

# Acts 14 - Part 3

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[ 0 : 00 ] Just take your copy of God's Word and turn to Acts chapter 14. Two weeks ago, we began a study of chapter 14 of Luke's second volume, most commonly referred to as the Acts of the Apostles.

You can look at the beginning of this book in your Bible and see it likely titled the Acts of the Apostles. And that's true in much measure. We're looking at the early life of the church and the apostles and the way in which God used them to proclaim the gospel to the known world at the time.

But I think it would be more apt to call this book the Acts of the Risen Jesus Christ. And I don't say that as a rebuke of the people who translated our Bibles.

I'm very thankful for them. But rather to set your mind headed in the right direction. The Acts of the Risen Jesus Christ. Luke's first account is about his ministry on earth.

His second account is about his ministry from heaven. As he acts by the agency of the Holy Spirit in the lives of his followers. Much of the book of Acts is aimed at helping us understand the activity of the Holy Spirit.

[ 1 : 19 ] At the very end of chapter 13 in verse 52 Luke writes this. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Now remember that our chapter numbers, verse numbers, subtitles, not inspired. So flowing from the end of chapter 13 into the beginning of chapter 14.

I believe that Luke intends this phrase and the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit to bridge us into the next chapter. Right. They were filled with the Spirit.

Watch. Here's what happens when you're filled with the Spirit. And I asserted to you the past two weeks the following. The primary role of the Spirit of God is the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the salvation and perfection of his church.

If you're taking notes, I'm going to give that to you again. I'll give it to you later if you need it again. The primary role of the Spirit of God is the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the salvation and perfection of his church.

[ 2 : 33 ] And the primary means that he uses to accomplish this is the word of God believed and spoken by the people of God.

The primary means used to accomplish this is the word of God believed and spoken by the people of God. Whatever the works of the Spirit you believe to be active, there's many views on this. Whatever you believe to be active or in some cases even real, the work of the Spirit is always aimed in this direction.

The exaltation of Jesus Christ in the salvation and perfection of his church. By causing belief in the word of God and causing the word of God to be spoken by the people of God.

The Spirit of God's job is to draw the world's attention. Those who already are following Christ and those who have yet to follow Christ to Christ. This is the job of the Spirit.

[ 3 : 37 ] If this concept is new to you, I really want you to listen to the past two sermons. Not because I think they're the most wonderful sermons on the topic. But because I know they contain within them the biblical context you need to rightly understand this.

So go back. Our website has it. You can go look these sermons up. Or just do some good study of the Spirit. And the Spirit's activity in the life of the believer.

But for this morning, I want to prime the pump a bit from our last two weeks before we continue our study of this text. Week 3 of Acts chapter 14.

By reading a quotation to you by Charles Spurgeon. And I'm actually going to do it from the book I got the quotation from. To make a point as an aside. On your bulletin every week, there's a

quotation at the top of that.

But it's often Charles Spurgeon because of this book. I want you to know that we don't use quotations to sound smart. My intent is never in quoting some saint of old or someone with more accolades than myself.

[ 4 : 45 ] To make me sound smart like I'm reading all the time. And I come across all these gems. And I've just got to let you know that I know what's going on out there in past and present Christianity.

Never the point. What I find is that often, particularly the old dead guys, just say things better than I say things. I just think they do a great job of summing up and driving the point home.

Further, all saints, all of those who are God's past and present and future are part of the universal church. And we should love all of them.

We have access to such wonderful minds. A grace of God to us that we can access such writing. So that's why we're giving that to you. A little church history.

I don't want you to think that the ideas that are being presented on Sunday morning are anything new. They're just great old ideas. And that's part of the reason. So I've got this wonderful book, Through the Eyes of Spurgeon, that my wife got me for something.

[ 5 : 46 ] I can't remember what it was exactly that I got it for. And it's done by topic in alphabetical order. So I can just look up quotes. And that's why you often get Spurgeon quotes. So I'm going to read this to you to drive the point we're making about the Spirit of God working to the exaltation of Jesus Christ using the Word as the primary means.

Spurgeon said this, God by his Spirit brings old truth home to the heart, gives new light to our eyes, and causes the Word to exercise new power over us.

But he reveals no new facts. And he utters no words in any man's ears concerning his condition and state. We must be content with the old revelation and with the life and power and force with which the Holy Spirit brings it to the heart.

Neither must any of us seek to have any additional revelation, for that would imply that the Scriptures are incomplete. So if we're to be empowered by the Spirit, be filled by the Spirit, right, in this case that I've been making to you, that means that we need to have the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

It is the tool that the Spirit of God uses to bring about obedience in His people. So if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, it will serve you well to give a careful consideration to what it means to be filled by the Spirit.

[ 7 : 15 ] Do not neglect the third person of the Trinity. Do not make Him into something that He is not, or magnify work attributed to Him that is not Christ-exalting, but rather take hold of the gift that He is in the life of the believer.

Precious gift that we have. And chapter 14 can help us to do that, right? It can help us by showing us some things.

It's not everything, not an exhaustive way that the Spirit works in the life, but there's things that we can observe in the lives of believers who are filled with the Spirit. And we can hold our life up to that and wonder, is this me?

Am I filled with the Spirit? So I'm going to read to us Acts chapter 14. We'll get into it. It's Acts chapter 14, beginning in verse 1.

Now at Iconium, they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

[ 8 : 22 ] But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

But the people of the city were divided. Some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews with their rulers to mistreat them and to stone them, they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lithuania, and to the surrounding country.

And there they continued to preach the gospel. Now at Lystra, there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking and Paul looked intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, stand upright on your feet.

And he sprang up and began walking. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.

Barnabas they called Zeus and Paul Hermes because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds.

[ 9 : 38 ] But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like nature with you.

And we bring you good news that you should turn from these vain things to a living God who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations, he allowed all the nations to walk in their ways, yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.

Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.

But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Italia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled.

[ 11 : 10 ] When they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles, and they remained no little time with the disciples.

Beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

So we've structured our study. So this is part three, Acts chapter 14. We've structured it around seven points. I'm going to give those to you really quickly. As I've said, this is not exhaustive of all the work of the Spirit, but we can find all of these things in our text, and they're worth our consideration.

So the person who is filled with the Spirit, number one is fruitful, number two is opposed, number three speaks boldly, number four acts humbly, number five develops disciples, number six is committed, and number seven loves fellowship.

Two weeks ago, we managed to make it through the first point. So the person who is filled with the Spirit is fruitful. That is, I mean this in the Mark chapter 4 good soil sense.

[ 12 : 32 ] The person who is filled with the Spirit is multiplied as they proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God uses God's people to bring people to faith.

The person who is filled with the Spirit is fruitful. Last week I worked to present the next three points. So secondly, number two, the person who is filled with the Spirit is opposed.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has been and will be accepted by many and has been and will be rejected by many. Rejection takes all kinds of form.

It often takes the form of direct opposition, and we see a lot of that in our text. You picked up on the plots and the actual stoning of Paul.

Much opposition in the text. The person who is filled with the Spirit will be opposed by some.

Thirdly, the person who is filled with the Spirit speaks boldly.

[ 13 : 29 ] Even in the face of great opposition, the Christian filled with the Spirit does not shrink back when they ought to press forward. Thirdly, Paul and Barnabas continue to preach the gospel in the face of persecution.

Fourthly, this is summary. I thought you didn't catch that. I'm moving us to today's points. Fourthly, the person who is filled with the Spirit acts humbly. Right? The person who is filled with the Spirit is humble.

They are not self-seeking or self-promoting. Paul and Barnabas are given the opportunity to be worshipped as gods, but they seek only to see the God of heaven and earth exalted.

My job on a Sunday morning is not for you to think of me as a good preacher. My job is for you to worship the risen Christ.

Get me out of the way. I hope you can't pick me out in a crowd at the end of today, but that you are in love with Jesus as a result of our time this morning.

[ 14 : 35 ] So this week, Lord willing, we'll complete our study of chapter 14 with the concluding three points. So here they are again for your note-taking benefit.

The person who is filled with the Spirit, number five, so catch the order, number five develops disciples, number six is committed, and number seven loves fellowship.

So number five, the person who is filled with the Spirit develops disciples. It's starting to feel like a list on Reddit, isn't it? Seven ways you know you're filled with the Spirit.

Number five, develops disciples. Paul and Barnabas carried with them the promise and the command of what we most often call the Great Commission.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, they are obedient to the command of Christ, which we find in Matthew chapter 28, verses 18 through 20. Now, hear me, the case I'm making to you is that to be filled with the Spirit is to have the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

[ 15 : 43 ] Set your mind, Romans chapter 8, set your minds on the things of the Spirit and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. What are the things of the Spirit that we set our minds on? It's the book that He's written for us.

So they understand both the power for and the command to make disciples. Matthew 28, 18 through 20. And Jesus came and said to them, right, here's the power for, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

And here's the command. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, not merely converts, but followers of Jesus Christ. Not merely those who say they follow Jesus, but those who actually follow Jesus.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Verse 20, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, following Him. And behold, I am with you.

I've got all power and I am with you. Always. To the end of the age. Paul and Barnabas know this information. They don't have it from Matthew 28, 18 through 20 at this time.

[ 16 : 47 ] They are aware of the power that Jesus brings and the command to go. Oh, that we would have a vision for discipleship that is consistent with our Lords.

Those of us who have been saved by Christ going out and bringing about redemption in the lives of others. Paul instructs Timothy concerning discipleship in the following way in 2 Timothy 2, 2.

He says, What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

So Paul's vision for discipleship is generational. To raise up a generational witness to the glory of our risen Christ. In 2 Timothy 2, 2, there are four generations.

There's Paul, right? Instructed by Christ himself, an apostle, who now has imparted this knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus to Timothy, who he's now instructing to impart that to faithful men who will impart that to others.

[ 17 : 56 ] This picture of the Gospel going forth through loving, truthful relationship from person to person. And we can see in our text, in the face of opposition, when they first arrive in Iconium, there's this opposition to them.

There's a stirring up. There's an embittering of people's hearts toward them. So verse 3 says, So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord.

Here's a people, young converts to Christ, that desperately need instruction. So they stay on in the face of this opposition to help raise them up in Jesus.

Verse 21, When they had preached the Gospel to that city, he's referring to Derbe, and had made many disciples, so these are converts coming to faith, what do they do?

They return. Go back to the places where they have been preaching the Gospel, and people have been coming to faith, that there's opposition. They go back to these places, to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, doing what?

[ 19 : 06 ] Verse 22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, helping them to be sanctified, to be raised up in Christ, and saying that through many

tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God.

Paul and Barnabas did not just see people converted, but also growing in grace and truth. But they did not stop there.

They also appointed leadership to continue this work of generational witness. Verse 23, they appointed elders for them in every church. They pray, and they fast, and they commit these elders to the Lord in whom they had believed.

And there's an important lesson in this, probably particularly for church leaders, but if you'll hear me for a second, note the way that Paul and Barnabas trust that Christ is the head of the church.

They do the work that they're called to do. They're obedient to be disciple makers. They appoint elders, and then what do they do? They commit them to the Lord. They're able to go on. They're able to finish their missionary journey and go away because who is with them?

[ 20 : 19 ] Jesus Christ working by the agency of the Spirit with the Word of God. They're able to press on to a new work beyond once they've established these things amongst them.

So they were disciple makers. They developed disciples being filled with the Spirit. Beloved, this is the work of the church. Ephesians chapter 4. I want you to turn there with me, please.

Ephesians chapter 4, just verses 11 and 12. I want you to see this for yourself. We will go back to Acts 14. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 11.

Paul has just talked about how Christ ascended. What does that also mean? But it also means that He descended, He came down to earth, and He gave gifts to men. And he begins to talk about these gifts that He gave for the sake of the church.

Verse 11. And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

[ 21 : 22 ] As a side note, it was so hard for me to stop at that point. The chapter gets so good after that. But to stay on point, verses 11 and 12, He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

Now, I want you to understand this text. That's why I want you there. I want you looking at this text. Okay? So, Christ gives gifts to the church. And there's a lot of various views on this particular text. And I will admit that I have a view. I can't say with 100% confidence that it's right. But I think it's right and I want to show you why. Right? So, of these gifts, these positions that have been given, right, the question would be which of them are active still?

All of them are, but there's not people, I would argue, that are actively apostles, actively prophets. Okay? Let me show you why I think that. Okay? So, if you back up in Ephesians to chapter 2, verse 19 and 20, Paul says, so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, a result of God's redeeming work in your life.

You're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. I'm in Ephesians 2, 19. Right? This is what's happened as a result.

[ 22 : 42 ] You're no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. Verse 20, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

Okay? Now go to Ephesians chapter 3, verses 4 and 5. So one letter, Paul's writing here, we're carrying thoughts, we're carrying these thoughts with us from Ephesians chapter 2 into Ephesians chapter 3 into Ephesians chapter 4.

Okay? So he's talked about the church has been built on the foundation, built on a foundation, it's been laid, right? The foundation has been laid, it's being built on top of that. Apostles, prophets. It has a past tense feeling to it. Ephesians 3, verses 4 and 5, when you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

So now, these insights into who Christ is, right, has been revealed in the apostles and prophets. So he's using the apostles and prophets in a very specific way, and when we get to chapter 4, I would suggest he's still using it in that way.

[ 23 : 56 ] Not new apostle, not new prophet, which would suggest the way he's been using it in Acts chapter 2 and Acts chapter 3, that there's going to be new revelation. What I'm suggesting to you is that the word of God is the apostles and the prophets.

It's built on this foundation. They were active in this day, still writing the canon, and now we have apostles and prophets active.

God's given us a gift. Apostles and prophets were people that wrote a book used by the Spirit to write this book. So the word of God is employed by evangelists and shepherd teachers.

Shepherd teachers. Right? Are you tracking me? I hope you are. This is what I would suggest is the way in which God has given us a book and he's given us people particularly gifted to be evangelists and people particularly gifted to be shepherd teachers.

But to what end? But to what end? To equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

[ 25 : 08 ] I want you to note there is no grammar, there's no punctuation, excuse me, punctuation in New Testament Greek.

There's no punctuation. So the translators have to do this difficult work of figuring out where to stick our English punctuation. Like where does the sentence end? Where does the comma belong? I'm using an ESV.

I think they did a really good job on this verse. Okay? And here's why. I want you to note that they did not put a comma after the word saints in verse 12. Had they put a comma there, here's how I think we would understand it.

Right? Christ gives gifts, the word of God and evangelists and shepherd teachers for three things. To equip the saints for the work, excuse me, to equip the saints, thing one.

For the work of ministry, thing two. For building up the body of Christ, thing three. So my job description as a shepherd teacher needs to include those three things.

[ 26 : 12 ] That's the work I'm meant to do. But note instead, without the comma there, the way we would read the text. Right? He gave these gifts, the word of God and people, leaders, verse 12, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

You catching the difference? So what is it that these gifts are meant to do? Right? My job this morning is to equip you, the saints, for the work of ministry.

I'm supposed to do work of ministry, but that primarily is equipping you for the work of ministry. And then, with the comma after ministry, it's an addition to, it is helping us understand what that looks like.

Your work of ministry is the building up of the body of Christ, bringing people to faith, making disciples. I hope you're tracking me there.

We can go back to Acts chapter 14. The person who is filled with the Spirit develops disciples. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you have the Spirit of God, you are commanded by Paul to be filled, and Ephesians, to be filled with the Spirit of God, that person makes disciples.

[ 27 : 25 ] And it's your job as a Christian to be a disciple maker. So the person who is filled with the Spirit develops disciples. The person who is filled with the Spirit also, number six, is committed.

Is committed. In our text, we observe the completion of the first missionary journey. The first missionary journey. This is Paul's first missionary journey. Barnabas is with him on this one. They return in this to their sending church. Verse 24. They passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Italia, and from there they sailed to Antioch.

Now, this Antioch is the Antioch of Cilicia, not Antioch in Pisidia. There's two Antiochs. They go back to Antioch of Cilicia, and that's where they were commissioned to go on this journey.

We can see that at the beginning of Acts chapter 13. So they go on a trip from Antioch of Cilicia. They end up in Antioch of Pisidia. They go back to Antioch in Cilicia. Okay?

[ 28 : 34 ] Where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. They were committed. They stayed the course.

They finished the task that was laid before them. In the face of a difficult journey, a treacherous journey, they completed the task.

And notice that they spoke in this return journey, they spoke the word in Perga. And to my point that they were committed, look back just a little bit in Acts chapter 13, verse 13 and 14.

This is the journey out. Chapter 14 is talking about the journey back. Acts chapter 13, beginning in verse 13, Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia.

And John left them. This is John Mark and returned to Jerusalem. But they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day, they went into the synagogue and sat down.

Now notice what doesn't seem to happen in Perga.

[ 29 : 39 ] They don't seem to preach the gospel there. For whatever reason, right, the occasion didn't present itself. I believe they're filled with the Spirit. The occasion didn't present itself, though, for them to preach the gospel in Perga.

So what did they do on the return journey? I just think it's fantastic. They preached the gospel in Perga on their way back. Man, we didn't proclaim the gospel in Perga.

So they didn't neglect the preaching of the Word in any city. They were committed to the making of disciples amongst the Gentiles. So the person who's filled with the Spirit develops disciples, is committed, and number seven, loves fellowship.

Loves fellowship. Verse 27, when they arrived, this is Antioch in Cilicia, back to the city that they started their journey on, they gathered the church together, and they told the church all that God had done on this trip.

They exalted the work of God in their lives on this trip that they had done. And how, verse 27, the last part, says how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles, right, to those who were not Jewish, taking the gospel to the nations as a starting point.

[ 30 : 54 ] And then verse 28 says, and they remained no little time with the disciples. Now on your bulletin there's a very brief quotation from Charles Spurgeon just says, sheep go in flocks and so do God's people.

I think that would make a fantastic t-shirt. I'm going to read to you the longer form of that quotation. So listen carefully. Some Christians try to go to heaven alone in solitude, but believers are not compared to bears or lions or other animals that wander alone.

But those who belong to Christ are sheep in this respect that they love to get together. Sheep go in flocks and so do God's people.

Often when I talk about the great need of fellowship, there will be a person or some people in my mind that I haven't seen in a long time that I know really need to hear and guess who tends to not be there that Sunday?

Sometimes it feels like I'm preaching to the choir when I tell people who are at church that they should be at church. So here's the exhortation to you, right?

[ 32 : 04 ] Like maybe this morning this is not the normal thing for you that you're a follower of Jesus but you're not committed to a fellowship of believers and you really need just to hear it for yourself, right? Come back or find another fellowship to be part of and commit to and live life with.

Or it could be that you are and many of you are. Many of you are so committed. Wonderfully committed to the life of this church but you know people who aren't, right? You know that person that should be sitting here with you this morning in fellowship with Christians and they're not. And you need to take this truth be a developing disciple maker and help people understand their great need of a church fellowship. The Apostle John writes in 1 John 4, 7 and 8 Beloved, let us love one another for love is from God and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. It should be the natural response for those of us who have been loved by God to love one another.

He's not speaking generically although there's definitely an overflowing, outflowing, loving response to the community around us. But he's primarily talking about those of us who are in Christ loving one another.

[ 33 : 20 ] Get together with the people that you love. Paul prays for the Thessalonian believers in 1 Thessalonians 3, 12. May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all as we do for you.

The Spirit-filled Christian loves the church. both universal, loves the church generally, but also loves the church local.

And beloved, I know this is not always easy. There are many times that I am thankful that I have a job to do and it would be neglectful of that job if I didn't show up and do that job.

There are some times I just don't feel like being with people. I'm thankful that I'm driven to be with you and I'm always really thankful when I am. I'm glad that I'm here once I get together.

Community group night, those of you who are in my community group, there's a rare Tuesday night that I just feel like bopping out the door and spending the evening out. Usually I would rather sit on the couch at home, right?

[ 34 : 28 ] But I'm compelled, right? It's an argument I'm making. Fill with the Spirit. Fill with the Spirit. Love. God's. People. Last week I told you that the Monday prior to that I fell out of a tree. Now that I know I'm not going to have to go to the hospital, it was a tree here. If you understand workers' comp, you'll understand that. I'm pretty sure I cracked two ribs. I'm pretty sure that I cracked two ribs. And in the pain of that week, Clay offered to preach for me last Sunday and it would have been really easy to go, yeah, I'm going to stay home. A heating pad feels great right now. But I love being with you guys. And I wasn't going to come and not preach. I couldn't say, oh, my ribs are cracked. I'm going to sit down. No, no, I'll get up and I'll preach all the same.

This morning, Clay called me. So I'm downstairs. Clay calls me. For Clay to call me on a Sunday morning, I'm thinking, oh, what's going on? So I call him. He sounded horrible. He's got the flu.

[ 35 : 35 ] And he called me and he asked my permission not to come this morning. I said, Clay, of course don't come, man. Like no one else wants the flu and you need to get better. And he said, and he said, and I just wouldn't have expected this.

He said, man, I just really want to come. I just really want to be there. And I was, little of me was hoping you'd make me. I said, no, you need to stay home this morning.

Do we long to be with God's people? And hear me say, it's not just that you come in and you sit down and you observe a show. If that's what you think of as church, yeah, skip it.

You're not missing that much if that's all that you're getting out of it. You can listen to a fantastic sermon and sing wonderful songs in your car by yourself. If that was church, I will tell you that my Sunday mornings would be spent heading somewhere to get out in the woods and I'd listen to a good sermon and I'd listen to some great music and that would satisfy.

It's not that. It's people living in relationship together. That's why I said not the person still in the spirit loves church because I think we have a misunderstanding of what that word means but loves fellowship.

[ 36 : 46 ] Loves being in relationship with one another. We can do that in some shape and form on a Sunday morning. More than that, it needs to be happening in other ways. We have activities and just life, just getting together because you long to be with God's people.

The church is not perfect but the church is our faith family, our refuge in a world of trouble. Too often we are troubled, we run to our solitude.

Beloved, I am guilty of this. I'm an introvert. I would rather be alone most of the time, especially when things aren't going well for me. But what I need most is to be with God's people.

We ought to flee to be together, to be reminded of the hope that we have in this world. Michael Horton, professor of theology and apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary said this in a foreword of a book that I actually did read.

The visible church is where you will find Christ's kingdom on earth and to disregard the kingdom is to disregard its king. So, the person who is filled with the Spirit is fruitful, is opposed, speaks boldly, acts humbly, develops disciples, and is committed.

[ 38 : 11 ] Let me ask you some questions for application. Number one, have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Jesus' promise is the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1, verse 5.

In brief, this phrase is only used seven times in the New Testament. It occurs four times in the prediction of John the Baptist concerning Jesus' promise to baptize believers in the Spirit. The next two, directly to the day of Pentecost, fulfilling that promise, the only other reference, and it is a variation of the statement is found in the New Testament in 1 Corinthians 12, verses 12 and 13. For just as the body is one and has many members and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.

Jews are Greek, slaves are free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit. I want you to look at this further, especially if you're wrestling with the notion that I've laid out for you today. But from that text, 1 Corinthians 12, 12 and 13, the Spirit is the element in which the believers were baptized, which moved them positionally from outside the church to positionally in the church.

This is what Paul is communicating in 1 Corinthians 12. They were baptized in the Spirit and found themselves in the church. Paul writes in Romans 8, verse 9, anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

[ 39 : 47 ] So, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be regenerate, is to be saved by God in Christ. If you are a follower of Jesus, you have the Spirit of God.

You have been baptized. And you cannot be filled with the Spirit if you have not been baptized in him. So having been baptized as a Christian, it's possible for him both to be filled and to not be filled.

That's what we've been talking about. How do we know? If we're believers, how do we know? But the question that must precede that is, are you a Christian? Do you ever produce fruit of the Spirit? And I would suggest to you that you ponder that yourself, but I would also suggest to you that you talk to people who are followers of Jesus Christ, who know you, if you're not sure. Do you think I'm regenerate? Do you see a growth in holiness in my life?

And if your friends won't be honest with you, find new friends. You cannot be filled with the Spirit if you have not been baptized in him. So if you would honestly answer the question, have you been baptized in the Spirit?

[ 40 : 59 ] No. Repent and believe. Flee from the wrath to come. Repent and believe in the sufficient work of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

If you answer yes to that question, yes, I've been baptized in the Spirit. Do you develop disciples? Are you at work with people? Are you investing something? All of us have something to invest. You may not feel equipped for that. You may not feel like you have some wealth of knowledge to impart to somebody else. You have something to invest in somebody who's younger in the faith than you or even a peer. Invest into others.

Do you develop disciples? Are you committed to the cause of Christ? Are you committed to the cause of Christ? Are you chasing your dream? Are you chasing his dream?

Is your life given to the building of the kingdom of God? And beloved, we do this in all kinds of practical ways. We do this as students. We do this as employees. We do this as husbands and fathers and parents.

[ 41 : 59 ] All kinds of very practical ways we build the kingdom of God. Do you love the fellowship of God's people?

Do you love the fellowship of God's people? If you answer yes to these questions, then there are signs that you are being filled with the Spirit. The Word of Christ is dwelling in you richly, at least at times.

If you answer no, then why not? Why not? Why are you not being filled with the Spirit? What is it that you believe that is not consistent with what the Bible has to say about you, what it has to say about the world around you, and what it has to say about our great God?

Let's pray together.