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Alright, boy, let's start with prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for what you have done for us. Thank you, God, that you have not come here to establish a religion, but that you have come here to establish a relationship with us, and that that relationship is not imaginary, it is real and tangible, and we can experience life with you starting today and from now on. Help us to learn from your Word today, help us to understand and hear what it is you're saying. Fill our hearts with your Holy Spirit and reveal these things to us. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen. So we're going to talk about Jesus today, which is always good for a sermon. Jesus said and did some amazing things, and you can look at that stuff and say, "Wow, that's brilliant, that's amazing." But then he also went and allowed himself to be crucified, and you can kind of look at that and say, "Wow, that seems crazy. You had this successful ministry and then you allowed yourself to be killed. Why?" And obviously, hindsight is 20/20, we can see the big picture, and we realize that the life Jesus lived was perfect, that the miracles that he accomplished and the teachings he gave were just as important as the death he died, and it was all part of God's plan, and the life he lived was the perfect fulfillment of God's plan. He walked in perfection, and how did he achieve this perfection? By walking in the Spirit. By walking in the Spirit. John 8.28 says, "And Jesus said to them, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of myself. But as my Father taught me, I speak these things. And he who sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.'" John 8.38 says, "I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your Father." John 5.30, "I can do of myself nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me." And John 14.10 says, "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does the works." Over and over again he's saying that, "This is not me working. I do nothing of myself. This is God in me. This is God working through me." The life he lived was perfect because he walked in the Spirit. He achieved constant, perfect nearness with God, and that is why his life was amazing. He was full of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3.16 says, "When he had been baptized, he came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were open to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him." Also Luke 4.16-21, "Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. When he was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then he closed the book and gave it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to him, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.'" The good news, brothers and sisters, is that we as Christians are also given the Holy Spirit. And we are told to walk in it. Galatians 5.25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." And what happens if we walk in the Holy Spirit? John 14.12, Jesus talking, "Most assuredly I say to you, He who believes in me, the works that I do, He will do also, and greater works than these He will do, because I go to the Father, and whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." God wants us to walk in the Spirit, and He promises that we will walk in power, because this brings glory to Him and He gives glory to the Father. A great example of this is the story of my brother. My brother was at Taco Bell, which is a very ordinary place, which kind of seems like where all the extraordinary stuff starts at, a very ordinary place. He was at Taco Bell eating tacos, and he was just sitting there, and he was having kind of a quiet time with God. He was alone, and so he was just enjoying his food, enjoying communion with God, and he finished, and he walked outside, and he saw this teenager sitting on the curb. And at that moment, he was overwhelmed, just overwhelmed with the urge that he needed to go talk to this young man. And that's a crazy feeling if you've never felt it, but he just knew, he knew he had to go talk to this young man, and he had no idea what to say, just that he had to talk. So he walked over to him, and he said, "Hey, this might sound crazy, but I think God wants me to come talk to you." And that teenager looked up at him, and he said, "I was just sitting here praying that if God was real, he would send someone to come talk to me." He came from a really troubled family, in a really dangerous neighborhood, and my brother was able to get him connected with this organization that takes in teens who are in bad situations, and it's a Christian organization, and they give them good discipline and direction and safety. Matthew 3, 11. This is John the Baptist talking. "I indeed baptize you with water under repentance, but he who was coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Time and again, the Bible makes it clear that to us believers, it's promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And some of you may have mistakenly heard that Quakers don't believe in baptism, and that's not true. We believe in baptism, and we believe in the necessity of baptism. It's just the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We believe that the baptism of water is just a symbol, but the baptism of Holy Spirit is life and power, and it is what Jesus died for. And just like the sacrifices in the Old Testament were a symbol pointing to the true, real sacrifice of Jesus, water baptism is just a symbol pointing to the true, real baptism of the Holy Spirit, which every Christian needs. What does the Holy Spirit do for us? I am not going to read out all of these verses, but I'm going to go over them quickly. The Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us in John 14, 26, and the reason there's so many scriptures in your bulletin today is because I listed these all out. You can look them up later. The Holy Spirit convicts us, John 16, 8. He comforts us, Acts 9, 31. He creates fellowship among us, Philippians 2, 1. He guides us, John 16, 13. He intercedes for us, Romans 8, 26. He searches the mysteries of God and reveals them to us, 1 Corinthians 2, 7. He testifies of Jesus. That's John 15, 26. And he takes what is Jesus and declares it to us, John 16, 14. He creates fruit in us, Galatians 5, 22. And he also gives gifts to us, 1 Corinthians 12, 7. That's a lot of stuff. But the most important thing that the Holy Spirit does is that He is our guarantee. He is the thing that lets us know, yes, we are saved. 2 Corinthians 1, 21 says, "Now he who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also sealed us and has given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee." 2 Corinthians 5, 5. "Now he who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee." Ephesians 1, 13. "In him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and whom also having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who was the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession to the praise of His glory." Last week we talked about crucifying the flesh. I was giving that talk in relation to how we treat other people and how we shouldn't look at them and treat them the way that our flesh wants us to, but we should say, "What is your will, God?" and treat any other people that we encounter the way God wants us to treat them. When we crucify our flesh, that's when we walk in the Spirit. And at the end, but that crucifying of the flesh, it's not just how we deal with others, it's how we do everything. God wants us to die to ourself, our own will, and say in all the aspects of our life, "What is your will, Lord? What is your will, my Lord?" And walk in the Spirit that way. And at the end of the sermon I gave a little challenge, and I just called it a suggestion because I didn't want you to feel guilted into it, but I said, "Just a suggestion. Say hi. Shake hands with someone you don't really know here today." And I see people here today that I don't know. Hi. Welcome. I'm the interim pastor. Next week, Keith is going to be here. He's our incoming pastor, so be sure and come back and see him. But anyways, I said, "Just shake someone's hand that you don't know." But I just made a suggestion. I didn't want to put any pressure on you. And some of you did it. You stood up. You shook hands. I'm usually the person who kind of locks up, flips off lights and stuff. I'm not the only one, by any means. But I'm usually one of the last people out of here, and there were people lingering around longer than me last week. There were people just hanging out, meeting each other, talking, and that was beautiful. But other people didn't do it. And my question is, "Why not?" And the only answer that I can think of is because you chose to walk in the flesh. It was too uncomfortable to you. I'm worried about that. I'm really worried about that. The Holy Spirit is our guarantee, and we need to walk in Him because this is how we please God. This is how we grow as Christians. A person who says they are a Christian, in 1 John, it talks about how if you don't love your brothers and sisters in this room, then the love of the Father is not in you. The reason for this is the Holy Spirit, which we just described about in all this detail, it teaches, it convicts, it comforts, it guides, it intercedes, it does all this stuff. The Holy Spirit is powerful and dynamic, and when it intersects with your life, you are changed. You cannot help but be changed. And what is being said in 1 John is, if you don't have a life that's changed, then you haven't had that encounter. And that terrifies me, and I know that there are Christians out there who say, "I'm a Christian," but they have no life in them. They have no burden for the lost. They have no love for their brothers and sisters in Christ. Where is their evidence? Where is your guarantee? Some of us have walked in that spirit and walked in that fire, but it has grown cold. Ephesians 4.30 says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed." 1 Thessalonians 5.19 says, "Do not quench the spirit." It's possible that there are people who have never encountered God and never been filled with the Spirit. And the good news to those people is that if you repent and believe in Jesus, if you put your faith in Jesus, God promises the Holy Spirit. You don't have to earn it or work for it. You may need to ask someone to pray for you, but it's promise. He wants you to have it. But for those of us who received it and grew cold, because we began to neglect that relationship. And any neglected relationship grows cold, doesn't it? If we neglect our relationship with God, we quench the spirit. We grieve the spirit. But if you want to live that life where you see God, where you see God so clearly that you walk with Him and you are close to Him and you are filled with His Spirit, how do you do that? How do you see God? It tells you right there in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Some of you are thinking, "Oh, I'm not pure in heart." But it has nothing to do with your past. So put that aside. Pure in heart means you, in your heart, get close to God and then just do whatever it takes to stay close to God. If there is a thing in your life that pulls you away from that closeness, get rid of that thing. Oswald Chambers says, "Purity is the result of continued spiritual harmony with God." Continued spiritual harmony. Getting in sync with God and staying in sync with God. That's what purity is. It's not, "I've never sinned." It's not, "I was never a bad person." It's, "Forget the past, focus on the present, get in harmony and stay in harmony." Chambers goes on to say, "God makes us pure by an act of His sovereign grace, but we still have something that we must carefully watch. It is through our bodily life, coming in contact with other people and other points of view, that we tend to become tarnished. Not only must our inner sanctuary be kept right with God, but also the outer courts must be brought into perfect harmony with the purity God gives us through His grace. Our spiritual vision and understanding is immediately blurred when our outer court becomes stained. If we want to maintain personal intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ, it will mean for us refusing to do or even think certain things. And some things that are acceptable for others will become unacceptable for us. Christianity is not a religion. It is relationship. And there are so many bad churches and bad teachers who overemphasize the "do's" and the "do not's" and ignore the fact that we have spiritual life and spiritual unity and harmony with God. We walk with Him and it is alive and well inside of us. And we must carefully protect and maintain that relationship and get rid of anything that disrupts or destroys that relationship. It is promised to everyone who believes, everyone who puts faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is promised to you. And it is life. It is life. It is the difference between the dead religion of works and the real true living religion of Jesus. I call it religion, but it is not religion. It is relationship. We are going to have our open worship now. But I am going to start us off with a prayer. Heavenly Father, Lord Jesus, we thank You that You do not want employees. You do not want people checking off boxes, performing in certain ways. We thank You, God, that You want relationship. You want us connected to You. And that is a beautiful thing because You are the most wonderful, amazing thing. And we were created to enjoy You and to be enjoyed by You. And You want nothing more than that relationship with us, with our lost brothers and sisters in the world. And we thank You, God, that You have made this so easy and so available to us. And right now I pray the fresh touch of the Holy Spirit on every life here. God, everyone who has placed their faith in You, I pray that You fill them right now, the fresh anointing of Your Holy Spirit. Remind us what it is like to walk in that nearness with You. Help us to sense You close to us. Help us to realize what this is all about. Help us to get past religion and see the truth of Christianity. Fill us now. In Jesus' name I pray, amen. I know people who have come out of stale, stuffy, dead churches and been filled with the Holy Spirit and they say, "Matthew, when I read the Bible now, it just jumps off the page and comes alive to me now. When I worship, it is sweet and beautiful and wonderful. When I look around at the lost, I care. I have a heart for those people now. When I look at brothers and sisters in Christ who I thought I had nothing in common with, I now realize I have the most important thing in common with them now. The Spirit of God is not something He wants some people to have. It is the thing God wants every Christian to have. When you encounter Him, He will change you. He will transform you into something you never thought you could be. It is beautiful and wonderful. It is available. If you're not sure that you have it and you want to be prayed for, you just come find me after church and I will stop whatever I'm doing and pray for you because there is nothing more important. Find me during the week or whenever. But it is open and available to everything. It is not just a piece of Christianity you can take or leave. It is the thing God wants you to have more than anything else. It is relationship with Him and nearness with Him.