

Led by the Spirit

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[0 : 00] Now, I want to first suggest something to you, and it is this, that I've been in churches pretty much all of my life, and I've noticed a common trend among churches, among people who do have a lot of self-awareness.

Okay, the church is full of a lot of people with not a lot of self-awareness, right, who don't really see the problems in their own life, who think, you know, they're the greatest thing since sliced bread. But I don't think most of us are like that.

Most of us who believe in Jesus Christ are well aware of the sin, well aware of our weaknesses, well aware of our failures. And we look in the pages of Scripture, we look throughout Scripture, we see many characters that we identify with, and some of them I think we perhaps identify with a little bit too quickly in some ways.

I can't keep count of the number of times that I've heard Christians say, you know, yeah, those Israelites wandering in the wilderness with Moses, look at how they grumble, look at how they complain, look how they rebel against God, look at them.

Look how quickly they forgot how God saved them. I'm just like that. I'm just the same person as that. And I've heard Christians say, you know, look at those disciples of Jesus.

[1 : 21] Look at how doubtful they were. Look at how brash they were. Look about how they kept arguing about who was the greatest. Look how slow they are to figure out that Jesus is the Messiah. You know, I'm just like that.

I'm just the same person. And I get that. There's an element of wisdom in that. There's a humility in that. There's humility in recognizing that sin, recognizing that disposition that we have to rebel against God, recognizing that is still present in our lives, even as Christians.

There is that self-awareness that's good, an awareness of our own helplessness, that need to be saved from the presence of sin. But there's a big mistake if we're not careful, careful, careful about this.

If you read the Old Testament, if you read the Gospels, if you look at them and your response is simply, oh, I'm just exactly like those people. I'm just like them. Well, then you, if you think that, and that's all you're thinking, then you are not paying attention.

You're not paying attention to the message of hope that is present in the Gospel, present in the good news of how Jesus Christ came to save us.

[2 : 34] Earlier in the service, we lit this green Advent candle, this candle that represents the humanity of Christ. God became man.

The Son of God took on human form, became a man. Jesus of Nazareth. This was the starting point of a new relationship, a new relationship of a God who would identify himself as a man, as a human being like you and me.

That new relationship. That is what the prophets, the Old Testament prophets longed for, looked forward to. The new relationship that Jesus himself called a new covenant.

A new covenant. It's a new binding relationship of love between God and all his people. Between God and all his people. And this relationship gives a new identity to you, to me, to anyone who repents of their sin and believes in Jesus Christ.

This new identity, we are now called holy. We are now set apart for God. A few weeks back, BK explained that in the New Testament writings, under this new covenant, Christians, they, if you look throughout the New Testament, they're never identified as sinners.

[3 : 55] Paul simply makes a passing reference to himself as a sinner when he's talking about his former life. But under the new covenant, we are only identified as saints.

As saints. The holy ones. A couple weeks ago, I was at a conference where the speaker, Jeff Vanderstelt, he made that same point. And here's what he said. He said, we act unholy because we believe we are unholy.

In other words, we believe we're not set apart for God. We act out of that identity. Oh, you know. We push God out of the picture. We don't think of ourselves as set apart for God. We always act out of what we believe.

The worst thing you can do is tell people, you're a bunch of sinners. Now go act like you're not. You're a saint who still sins is the true gospel. You're a saint who still sins.

Yes, there is still sin resident in you, but there is a new identity. There is a new relationship with God. There is a new creation within you. Jesus came to begin this new covenant relationship between God and his people.

[5 : 00] And here's how the angel announced Jesus' mission to his earthly father, Joseph, in Matthew chapter 1. The angel Gabriel said, you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. Everyone who belongs to the people of God, everyone in this new covenant relationship with God will be saved from their sins.

Now how would Jesus do this? How would he save us? Well, first we see in scriptures, he would save us by paying the penalty for our sin. Jesus was crucified.

Jesus died in our place. Jesus took that punishment from God that we deserve. He paid the full penalty. Second, Jesus would save us by overcoming the power of sin.

That's what we're going to talk about today. You are no longer under the power of sin. Jesus has saved us from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, and he is saving us from the presence of sin.

[6 : 08] In our lives. Liberating us from the penalty, the power, and the presence of sin. And now, in our circles, in our particular branch of the Christian faith, we do, we gladly affirm, Jesus has saved us from the penalty of sin by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

We get that. But we're a little skeptical whether Jesus has really saved us from the power of sin. If we're reasonably self-aware, we see patterns of sin that just seem so deeply ingrained, so deeply carved into our lives, we think they are here to stay.

We lose hope. They're just not going to go away. I'm just not going to change. This is just going to be, I'm stuck with this. We start to think of ourselves primarily as sinners, think that God is, you know, he's just grudgingly letting us dirty people squat in his household, in the church.

And if we're still under the power of sin, then we lose hope that God can remove the presence of these ingrained sins in our lives. And we tend to think of our relationship with God as something that just can't ever really be made right, can't really be the way it's supposed to be.

But the message of Christmas is that Jesus will save his people from their sins and he will save them to the utmost. He saves you here and now, not only from the penalty of sin, but from the power of sin.

[7 : 36] And maybe you don't feel like this is true. Maybe it doesn't feel true to you, but it is. It doesn't matter what you feel. The truth is far more glorious than your feelings.

This is the clear teaching of God's word, the Bible. If you are a genuine Christian, the power of sin over you has been broken.

The power is broken. But how has Jesus done this? How has he accomplished this? How has he saved you from the power of sin?

Well, the simplest, the most succinct answer to this question, it's found in Galatians 5, verse 18, which is where we begin, which forms a structure of all that we're looking at today.

Here's what the Apostle Paul writes to the churches in Galatia. Galatians 5, verse 18. If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

[8 : 36] If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. This is how the power of sin has been broken. Paul says that there are two ways.

There are two ways that you and I try to live within a relationship with God. There's two ways you can do this. One of the ways is by living, the way he calls it, under the law.

That's the way the people of God lived in the Old Testament. The nation of Israel as a whole. That's how they lived in their covenant relationship with God. A covenant relationship that was governed

by laws and regulations.

By these things that set the standard, the expectations of what God's love for them would look like. What their love for God would look like. Here's how Moses explains what this old covenant relationship, living under the law, looks like.

In Deuteronomy chapter 30. He says to the people, See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.

[9 : 41] If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you today, by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply.

And the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish.

You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore, choose life. that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

So hey, good communication here. Good, clear communication. God's covenant relationship with his people. You know what's good about this? There isn't this muddle of unspoken expectations.

[11 : 07] You ever been in a relationship with someone where there's all these unspoken expectations, and you're always stepping on their toes, and you never really know where the boundary lines are? You never really know what they're really looking for.

You're just always running afoul of them, and they have you. God's not like that. He clearly communicates. He clearly marks out for the people of Israel what his expectations of them are, what their expectations of him are.

That's good. And he lays out to them two possible outcomes. One is life and good. The other outcome is death and evil, death and destruction.

So simple, straightforward, right? It is. It's simple. It's straightforward. We get it intuitively. Being under the law, that resonates with many of us.

That's just naturally the way that we live. Even if you're the kind of person that says, oh, I don't like laws. But you do that all the time. Our relationships with other people are filled with expectations of how we think they ought to behave, how they think we ought to behave.

[12 : 18] We're just people constantly governed by laws, man-made laws. And here we have laws that are made up by God and clearly communicated. And this seems so simple and straightforward.

But simple and straightforward does not mean easy. It doesn't mean easy. The entire Old Testament, it tells a story of failure. The failure of God's people.

God's people as a whole, as a nation. As a nation, they are remaining enslaved under the power of sin. They know what the Lord has done to save them, but they disobey anyway.

Moses summarizes this problem in Deuteronomy chapter 29, right before he sets before them life and good, death and evil. Here's what he says in the chapter right before that. You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs and those great wonders.

But to this day, the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. Lest anyone think that, oh, I would believe in God if he showed a sign, he proved that he exists.

[13 : 33] Well, the people of Israel didn't. They saw it all. But they didn't have a heart to understand, eyes to see, ears to hear. Under the law, under the old covenant, they didn't have that.

On the outside, they looked like his people. Their men were all marked by the covenant sign of circumcision, but their circumcision didn't tell the truth about what was inside of them.

Apart from a small remnant of faithful worshipers, apart from that remnant, the desires, the feelings, the thoughts of Israel were inclined away from God.

Their eyes were blind to his glory. Their ears shut to his wisdom. They were still enslaved by the power of sin. They were under far greater slavery than Pharaoh ever could have put them under. And so Moses saw that this old covenant relationship, it was not going to bring them life and good. It was only going to bring them death and evil. And speaking as a prophet, Moses saw that God

would one day replace this old covenant relationship with a newer and better one.

[14:50] In which God would save all his people. All his people. Not just the remnant. God would save all his people from the power of sin, giving them all a heart to understand, eyes to see, ears to hear.

Again, in Deuteronomy chapter 30, Moses promises this. The Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

So Moses is saying that no longer will God's people mark themselves on the outside by circumcision. An outside marking boundary of the people of God.

Rather, they will be set apart as holy, not by something that's done on the outside, but something that's done on the inside. An internal work of God. A sort of a circumcision of the heart.

Set apart by God that way. On the inside. They are now freed. Set free on the inside. Not just the outside. Set free from the power of sin. Free to love the Lord our God.

[15:59] Free to receive goodness and life from God. You are not like those people wandering in the wilderness. You are not enslaved by the power of sin.

You are free. You are not under the law as in the old covenant. You are not under the law as in the old covenant. That is not who you are any longer.

If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Long before God gave the law to Moses, God had already made a covenant and promises to Moses' ancestor Abraham.

And here is what God said to Abraham in Genesis chapter 17. Behold, my covenant is with you.

And you shall be the father of a multitude of nations.

I will make you exceedingly fruitful. And I will make you into nations. And kings shall come from you.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you. And your offspring after you.

[16:57] Throughout their generations. For an everlasting covenant. To be God to you. And to your offspring after you. Think of this covenant promise like a branch.

That began to bud. As the rest of the Old Testament progressed. As God forms the nation of Israel.

This branch forms a bud on it. And this bud finally, finally, finally.

Bursts into full bloom. When Jesus Christ became a man. When he inaugurated a new covenant.

By shedding his blood on the cross.

Jesus is the singular focus. The singular recipient of all of those promises to Abraham. And of all the good promises under the Old Covenant.

The only man who ever kept all that the Old Covenant required was Jesus. And in Galatians chapter 3, Paul explains. Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

[18:02] It does not say unto offsprings. Referring to many. But referring to one. And to your offspring. Who is Christ. Christ is that singular offspring of Abraham.

That seed. That holy seed. The one that all Israel was looking forward to. That Abraham was looking forward to. The one who receives all the promises of God. And when Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

When Jesus Christ conquered the grave. When Jesus ascended into heaven. When Jesus sat down at the right hand of God in power. Jesus received a gift. A promised gift that would enable him to fill the nations of the earth.

With sons and daughters of Abraham. In Acts chapter 2. The apostle Peter announced. This Jesus. God raised up.

And of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore. Exalted at the right hand of God. And having received from the Father. The promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured out.

[19:05] This that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Jesus is exalted. Ascends into heaven. He receives the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father. And he pours out that promise. On all of his disciples.

All of his followers. And so God raises up sons and daughters. For Abraham. Just as he promised in Isaiah chapter 44. I will pour water on the thirsty land.

And streams on the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon your offspring. And my blessing on your descendants. They shall spring up among the grass. Like willows by flowing streams.

This one will say. I am the Lord's. Another will call on the name of Jacob. And another will write on his hand. The Lord's.

And name himself by the name of Israel. And who are these offspring? All of these people. Who receive the spirit of the Lord. Who are springing up out of nowhere. Again in Galatians chapter 3. [20 : 02] Paul tells us who they are. Galatians chapter 3. Verses 7 through 9. Know then that it is those of faith.

Those of faith. Who are the sons of Abraham. Those who are of faith. Are blessed along with Abraham. The man of faith. Then down to verse 13. Christ redeemed us. Everyone who has faith in Christ. Christ redeemed us. From the curse of the law. By becoming a curse. For us.

For it is written. Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. So that. In Christ Jesus. The blessing of Abraham. Might come to.

The Gentiles. So that we. Might receive. The promised spirit. Through faith. That's how you receive the Holy Spirit.

[21 : 01] Through faith. Then down in verse. Verse 26. In Christ Jesus. You are all. Sons of God. Through faith.

For as many of you. As were baptized. Into Christ. Have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male and female. For you are all. One. In Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's. Then you are Abraham's offspring. Heirs. According to promise. BK spoke about.

How we have. We have this heritage. We receive all the promises of God. That we are secure. In our faith. God is never going to let us go. If you are Abraham's offspring.

His seed. God is not going to let you go. You will receive all the promise. All that he has promised. And so Paul is saying that. If you have faith in Christ. Then you are united with Christ.

[21 : 57] You are a son of God. Through faith. Through your union with Christ. You the offspring of Abraham.

Are an heir. And what is the fulfillment of that promise? It is the Holy Spirit of God. Himself. Poured out on Christ. Christ pours the spirit out on you.

You are redeemed. From the curse of the law. You are given a circumcised heart. A heart to understand. You have eyes to see.

You have ears to hear. Paul says this is true. Of who? Just some of the people of God? No. You are all sons of God.

Through faith. As many of you as were baptized in Christ. Have put on Christ. This is true of everyone. Who has faith in Christ. Everyone who is in Christ.

[22 : 54] Who has faith in him. Who is in Christ. Everyone is a son of God. Has received the life giving Holy Spirit. Not just a remnant. Everyone.

In a new covenant. Relationship with God. Has the Holy Spirit. Has received the Spirit. The Old Testament prophets. Anticipated this.

New revelation. New relationship with God. This. This relationship. In which God is not only with his people. God is not only dwelling among his people. But God is dwelling within. His people.

Here's how this relationship with God. Is described. In Jeremiah chapter 31. Behold. The days are coming.

Declares the Lord. When I will make a new covenant. With the house of Israel. And the house of Judah. Not like the covenant. That I made with their fathers. On the day when I took them by the hand.

[23 : 50] To bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant that they broke. Though I was their husband. Declares the Lord. For this is the covenant.

That I will make with the house of Israel. After those days. Declares the Lord. I will put my law within them. And I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God.

And they shall be my people. And no longer. Shall each one teach his neighbor. And each his brother saying. Know the Lord. For they shall all.

Know me. From the least of them to the greatest. Declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity. And I will remember their sin. No more.

This is not like the old covenant. You see. There is something new here. In this respect. You aren't like the people of Israel. You aren't wandering in the wilderness.

[24 : 49] Without hearts to understand. Eyes to see. Ears to hear. You are not under the law. As in the old covenant. You are led by the spirit. In the new covenant. You are led by the spirit.

In the new covenant. There are three blessings. That come through the spirit. That we. I want to focus on today. Look at the prophecy. In these words of Jeremiah. There are three blessings. That come through the spirit. In Jeremiah chapter 31. First. They shall. They shall. All know me. From the least of them. To the greatest. They shall all know me. When this promise comes true. It is exactly like Paul writes. You are all. Sons of God. Through faith. You are all. One. In Christ Jesus. Every person. In this new covenant relationship. With God. Receives the Holy Spirit. Every person. Knows the Lord. This is the first. Of three blessings. Everyone has received. The one Holy Spirit. Everyone has received. [25 : 47] The one Holy Spirit. That means. That there is now. A unity. And an equality. In the people of God. There are no longer. You know. Two tiers.

Of people. And the. Under the old covenant. There were two tiers. Of God's people. There were. You know. You had the priests. They had their special experience. They had special access to God. Able to go into the tabernacle.

And there were the high priests. He could go into. Into the very. Tent itself. Into the most holy place. Once a year. The priests and Levites. Had special experience. Special knowledge. They had a unique relationship.

With God. That they could. They could be the go-betweens. Between God. And the rest of the people. Who didn't have that special access. And special experience. That idea. That. This two-tiered.

People of God. You know what? That's something. That is common. Across so many religions. That sort of creeps into. Christian traditions too. This idea that. Certain people in the church.

[26 : 42] Have special access. Special knowledge. That others don't have. You know. There are Christian traditions. Where. You know.

Maybe someone is a priest. Who's got special access to God. That other Christians don't have. Or maybe someone has received. A second blessing of the Holy Spirit. Now has special access. And special experience to God.

That others don't have. These. Two tiers. That divide the church. In the new covenant.

You are all. Priests. You are a kingdom of priests. You have all been baptized. In the Holy Spirit. You have him.

And all that he has for you. Already. You all. Know the Lord. From the least of you. To the greatest. You know him.

[27 : 38] That's why Jesus. And his apostles. They could say with confidence. That his people. Don't need the priests. As a go-between anymore. They have the Holy Spirit. Who dwells within them.

Who teaches them wisdom. Directly. That's why Paul. This occurs several times. In the New Testament. I'll just show you one. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. Paul writes. Now concerning brotherly love.

You have no need for anyone. To write to you. For you yourselves. Have been taught by God. To love one another. You yourselves. Have been taught by God. To love one another.

We're beginning to see here. That since everyone. Has received the one Holy Spirit. This first blessing. Spills over into a second blessing. The second blessing is this.

Everyone is empowered. To live by the Spirit. From the moment. You first become a believer. You are empowered. To live by the Spirit. Everyone is empowered. To live by the Spirit.

[28 : 36] We all know God. We are all taught by God. The Holy Spirit. In the new covenant. And out of this new relationship. With God. You and I are empowered.

To overcome sin. We are free to obey. Not grudgingly. Out of a sense of duty. Not just.

Just trying to gut out obedience. And trying to be the best we can. We are free to obey. Because the Spirit. Is at work within us. He is at work. He is transforming.

Our desires. Down at the very deepest. Level. Teaching us to love. What is good. Teaching us to hate. What is evil. The Spirit. Is teaching us. How to depend on him.

And his strength. Instead of depending on ourselves. The corrupted weakness. Of our own flesh. Here is how Paul puts it. In Galatians chapter 5. Walk by the Spirit.

[29 : 28] And you will not gratify. The desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh. Are against the Spirit. And the desires of the Spirit. Are against the flesh. For these are opposed. To each other.

To keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit. You are not under the law. I have seen this in counseling. That whole idea of trying to teach people.

To follow God. Who don't have hearts to understand. Eyes to see. Ears to hear. Oh it is brutal. You can just sit in counseling. For weeks. And weeks. And weeks. And for months. And they are just not getting it. And not getting it.

And you are just making barely incremental progress. And then. There is just that moment. When the Holy Spirit steps in. And in the space of a single week. He does what I could never do in 10 years. And.

The person I am counseling. Just starts doing the right thing. It is like. The difference between. Pushing. At an empty car. That has no gas in the tank. And you are pushing it uphill.

[30 : 29] By your own strength. And all of a sudden. The tanks filled with gas. The car takes off up the hill. On it is own. It is a beautiful. Beautiful moment. And everyone who has received. That one Holy Spirit. Everyone is empowered.

To live by the Spirit. And the third blessing. Is that everyone is empowered. To serve by the Spirit. Everyone is empowered. To serve by the Spirit. There is not this distinction. Between there is some people.

In the church of God. Who can serve. And other people who just can't. If they are you know. They just fill the pews. You know. No. All of you can serve. All of you have this power. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.

Now. There are varieties of gifts. But. The same Spirit. And there are varieties of service. But the same Lord. And there are varieties of activities.

But it is the same God. Who empowers them all. In everyone. To each. Is given. The manifestation of the Spirit. For the common good. That means you. You.

[31 : 26] You. You. You. You. You. You. You. You. All of you. You. Have been given. The manifestation of the Spirit. For the common good. For the church. 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 or Greeks. Slave or free. And all were made to drink. Of one Spirit. Everybody in the church. Has been baptized. In the Spirit.

Into one body. Made to drink of the one Spirit. When we became believers. I could go on. And on. And on. With this. So much. In Scripture. About this. We. I could just spend the next hour.

Quoting Scripture. After Scripture. After Scripture. From the Old. And the New Testament. All the prophets. All the promises. Coming true. In Christ. The Bible. Has so much to say. About how.

[32 : 20] In the New Covenant. Everyone has received. The one Holy Spirit. Everyone is empowered. To live by the Spirit. Everyone is empowered. To serve by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit. Teaches us.

To know the Lord. Empowers us. To overcome sin. Empowers us. To serve one another. Faithfully. And you do this. Not by gutting out. Obedience. Through your own willpower.

Because you're just. I'm just. You know. I can just. Do it on my own. I can just. Be a good person. You can't. Stick in a church.

For very long. And be a good person. Gutting it out. And not causing. A lot of problems. Churches are destroyed.

By people. Trying to gut out. Obedience. And trying to be a good person. Without the power. Of the Holy Spirit. Oh. That God would deliver us. From that self-sufficiency.

[33 : 15] Self-reliance. Of the flesh. I've had to ask. A lot of forgiveness. Over the last couple months. As I've realized that. As one of your pastors.

I've been trying to do that. For so long. And I'd say to the Lord. I don't even want to be a pastor anymore. If I have to rely. On my own strength. My own flesh. My own abilities.

Just being. Good enough. Being sufficient. And adequate enough. I don't have what it takes. If I don't have the Spirit of God. I've got nothing for you. And if you don't have the Spirit of God.

You've got nothing for any one of us. And our church will fall apart. You. Need. To see. That is the Spirit.

Who empowers us. To obey. To serve. To live. To serve. Seek.

[34 : 22] And embrace. The work of the Holy Spirit. In your life. You are not under the law. As in the old covenant. You are led by the Spirit. In the new covenant. So how do we respond to this? If

you aren't under the laws.

In the old covenant. If you are led by the Spirit. In the new covenant. Keep in step with the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. That's a direct quote from Galatians chapter 5.

Where Paul says. Walk by the Spirit. Be led by the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. In Ephesians. We are going to later see. He says. Be filled with the Spirit. These are all describing the same thing. What does it mean? Well we are going to talk about that. A little bit more next week. Because we are going to go back. To the book of Ephesians. And we are going to see. Paul praying. That his people. Would be transformed.

By the Spirit of God. I am going to ask a few simple questions. Right now. Though. First.

[35 : 23] Have you ever asked for the Holy Spirit? Have you ever asked for the Holy Spirit? You first keep in step with the Spirit. By asking for the Holy Spirit. You can ask to be filled with the Spirit. Paul is going to pray for that.

In Ephesians. To. That his people would be empowered. And enlightened. By the Holy Spirit. So that they can obey God. And hold fast to him. This is one of those prayer requests.

That. You know what? God is 100% guaranteed. To answer. Yes. To. He will answer yes. And if you don't believe me. Look at what Jesus says.

In Luke chapter 11. And I tell you. Ask. And it will be given to you. Seek. And you will find. Knock. And it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks. Receives. And the one who seeks. Finds. And to the one who knocks. It will be opened. What father among you. If his son asked for a fish.

[36 : 19] Will instead of a fish. Give him a serpent. Or if he asked for an egg. Will give him a scorpion. If you then. Who are evil. Love that comment. If you then.

Who are evil. Know how to give good gifts. To your children. How much more. Will the heavenly father. Give the holy spirit. To those who ask him. If you are a child.

By God. Of God. By faith. You can ask. Continually ask. And he will give his spirit to you. He will fill you with his spirit. You will walk by the spirit. Keep in step with the spirit.

He will transform you. By the renewing of your mind. If you are not yet a child of God. Not yet a believer in Jesus Christ. You too can ask.

Ask. And you will receive the spirit. If you repent of your sins. And believe in Christ Jesus.

Expressing that faith through baptism. That's the second thing. You need to do.

[37 : 17] To keep in step with the spirit. So here's the second question. Have you repented? Believed? Been baptized? Have you repented? Believed? Been baptized? Peter.

Urges this. Urges a crowd of listeners about this. In Acts chapter 2. Peter said to them. Repent. And be baptized. Every one of you. In the name of Jesus Christ.

For the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you. And for your children. And for all who are far off. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

So those who received his word. Were baptized. Peter is telling you. If you repent. And believe. If you express that inward faith.

That inward heart circumcision. And faith. Through the outward act of baptism. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's the promise that he's referring to. The promise that you will be called a son of Abraham.

[38 : 15] And a child of God. If you repent and believe. You will receive the Spirit. If your children repent and believe. They will receive the Spirit. If anyone in the world. Those who are far off repent and believe. They will receive the Spirit.

It's available. To everyone. Not just the people of Israel. The Gentiles. Everyone. All over the world. Let me say also. I know.

Some of you in this room. You. I know you have repented and believed. But you haven't yet been baptized. You're like a soldier who's enlisted. But never put on a uniform. Maybe you're afraid to make that outward public commitment.

Maybe you're expecting. You know. Well. You know. I'll be baptized once I kind of reach a certain level of holiness in my faith. When you know. My faith reaches just sort of the second stage. That imaginary second tier of spiritual knowledge.

That's not how the new covenant works. There is no second tier of spiritual knowledge. There is no category of super Christians or real Christians. You're either real Christian or you're not.

[39 : 22] You're a child of God or you're not. And if you are a child of God. If you have repented and believed in Christ. You get baptized. That's just what you do. Please.

I don't know if that. Choosing not to be baptized. Is hindering the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Maybe. But stop avoiding this outward sign of your new covenant relationship with God.

God. When Peter preached. Those who receive his word were baptized. He meant it. Everyone who received that word and believed in it.

Those are the ones who were baptized. So have you asked for the Holy Spirit? Have you repented, believed, and been baptized? Finally, we see in Galatians chapter 6.

Paul writes these words. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.

[40 : 26] But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. If you have asked for the Holy Spirit. If you have repented and believed and been baptized. Well, is there more to do?

How else are we led by the Spirit? How do we walk by the Spirit? How do we keep in step with the Spirit? How are we filled with the Spirit? And the answer is that we sow to the Spirit. So that's the third question. Are you sowing to the Spirit?

Are you sowing to the Spirit? The author Tim Chester, in his book *You Can Change*. This book we were studying in the Journey class. Here's what he writes, and this is in your bulletin.

He says, We sow to the flesh whenever we do something that strengthens or provokes our sinful desires. You're planting a seed in that field. We sow to the Spirit whenever we strengthen our spirit-inspired desire for holiness.

You plant a seed in that field. And so, next week, as we return to the book of Ephesians, we're going to learn how we strengthen our spirit-inspired desire for holiness.

[41 : 33] How we plant these seeds of holiness. How the Holy Spirit causes them to grow. Isn't it a beautiful thing that you don't have to grow these seeds yourself?

So much of our, oh man, this is the way I've tried to live the Christian life so many times. I take that little seed and I try to like squeeze the shoot out of it and like make it grow. It doesn't work.

You can't make it grow. Isn't it beautiful that God grows the seed for you? That the Holy Spirit works within you?

You are not only saved from the penalty of sin. You have been saved from the power of sin. And you are being saved from the presence of sin. You are not under the law as in the old covenant. You are led by the Spirit in the new covenant. So keep in step with the Spirit. Father, oh God, we have been trying to live the way of the world.