

# Anointed in Christ

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning everyone. Morning Mike. So it's great today on the day of Pentecost, isn't it, to celebrate that we are today part of a multicultural, intergenerational community of millions of people who will all be worshipping the living God today.

And on that first day, everybody heard what God had done in their own language. So, well, welcoming you all, a special word to our friends from Australia. Good day, mates. How are you going?

Good morning. It's wonderful to be here with you and I want to preach to you on a verse from the reading that Grace just read to us.

Paul wrote this, he said, he anointed us, set his seal of ownership upon us and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Shall we pray? Our gracious Father, we want to pray that today you would open our ears, you would open our minds and you would open our hearts.

[ 1 : 27 ] That we may be truly open to what it is you want to say to us. Father, we pray that we might be open as you speak and we discern your word through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Amen. So, I guess for many years, the Holy Spirit was kind of relegated to the substitute's bench as far as the Holy Trinity was concerned.

A.W. Tozer, this came out in a book that was written in 1952 when I was three years old. And the book itself was a collection of some messages that he preached in the USA.

And this is what he said. Listen to this carefully. If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference.

If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 90% of what they did would stop and everybody would know the difference.

[ 2 : 47 ] I don't know, but I feel deep in my bones that actually that may be sadly true.

The Holy Spirit was withdrawn. God kind of, you know, I don't know what, dog-whistled the Holy Spirit back to heaven. What would change?

What would change? David Watson, writing of our attitude to the Holy Spirit until the renewal movement of the 1960s, said, The Holy Spirit's like a distant cousin.

Somebody we know about, but somebody we've never met. And frankly, they pay no part in our lives whatsoever. And then suddenly, God broke through in the 1960s through the ministry of men like Dennis Bennett and Merlin Carruthers, and a little later, David Watson and Michael Harper and John Wimber.

And suddenly, some in the church became far more aware of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the Spirit was spoken of as a wind, the Ruach of God.

[ 4 : 09 ] In the New Testament, rather than being an impersonal force, the New Testament understands the Holy Spirit to be a person.

A person with feeling, with intelligence, with intent. One of the big differences between the Old and the New Testament is, in the Old Testament, the Spirit was seen as an impersonal force that was used particularly on particular people for particular purposes.

As the prophecy of Joel reminds us, the Spirit will be poured out on all God's people. And stuff will happen.

Stuff that probably, right now, sounds a bit weird to you. People dreaming dreams, and people having visions. It's kind of stuff that generally, we're kind of vaguely interested in, but hope, frankly, it never happens to us.

And I want to say to you today, I hope you realize, those of you who are members of this church, that you are a member of a church that worships the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

[ 5 : 27 ] I don't like using a conjunction to say, and the Holy Spirit, because it sounds like, back to the 1950s, it's an add-on. And it really isn't. We worship God the Father, who created the earth, the heavens, and all that is in them.

We worship Jesus the Son, who went to a cross, that ordinary people like you and me might find forgiveness through the shedding of His blood, through His death and resurrection and ascension. And my goodness, we really do need to worship God the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to worship Him, to know Him better, and to serve in this world, which is in a rather degraded condition right now.

Let me ask you, is the Holy Spirit a distant relative to you? Think about that for a moment. The Holy Spirit was removed.

Would 95% of your life look exactly the same? In Ephesians chapter 19, Paul goes to Ephesus, and he meets there some disciples.

[ 6 : 45 ] And I don't know if it was the Holy Spirit that prompted him, but he met them, and clearly he could tell there was something a bit deficient about them. So he said to them, have you heard about the Holy Spirit?

They're like, no, we never heard about that. So he's like, well, hang on, who baptized you? And they said, John the Baptist. Paul says, no, John's baptism was for repentance alone.

We need to re-baptize you in the Holy Spirit. That story will spook some of you, because what happens is, Paul lays hands on these disciples, and prays with them, and they're filled with the Holy Spirit, and they begin to speak in tongues.

I can see now, some of your weird meters starting to flicker, even as I say it. That's not really the point. I love the Pentecostal church, let me say that.

I feel very at home in it, in so many ways, but I have this big issue with them, that they think that the only sign of the fullness of the Spirit is speaking in tongues.

[ 7 : 50 ] I don't think that's biblical, and I'm not quite sure it's helpful, and probably will relieve some of you who have tried your best to speak in tongues and never quite achieved it. That's not to say that we shouldn't seek the higher gifts, that's what Paul advises us.

But not all of us are meant to have all the gifts. That's very clear from the New Testament. In Acts chapter 2, in obedience to what Jesus had told them in Acts chapter 1, wait, wait until the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and then you will be my witnesses.

In obedience to that command, 120 disciples. I mean, come on. 120 disciples isn't even a decent Sunday morning congregation, is it?

After three years of Jesus' dynamic ministry, healings, all that stuff, it's just 120 people. And they're in a room, locked away.

And then suddenly, there's a funny noise, and the Holy Spirit emerges and tongues of flame and falls upon those people and they begin to speak what the Bible calls the wonders of God in the language of the people there.

[ 9 : 28 ] One of the amazing things about the Christian faith is it is truly meant to be multicultural.

They all heard the wonders of God in their own language. And so we come to 2 Corinthians. It's a little something I just need to explain to you now.

I hope you'll forgive me, but you have no choice. 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 22.

He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his spirit in our hearts as a deposit guaranteeing what is to come. See, you remember that first bit of it.

It's a bit like, you know, yes and no, and Jesus is always yes, and there's a reason for that. Paul had intended to go to Corinth and had to kind of pull out of his speaking tour there.

[ 10 : 34 ] Some of the congregation in Corinth were accusing him of being fickle. That's why Paul's trying to reassure them, saying, surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not yes and no.

Why? Because the message of the gospel is always yes. St. John tells us, I will never turn away anyone, anyone who turns to me.

Paul was accused of being fickle, and in return, he affirms the positivity of Jesus, and he also affirms that he and all disciples, at the moment, they accept the grace of God through faith, that Jesus died on a cross for our forgiveness.

At that moment, God fills us with the Holy Spirit. He sets his seal upon us. In ancient times, a seal was a mark of ownership.

So when Paul's talking about God sealing us with his Holy Spirit, what he's telling us is, we are gods, we are marked for God.

[ 11 : 51 ] But in the New Testament, there seems to be this kind of idea that for some of you, some of us, this is a kind of process that needs constant attention.

Because although on conversion, God fills us with his Spirit, unfortunately, we leak. We leak through our disobedience, through our fickleness, through our flabby thinking, and we need to be filled.

And speaking personally, I don't think this just had to happen to me once after I was converted. I think it's a repeated process in my life. We need to be filled.

Let me just give you a couple of criteria that you might like to apply to yourself, which might give you a steer on whether or not you need to be filled by the Holy Spirit.

Let me ask you this. How much of every day do you spend thinking about God compared to the cares and troubles of this world? Jesus said, didn't he, where your heart is.

[ 13 : 11 ] That's what really matters. See, if your heart's really into God, you will be thinking more about God than you will be thinking about the cares and troubles of this world.

Secondly, how much of your life is driven by what God asks of his disciples in the Bible? I'm going to say this to you, and it sounds a little tough because it is a little tough.

But there is no way that you can be filled with the Spirit and at the same time be totally inattentive to his word, the Bible. Let me say that again.

There is no way, no way, that you can remain filled with the Spirit and be completely inattentive to God's word, the Bible.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 7 verse 21, Not everyone who calls me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father.

[ 14 : 21 ] If you answer to those questions convicts you, I suggest that today you might consider at the end of this talk asking God from your heart to fill you again with his Holy Spirit.

If your answer to those questions is negative, I think you need to be filled. And some of you will say, hang on, I was filled at a renewal conference back in 1982.

too. Surprised most of you can remember, but listen, you cannot live on yesterday's spiritual experience.

The prophet Isaiah, writing in chapter 64, think about verse 6, says that our spiritual experience is like the autumn leaves.

It fades with time. I wonder if you begin to see your need this morning. I wonder if you begin to feel it.

[ 15 : 34 ] And before I tell you why you need to be filled with the Spirit, let me tell you what the Holy Spirit isn't. The Holy Spirit is not enthusiasm. enthusiasm. I think a lot of people, if I might say this, have been fearful of being filled with the Spirit because they've seen the kind of hijinks of some Christians who are filled with the Spirit.

It's not really the point. Nobody thinks enthusiasm is an idea, apart from the Scottish theologian Ronald Knox. He must have been a pretty miserable guy, I think. enthusiasm is good, but it's not the same as the Holy Spirit.

It's possible to be enthusiastic and not be filled with the Spirit. It's not chasing a better experience than last week's experience in church. And certainly, and here, those of us who think we are filled with the Spirit need to be very careful.

It's not a cause for spiritual arrogance. There are no different classes of Christian in God's church. The Spirit is the person of the Holy Trinity who will bring four critical aspects of the spiritual life into your soul.

One of those things, number one, courage. I wonder today how much this is lacking in today's church. I struggle having done the job that I did in the church for years.

[ 17 : 10 ] with the idea that today my fellow bishops are virtually silent on anything other than politics. There's very little about holiness of life.

There's very little about how I can get to heaven. There is very little about sanctification. There's very little about these things. And huge amounts of criticism of government policy.

not saying it's beyond criticism. We need courage, friends, to stand up. Says, doesn't it, in 2 Corinthians, because Jesus is the yes, it says, now it is God who makes both of us and you stand firm.

Friends, if ever there was a moment that the church needs to stand firm, it's today. You are looking at a society that is reaping the fruits of ungodliness.

In the middle of the night, I was awakened listening to my radio, I heard the most horrific, horrific item on the radio, and it was a woman, an investigative journalist, who's looking at the impact of pornography upon our kids.

[18:31] I mean, we should be shamed by such stuff. And let me tell you, and this is fact, that whilst there are adults looking at pornography, whilst it is a multi-billion dollar business that people seem to want to feed into, as long as there is adult pornography on the internet, kids will access it.

It is reckoned now that on average children aged between 11 and 13 have watched hardcore pornography involving violence on the internet.

Put your hand up if you feel great about that. I don't see many hands in the air. I don't hear many bishops speaking out about what we're doing to our kids today.

I understand why in many ways social media makes standing up such a painful process sometimes. The second thing is, we need courage to speak up.

Mark chapter 13 and verse 1, Jesus here is talking about persecution. And he says, don't you worry when these people come at you, criticizing you.

[19:49] The words that you speak will be given to you by the Holy Spirit. See, how much longer are you going to keep quiet, guys? How much longer?

Stand up, speak up, and then, I love this, the Holy Spirit, when we're filled, makes us pray bold prayers. Not just, my name's Jimmy and I'll take what you can give me prayers, but bold prayers. Praying that God would do the work that God has always done in us and through us. Courage. Second, compassion.

Romans 5, verse 5, tells us that God has shed love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. You know, I have to think about this, don't you?

In our culture, it's so easy to let compassion drain out of your soul by being consistently judgmental. I want to know how much different the world would be that instead of sitting around in dinner parties judging the world, the Holy Spirit started to release a bit more agape love into the world through me, through you.

[21:11] I need to think about that. God's got some work to do in me. The third thing is conviction. have you ever met anybody and something's gone wrong in their life?

Maybe they've gone involved with addiction. Maybe they've broken up a relationship which they really valued in a moment of madness. You know, that kind of stuff.

And then, when you're talking to them and trying to give them some support, they'll say to you, I wish somebody had warned me. I wish somebody had warned me.

Told you about that drug addict who had been addicted to fentanyl in Vancouver. And how at the end of it, it's just a terrible thing to watch.

This poor young guy, wrecked by drugs. Says, there was a day when I made a choice and no one warned me.

[22:15] See, in John's Gospel, in chapter 16 and verse 11, I don't know if you've got a Bible anywhere near you, but you might like to. Incidentally, it'd be really good if you did have a Bible near you, but that's another sermon.

I was talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. He said, when he comes, he will convict the world. That's you and me. of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment.

How much different would our world be if the Holy Spirit cultivated in us a holy conscience that would make us think before we do wild things?

And wild things are just about addiction. Wild things can be spending ridiculous amounts of money on yourself. Complicated.

I saw the Sunday Times this morning and there's a kind of supplement in that called, I purposely looked at it so I could tell a tale against them. And I mean, week by week in this time of economic deprivation, they're advertising stuff like dresses for £21,000.

[23:41] Right? This morning, actually, I think they've toned it down a bit, but the worst thing I could find was a pair of sunglasses for £400. I know, it's just terrible.

Holy Spirit will bring conviction. The fourth thing is really important. The Holy Spirit will be the driving force of cultivating your relationship with God.

Romans chapter 8. This is such a seminal passage, I think we studied it in some of the home groups together fairly recently.

Romans 8, verses 15 and 16. For you did not receive a spirit, says Paul, that makes you a slave to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship, of childhood, I guess.

And by him, by him, we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. You have an issue with praying, you have an issue of spending time with God, you have an issue with reading his word, all the things that will really build you as a disciple and begin to make you effective as a disciple in this world.

[ 25 : 07 ] You cannot do without the help of the Holy Spirit. so, every day, I go on a website, I have no idea what a cookie is.

Right? I have no idea. Do you accept cookies? Yeah? I'm a cookie freak. And because of that, I now am, apart from on every boring website on the planet, apparently, I get stuff from Marcus Buckingham.

Marcus Buckingham used to be director of research at Gallup, the research association. And I got a thing, and it caught my attention.

Because if this had been the Archbishop of Canterbury writing this, I'd have sat up. He says this, he's trying to sell you a course, which is produced by Harvard.

He says the most sacred human mission is to help each person discover they are so special and so powerful, and then help them to share it with the rest of us.

[ 26 : 19 ] The course is called Find What You Love. Now, Marcus Buckingham is one of the smartest guys I know. I'd be quite sure that there might be something helpful in that course, but the problem with it is, it's a secular course.

It is encouraging you to look in this direction without any inner help whatsoever. Today, in this church, there's a course, not really a course, there's a Bible that says that you and me, if you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

find some courage, some compassion, some conviction, and some cultivation of your life with God. And listen, that same spirit, I love this, it's the same spirit that brooded over the chaos in the creation of the world.

God's God's God's spirit. The same spirit that inspired Abraham to leave the security of his nice middle-class existence and go on a scary journey to a land filled with milk and honey.

A man who was prepared to believe at the age of 90 that God would make him the father of all nations. Keeping my fingers crossed. And he did it by the power of that same spirit.

[ 27 : 58 ] Same spirit that David took on Goliath. Same spirit that inspired those prophets of old to courageously stand up and speak up for God.

That same spirit is in this church this morning. And that same spirit is the same spirit that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

Someone say amen. And that same spirit is available for you.

For you. God's gift to you that you might be the people that he wants you to be.

And God knows we can't afford to be the silent minority any longer friends. This world is going to hell in a handcart.

[ 28 : 57 ] And somebody's got to stand in the breach. So what can I do this morning? Let me read to you from St. Luke's Gospel.

Just a short verse. Two verses. Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. Luke chapter 11. And verses 9 through 13.

So I say to you, this is Jesus speaking, ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks the door will be opened.

Then he says this, and I wonder for some people in church this morning who don't suffer from this kind of blight. Which of you, says Jesus, which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish will give him a snake instead?

Or if he asks for an egg will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more? How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit?

[ 30 : 10 ] to those who ask you. I'm going to pray with you now. And I want you to pray along with me if you feel in your heart you would like to.

It's not going to be a long prayer. You're not going to choir out the back who are going to sing until you surrender. But I'm going to ask you to surrender. Surrender your will to the living God who wants to fill you with the Holy Spirit this Sunday, and every Sunday, that you might be the person that he calls you to be, that you might make your difference on this planet.

You don't need Marcus Buckingham. You need God and his Spirit. Let's pray. Let's pray. God and just leave a moment's silence.

Just ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of what you need to do today. Father, it seems really weird that lots and lots and lots of people will pay lots and lots of dollars to sign up to Marcus Buckingham's course, which in the end will leave them on their own to try and find the strength for the inner change that I guess we all need in some respect.

and Lord, you have a better plan, a plan that relies on your grace and your generosity and your power to heal and transform.

[ 32 : 04 ] And so Father, on this holy day, Pentecost, we pray, Lord God, that you would fill us again with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, help us to be courageous, compassion, convicted, and people who cultivate a real deep relationship with you.

Lord, that we might make our impact on this world. And Lord, in days ahead, if you were to withdraw the Holy Spirit, Lord, that our church would be deflated by that.

Because Lord, we want to be a church that depends on you and upon your spirit. And the people who agreed, said together, Amen.