a look at it just structurally from a grammatical point of view there are three distinct sections of the Apostles Creed. And I think you will be able to pick those out and identify them pretty easily. And the third part is an intensive look at the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is that part of God that dwells in us. We previously stated our belief in God the Father. We have stated our belief in the Son, and these are aspect portions and there isn't any word that adequately encompasses what they are because the Trinity is far too complex and far too mysterious for us to even be able to define using human terms, but they are portions of what is known as the Godhead, all that is God. And they are all fully God and yet they are all unique.

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And now we are going to turn from the Father and the Son to the Holy Spirit. It is that part of the Trinity that still does the work of God in and around us here on earth. God has always been in heaven, and while Christ resides at His throne, we know they are omnipresent. And we know that God specifically has assigned the Holy Spirit, the dwelling authority of the Godhead here on earth during this time.

Let's go back and look at the Apostles Creed because I want you to remember that it is a tool. It is a tool quite frankly of discipleship. Before there was a written Scripture, before there were seminaries, before there were websites and all the other tools that we have there were limited things that we could go to and use for these instructional devices and tools, and the Apostles Creed was one of them. But remember this, the Apostles Creed is not Scripture, nor is it a Scriptural equivalent; rather the Apostles Creed is intended to help us understand, apply and comprehend the key or core doctrines that we find in the Scripture. It is intended to help us understand these things and to be able to use them. It is a distillation of orthodoxy. We learn doctrine by using it and quoting it and as such we are educated and trained into our faith beliefs and practices. And that is the essence of discipleship that we know not only what we believe but why we believe it and how to apply it. That is biblical discipleship.

It was authored by God the Father, fulfilled in Christ, now applied by the Holy Spirit. Let me say that again because I want you to understand the doctrines we believe, those key tenets of what we know to be eternal and to be fundamentally true; these were authored by God the Father, they were fulfilled in Christ the Son, and they are now applied in us, in our daily lives, by the Holy Spirit.

So this morning I kind of want you to understand that this is kind of the introduction to the third part of our study on the Apostles Creed. Maybe you are wondering why we do this and why is it important. Why we do the ancient future thing. It is because we believe that in this contemporary world we need to make sure that we have our feet anchored on something that is solid and stable. That is why we do this. And by the way, I want you to understand that in some of our messages we try to be very, very practical so that when you leave here you can say, '*This is what I should do.*' And that is part of our job, that is part of Pastor Ben and my responsibility to help apply the Word of God, but you are not going to apply the Word of God if you don't know the Word of God. So part of our responsibility is to teach you these things so that intellectually you know why you should do it and for what reason we apply the Word of God.

We don't want to insist on a classroom, this is not Life Fellowship University. We do have something like university classes, but from time to time we are going to focus more on one side of that than the other. And quite frankly as we finish up this last third of this series we want to focus on knowing this this morning so that we can apply this in the final third of the messages. So when Pastor Ben gets up next week you will kind of have that context.

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But today I want you to kind of put your thinking caps on because I want you to be the intellectual. I will try not to be too professorial but I do want to make sure that we re-emphasize the fundamental truths of the Holy Spirit, so that as we continue these building blocks, and whether you are seven or seventy, these building blocks are essential because our ortho-practice is very dependent on our orthodoxy. And again I am not trying to use these fancy theological words, but what we practice, how we do our faith is very important that we know the right thing; otherwise you are going to be walking around doing stupid stuff that you really don't need to be doing, or you are going to get off track, or go into some kind of extreme. And someday you may wake up and think, '*What good was that? What was that for? Was that important? We may find out it was meaningless.*'

And if we do that it is because we haven't focused on that foundation that we need to build on. So that is where we are this morning. If you will bear with us, and I really don't want to apologize for this because there is no apology that is necessary, but we are going to go through a range of Scripture this morning. And that is because that is our foundation. So what I want you to do as we read this Scripture, some of which we may read together, and some you will just listen to as I read it, is to let it kind of wash over you. Then I will try and explain it to you and show you why it is important. And then in the future we will try to apply it. That is kind of our strategy for this.

I want to begin by reminding us of the Apostles Creed, so we are going to say that together as we have done at some point in every service for the last several weeks. Let's just all read it together, and while we do this I want you to focus on the 'I believes.' You will see that three times and it is the three parts of God and it is the three divisions of the Apostles Creed. It kind of helps us think in an orderly way. So here we go beginning with the first line.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and borne of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Now open your Bibles with me if you would to Ephesians Chapter 1. We are going to be in Ephesians and we are going to be in the book of John. I will be quoting from other places as well, and then we will be in the book of Romans. So there are actually three passages we are going to read, first in the book of Ephesians, then in the book of John and then we will go to the book of Romans. We are going to read three passages that explain to us in the most concise way as is possible without reading every single verse. And these three passages are general areas of Scripture dealing with the

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work of the Holy Spirit as He is mentioned here in the Apostles Creed and as He is part of the Godhead.

So first we will be in Ephesians Chapter 1 and we are going to begin reading in verse 3. I will read this one as you follow along. In doing this I want you to notice that this passage is broken up into the Apostles Creed. I will help you see that as we go through because these first five verses are talking about God the Father and His attributes. Here we go.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.” That was God the Father. Now we are going to switch and you are going to see God the Son.

“To the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

“In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.” Now we are going into the Holy Spirit. ***“In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.”***

So in this passage we kind of have a reintroduction of the Apostles Creed. Now I am going to read some other verses in John Chapter 14 beginning in verse 15 through 18 and then skip down a few verses as these are also referencing the Holy Spirit. So John Chapter 14 beginning in verse 15. By the way just so you will understand the context, Jesus is speaking to His disciples here and they are quite frankly confused. If you jump up to the first part of John Chapter 14 you will see they ask Him a bunch of questions and Jesus is kind of having to say, *‘Look, quit worrying.’ ‘Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, you believe in me and it is all going to work out. My Father’s house has many places for you to dwell and if I am going to go away I will come again.’*

So we have to understand the whole context as the whole posture of the disciples right now is pretty confusing. They need some reassurance; they sense that something is about ready to shift in what is going on with Christ. And while they have been following

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Him for three and a half years, they sense something is coming up. Christ Himself has been foreshadowing it in what He has said. So now Jesus is reassuring them. They will come back to these words and get great comfort from them in the future.

So John Chapter 14 beginning in verse 15 says this: ***“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper.”*** Notice that the word ‘Helper’ is capitalized which is commonly done because it is referring to God Himself. So when you see the word ‘Helper’ there it is a word dealing with God, the Godhead. ***“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.”*** Again notice the word ‘Spirit’ is capitalized noting that it is referring to the Holy Spirit and it is not talking about the ‘I have spirit, yes I do,’ type of spirit, but rather the type of spirit that speaks of the Godhead.

“He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” These are words of assurance to the disciples.

Now drop down to verse 25. ***“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper,”*** again notice it is capitalized, and then He tells who the Helper is. ***“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”***

Now go over to John 16 and let’s look in verse 7. ***“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you.”*** Who is the Helper – it is the Holy Spirit. ***“The Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”*** I am going to come back to this verse later so let me read it again for you. ***“He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.”***

Now drop down to verse 13 of John Chapter 16. ***“When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.”***

Now turn to Romans Chapter 8 and verses 9 through 17. I would like for us to read these verses responsibly. I will read verse 9; you read verse 10, and so on. Romans Chapter 8 and verse 9 says: ***“You, however are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus***

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from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

So there you have it. Those are key passages of Scripture that deal with the Holy Spirit. If you don't remember anything else this morning I want you to remember this – God dwells in you. He is in you. This morning we want to remember the fact that the Holy Spirit is a part of God, and He is all God; yet there is no division of God, and again I cannot adequately use terms without going into heresy to help the human mind comprehend it, but God fully lives in you. He is fully in heaven, He is fully in the Son, and He is fully in the Spirit. And with that He is that God who lives within us as the Holy Spirit.

Now many who claim to believe in the Trinity, which is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, they say they believe in the Trinity but either they don't believe it or they don't understand it fully or adequately. Several years ago there was a survey done with conservative Christians. And when they were asked to describe the Holy Spirit, four out of ten, fully forty percent of people who know Christ as Savior, who love God, who have a Bible, called the Holy Spirit a force. Well, He is a force, but He is not 'the force.' No matter how big a Star Wars fan you might be, He is not 'the force that lies within you,' and He is not 'the force be with you' that people often speak of.

Many refer to the Holy Spirit as an 'it,' but the Holy Spirit is not an 'it,' because God always refers to Him in a masculine sense. And so God Himself dwells in us. We do not serve a God who has three parts, or three responsibilities, or three different forms, or as three different gods who act together. He is a singular God who exists in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This has always been the case, and you can see it throughout Scripture. For instance if you study in the book of Genesis you will see that at creation all three persons of the Godhead were present. God creates us in His image, He literally says, “*Let us create man in our image.*” The Father authored creation, the Son accomplished creation and the Holy Spirit administered creation. It speaks of the Holy Spirit moving across the waters, so He was active in creation.

This is the same for our redemption by the way. It was the heavenly Father who authored our salvation, it was the Son who accomplished our salvation on Calvary, and it is the Holy Spirit who applies and administers our salvation through His constant

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indwelling in us. This is true because this is how God works. We even see how God works across His creation today. It is the Father who oversees us as His children and that is why we call Him Abba Father. The Son intercedes for us; He is our advocate. He is the one who stands before God and says, *'They are forgiven. They have been redeemed.'* And yet it is the Holy Spirit who works in us for our own good and for God's glory. That is the working of the Holy Spirit.

So it brings us to this question – so what is the Holy Spirit doing right now? How does this apply to me in 2021 in the midst of Covid, in the midst of world chaos, in the midst of all these things that are going on? What difference should that make to me? And that is where sometimes the needle screeches across the record and people lose their way as they get frustrated. And that is where we want to kind of focus, because all of the things you see in the Apostles Creed that come after, whether we are talking about the church, or the promises, or unity, all those things are possible because of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what gives communion significance. It is the Holy Spirit that gives baptism significance to us. It helps us to understand, it helps us to be reminded. It is God reminding us of things. It is God teaching us things. It is God challenging us of things. It is God confronting us about things. And if we live without recognizing that God lives in us, we will live powerless, confused lives.

One of the greatest signs of danger is not the presence of love or the presence of hate; it is the presence of apathy. And I am concerned that many of us today when it comes to the Holy Spirit living in us, we kind of have an apathetic attitude. If asked if you love God you will say, *'Oh yes, I love God.'* If asked if you hate the devil you will say, *'Oh yes, I hate the devil.'* But what about the part of God that lives within us? It is as if He doesn't exist.

Several years ago my wife had some medical issues and I wanted to go with her to the doctor and she wanted me to go with her to hear firsthand what the doctor would say about her medical issues. This doctor was very woke; he was very enlightened. We sat down together, and being who I am which is kind of assertive, I began asking questions. I wanted details, I wanted information. So I would ask a question and the doctor would completely ignore me. And then my wife would ask the doctor the same question that I had asked and he would answer her. When he talked to her he would look right at her and it was like I wasn't even in the room. I felt like waving at him to get him to acknowledge me because I had several things I really wanted to share with him, but I chose not to since he was literally going to have my wife's life in his hands. So I didn't share with him how frustrated I was. And at the end of that appointment both my wife and I were frustrated because I never got acknowledged the entire time I was in the room. I was never spoken to, or addressed in any way, and I never had a question answered. The doctor only looked at her. I don't know for sure what was going on, but I do know that it left me feeling unsettled, it left me feeling rejected and it left me feeling irrelevant.

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And I am afraid that some of us pray to God the Father, we end our prayers in Jesus' name, we read the Scriptures, we talk about lots of things in theological terms about what God is doing in our lives, but for many of us we never acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit who lives in us right now, who is caring about us right now, who literally is the gift that God has given us so that we never feel forsaken, that we never feel abandoned. In fact Jesus Himself said to His disciples, *'I know you are scared. I know you are confused. But I want you to understand something and that is it is better that I go away because I will send my Helper, I will send my Comforter, I will send you the Holy Spirit to be with you. And that will be even better than me walking here on this earth because that was just while I was literally being in your presence. But when the Holy Spirit lives within you, I will be with you always, even until the end of the world. I will be there for you.'*

So this is God's gift that we would never feel like we have been abandoned. I have to tell you there have been times where I have said, *'Lord, will you please come back.'* Some of you here are teenagers and I know we have talked about this before, but when I was a teenager and they talked about Jesus coming back, I was kind of like, *'Yes, Jesus, come back, but would you please wait until I have my driver's license.'* Or more importantly when I was a sixteen year old boy, *'Jesus would you please wait until I get my first kiss.'* And then it was until I get married and all the other important things I had on my list I wanted to accomplish.

But now I have a big birthday coming up this week and I just have to tell you that I am ready for the Lord to come. I am ready now. I have pretty much checked off my entire list. And I found out that many of the things on my list weren't really all that important after all, so I am ready to see what the Lord has prepared for me after some two thousand years of preparation. It is going to be awesome, right? And I am ready to go.

And the reality is many of us think about that, but we forget that God is right here. He is active in the middle of Covid. He is active in the middle of cancer. He is active in the middle of unemployment. He is active in the middle of political unrest. He is active in the middle of sin. He is active right here in us, and you know what we do – we look right past Him. We look right past him like the doctor who wouldn't acknowledge that I was in the room. And do you realize that apathy, or strategic ignorance, or just unawareness is offensive to God. We have God in us and He is there because He loves us so much that He never wanted us to feel alone. He never wanted us to feel abandoned. He never wanted us to feel orphaned. He wants us to know that there is nothing in heaven or earth that can separate us from Him.

Folks, there is a God who lives within us if we have been adopted in His name. So let's not look past Him. Now let's look at the current work of the Holy Spirit. What is He doing right now? What is He doing in us who possess Him? What is His work among us as a body of believers? First of all, He helps us understand God. He helps us

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understand Himself as the Holy Spirit. He helps us understand Christ as the Son. He helps us understand our heavenly Father.

I Corinthians Chapter 2 and verse 11 says this: *“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”* And where is the Spirit of God for us? It is in us. So if you want to understand God, you have the ability if you are a follower of God, if you are a child of God to know that He will help you understand Him. That is why, folks, we can seem a little wacky to people who don’t know Christ. We can seem a little off kilter, we can seem a little strange, we can seem to be aliens, we can seem to be unique, and I don’t mean that in a positive way. And do you know why that is? It is because either God lives within you or He doesn’t. It is like being a little bit pregnant – which isn’t possible.

And we often say these things that are not true like, *‘We are all God’s children.’* No, we are not. We are all God’s creation, but we are not all God’s children. And the Bible clearly says that some of you are the sons of Belial, or the sons of Satan. Scripture clearly teaches that. Does God love every one of us? Yes, He does. Did God design every one of us? Yes, He did. God loves the entire world, but He loves His children in a unique way because He loves us as a father and there is a difference. And when we understand that, when we comprehend that, it ought to give us some comfort and some understanding, because everyone who has had a father, and everyone who has been a father understands the uniqueness of that bond.

And even if that bond was dysfunctional between you and your earthly father, in your heart you aspire to a better relationship. Why? It is because he was dad, he was your father. You knew he was supposed to love you, you knew he was supposed to care for you, and even if your relationship with your earthly father was dysfunctional, you know that God has no dysfunction in His relationship with you. He loves you with a purity that no one else can ever achieve. So if you are feeling abandoned, then it may be that you just don’t understand God fully. And if you feel isolated from God, ask yourself *‘Do I have Him as my Savior? Do I know Him? Is He indeed my Father?’* Because if He is then you need to listen to the Holy Spirit; He is telling you right now that He has not abandoned you, and He does love you.

Number two – He counsels and comforts us. And I think this is so cool. It is one of the areas that I feel like we just ignore. But the work of the Holy Spirit is to counsel and comfort us. When we read the verses in John Chapters 14, 15 and 16 we see that Jesus is comforting His disciples. He is telling them not to freak out. Yes, they are going to witness something awful in a few days. They are going to see Him tortured and literally die. They are going to see His blood drain from His body. They are going to see Him put into a tomb and they are going to wonder what happened for a few days. This was going to be frightening, appalling, and confusing but Jesus wanted them to

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understand that it was not going to be over. It would not be over and they should not walk away in doubt.

So in John 14, 15 and 16 Jesus tells them He is going to send someone and He would be with them every moment of the day, even until the day that they too would pay a price similar to what Jesus' paid. When we read John 14 we saw that Jesus used the word 'Helper' for the Holy Spirit. Now if you go back and do a Greek word study, and again I don't want to get too deep in this, but it is really cool. I want you to hear this and understand it. When you get to the word 'Helper,' it is a transliteration of a Greek word. And the Greek word is *paraclete*. And *para* means 'to come alongside of.'

For instance *parakalo* is the word that we have for fellowship. It means you walk up to someone and you journey with them. That is *parakalo* or fellowship. And if you go back to the origination of *parakalo* it means 'the call.' In other words like you are calling someone to something or you are instructing someone like, '*Walk this way.*' Or '*I will give you directions.*' So when you see the term *paraclete* or *parakalo* used when talking about the Holy Spirit it literally means that God has been sent to walk alongside of you to help you along your way.

Do you remember Scripture says in the book of Proverbs we should acknowledge Him in all our ways and He will make our path straight? Well, part of acknowledging Him for us New Testament Christians is remembering He lives in us, and He will give us the path, He will give us the call, He will give us directions to move forward and to know what we should be doing next. In other words the Holy Spirit comes alongside of us, He calls us out of the darkness into the light, He calls us out of confusion into clarity, He calls us out of despair and provides us with hope, He calls us out of grief and He gives us comfort.

He is calling us right now. And by the way, part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to call us into the family of God. '*Come be adopted by He who loved you enough to die for you. Come and be adopted by He whose image you were made in. Come and repent of your sins and trust in Him for eternal life. You can't be good enough on your own. Come and be forgiven. Don't live under the guilt and condemnation that you struggle with.*' That is the Holy Spirit who is calling you right now. '*Come – come – come.*' And when we hear Him it will change our path and our direction.

And then the next thing the Holy Spirit does is He convicts and challenges us. Remember I said when we were reading in John Chapter 16 that I was going to come back to this verse. "***He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.***" Make no mistake, and this is something we need to understand, because the Holy Spirit is God, and God is the Holy Spirit - He is holy. And part of the calling that He does is the calling us away from sin and into righteousness. And folks, that is conviction. He is not condemning you but He is convicting you. And if you live your

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life comfortable in sin, you are either incredibly ignoring the Holy Spirit or you do not have the Holy Spirit. And either way it is a big problem. It is a big problem.

It is the Holy Spirit who taps you on the shoulder and says, *'That was wrong. You are better than that. That displeases God. That violates Scripture. You need to get forgiveness. You need to seek reconciliation. You need to do something about that.'* And by the way, I believe this with all of my heart, the more you acknowledge the Holy Spirit the more He will spend time with you helping you to become more like Jesus. If you do not ignore the Holy Spirit, He will speak more to you. He is calling you. Satan tells you that you are a failure, that you will never be good enough, that God has given up on you and your kind a long time ago, and that you are going to split hell wide open. That is Satan condemning you.

But our heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit does not condemn us, but He convicts us. He says, *'Hey dude, you are better than that. Come here. Stand right here.'* And He puts His arm around us and talks to us. *'Seriously, what are you thinking? Is that worthy of my name? Is that where you should be going? Those thoughts you are entertaining, do you honestly think that those please me?'* What is He acting like? He is acting like our father. He is acting like a father who entreats us to something better, who loves us and wants us to be the best that we are capable of being. And every good father knows that when you bring your son or your daughter alongside of you, you are trying to build them into something that is better, build them into something that is stronger, to keep them safe, and to encourage them. You are not trying to squash them.

Have you ever seen a dad that squashes their kid? *'You are stupid. You are worthless.'* Do we look at that and think they are a good father? Do we want to give him the father of the year award? No, we are thinking he is a jerk. That is not fatherhood. That is not what God has called us to do. And if you are a father that does that on occasion whenever you get mad or upset, the best thing you can do is go to your kid and say, *'I am sorry. That was not right. That is not what God would do to me, and that is not what I want to do to you. I'm sorry that I am a jerk sometimes.'*

We have a heavenly Father who will never leave us, He will never forsake us, He will never abandon us; we are His children on purpose. Not only did He create us but He redeemed us. Not only did He give design to us, but He adopted us into His family. He chose us on purpose. As an adoptive father I have always wanted to remind my kids of that. My kids are in my family not because of a biological fluke; I picked them out, paid for them, and signed on the dotted line.

For better or worse, God picked us out and He paid for us with the blood of His Son. He signed on the dotted line and He gave Himself to live in our heart. What more does He need to do to tell us that He loves us? What else could He possibly do? He predestined you, He chose you, and He wants you to live for Him. So that is why He convicts and challenges us. It not because He is a taskmaster, not because He is evil, not

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because He is unsympathetic; it is because He as a father is looking at us and saying He wants the best for us and He wants to protect us.

The fourth thing the Holy Spirit does is He teaches us the Scripture. He is called the Spirit of Truth. He spoke the Scriptures to the Apostles who recorded it. He applies it to each of us personally. He preserves it supernaturally. And the Holy Spirit activates it when we read it and when we hear it. He gives us understanding and comprehension. Ben and I were talking about this earlier this morning. This is what gives me some relief when I preach because I only get thirty or forty minutes with you a week and both Ben and I feel that. We feel the fact that we only get thirty or forty minutes with you a week. There are a lot of minutes in a week and there are a lot of messages going out there. But ultimately also we know that all we are is a megaphone; all we are is a recording. You are going to hear our voices, but what you do with that is between you and that part of God that is working in you for your good and His glory.

You can sit here and do your grocery list. You can scroll through Facebook. Or you can listen. You can say in your head that you hope so and so heard that. Or you can say, *'Man, that message was for me.'* If I have at least used the Word of God, I have done what I am supposed to do. That doesn't mean I can just get up here and be boring and dull because I believe I am responsible for the part of what God is doing with the gifts and skills He has given me. But the bottom line is the fact that you have to accept responsibility for what God is saying to you, and how He is trying to apply it to your life. And if I have given you the Word of God then someone in this room hopefully has had the Holy Spirit say, *'That was for you today. Are you listening? Get off the phone and listen, bro, I want you to hear this.'* That may be what the Holy Spirit is saying to you right now.

And then the question is - are you going to do what He says, because that is the moment of decision. When He convicts, when He challenges, when He encourages, when He comforts, are you going to receive it? Are you going to let His peace fill you? Are you going to repent? Are you going to move forward? He is teaching the Scriptures because He wants us to take action on it.

Now I am going to pause here and give you a real quick commercial. Every month over the rest of 2021 the elders have kind of decided we are going to emphasize something different. And unless you have been under a rock, even if you are watching this morning on the internet, you know that one of the things that we have been doing this month is talking about 'living in community.' We want you to be part of a Life Group. Before you leave today I hope you will go out in the lobby and sign up for a Life Group. We have had a lot of new people sign up recently and that is awesome. My Life Group is just amazing and I am so happy with them.

Next month we will be emphasizing 'investing in growth.' And if you want to grow you need to be a student of the Bible. So all during May we are going to be talking

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about investing in growth through the Bible and we are going to do a few things to help you. We will hit it again later in the year, but in the month of May we are going to do several things. One of the things we are going to do is give everyone here a Bible if you want one. If you don't have a Bible - and I am not talking about the U-Verse app on your phone. It is great if you have downloaded that, because it is a great tool and I use it all the time myself. But I am talking about an actual Bible like this one. Do you hear me flipping through the pages? I miss that sound today. Not because it is sacred, and I am not trying to be legalistic, but there is something tactical about having a Bible in your hands.

So during the month of May would you please bring a real Bible with you to church. Now I am not trying to put a guilt trip on you I promise. I have brought my iPad to church before because I like to use my little tools on it. And I have seven different Bibles that I preach from because they are the right size. But the Bibles that I like to write notes in have margins. I have my dad's Bible and I love to read his notes. So let me just encourage you to have a Bible that you can touch, that we can hear you turn the pages, and where you can record your thoughts. It will mean something to you. So for just the month of May we would appreciate it if you would bring an actual Bible with you to church.

And when you come next week we will have Bibles stacked in the lobby. If you need a Bible for yourself please take one. And here is the other thing, maybe you have more Bibles than you need, then still take one and then give it to someone else. And when you give it to someone write a message in the front of the Bible for them. And then you could invite them to church and maybe take them out to lunch with you after the service. Or you could just invite them to lunch and maybe have an opportunity to talk about the Bible.

And then the third thing we are going to do is have a simple Bible reading plan for thirty days. We are going to give you a little notecard that you can use as a bookmark, and as a church we want to read through some passages that we think will encourage you. So those are three things we want to do during the month of May. And that is my little commercial so you will be aware of what is going to be happening beginning May 1st. So look for that beginning next Sunday.

Number five – the Holy Spirit activates our salvation. John Chapter 3 and verses 5 through 8 says this: ***“Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”***

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It is the Holy Spirit that figuratively baptizes us into the family of God. It is the Holy Spirit that seals our adoption. It is the Holy Spirit that activates our salvation. You are not saved because of anything you have done. You are saved because God designed it and chose you. You are saved because Christ redeemed you and forgave your sins. And you are saved because the Holy Spirit seals you into His family as an adopted child.

Remember what we read earlier from John. He said we were heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus. Do you know what that means? It means that you have the legal standing before God that Jesus has. We inherit His wealth, His works, His designs; His privilege for ourselves like it is Jesus' because we have been adopted into His family. And that happens when the Holy Spirit baptizes us into His family. So our baptism is a picture of the spiritual baptism we have when the old man dies and the new man is born again.

We have to be born twice. We have to be born of the water first, and if you have ever seen anything give birth, then you know there was a flood coming at some point. We were literally delivered in a pool of water, plus some other stuff I don't want to think about. That is the physical birth, but the spiritual birth is from the Holy Spirit and He baptizes us when we are born again for new life in Christ and eternal life in the future. The old man is dead and a new creation is formed and we are now a child of God.

Maybe you have studied science and you don't understand all of this, well that is okay because we are not talking about naturalism; we are talking about supernatural. We are talking about that area that science can't explain, those issues that are not known by man, those things that were not designed or discovered, but rather have existed because God exists. And the Holy Spirit that lives within you is calling you this morning. He who lives within us is God every bit as much as God as the creator and as God is the redeemer. He is working in you. He is not static, He is dynamic. He is changing and transforming, He is convicting and comforting, He is counseling and teaching, He is guiding and directing, and He is cleanses us. He fills us. He disturbs us. He incites us and excites us.

Do you feel Him? Do you acknowledge Him? Do you sense Him? Do you hear from Him? Are you paying any attention to Him at all? He who lives within us is God and if you will capture that you will gain an understanding of how God is working in you and through you unlike anything you have ever experienced. And I am praying that we as a church will be a church that really knows the God that lives within us.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.