

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Holy Spirit as Illuminator

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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As you know, a couple of weeks ago we had a conference here called Strange Fire. And it stirred up no small amount of reaction. We kicked the hornet's nest, I'm afraid, and the buzzing hasn't stopped. And I understand that. I mean, I knew that was going to happen to some degree because we were basically drawing lines where the evangelical world has been unwilling to do that. We were confronting what the evangelical world has been unwilling to confront. We were identifying heterodoxy and even heresy and all of those kinds of things. We were even talking to true believers and faithful folks about the alliances they have made and this...this really opened up a huge conversation. In fact, once the Strange Fire Conference came, my vacation ended because I was then thrust into having to kind of respond to all of this and figure out where do we go from here? And there are a number of things that we're thinking of, we've already started working on a second book, a sequel to *Strange Fire*. I think I'll call it *Clearing the Smoke from Strange Fire*. Something like that. But what that book will be designed to do is to take a look at all the criticisms and all of the things that people have said you got wrong. And this is not accurate. And you didn't do this right. And what about this and what about that?

And that's pretty typically the way you would expect that in any kind of situation like this. You sort of storm the beach, it's kind of a Normandy Invasion with the truth and you realize there's going to be some fighting coming back at you and you've got to be ready for that and then go to the Word of God and answer those issues. So we've been in the process of doing that through a myriad of means and blogs and lots of other people coming to our defense, as well as many who are vilifying me and attacking and that's okay, we expect that because people hold these...these views strongly because there's a lot at stake and for many people this is how they define their spirituality. It's a paradigm for them. And they don't know how to even imagine themselves as Christians outside that paradigm.

So there's a lot going on and I want you to know this first Sunday back, kind of where I am on that. So tonight Phil and I are going to have a conversation and Phil's going to ask me all the questions that he knows I know the answer to because the guy wants job security. I just want to remind him of it. So we're going to dialogue and you'll be able to get from me some personal responses to some of the criticism that's come cause I think you need to know that. And I know you weren't at the conference but many of you probably listened to it on line or you've gotten some in to the dialogue on the various web sites and things like that. So you may know.

But I want to talk personally about some of those issues and tell you how we would answer the criticisms that have come and I'm very, very grateful to say that I think what we did was right. I feel more strongly about than ever. Nothing has changed my conviction. And there's been waves of response, the first wave was pretty much an attaching, vilify MacArthur, attack him, kind of thing. And then it began...that began to kind of go away a little bit and then people began to face the fact that they had to grapple with this biblically and so some of that has come along. Then a second wave, once the book came out earlier this week, the book was available to everybody outside Grace Church only this week. And so it started some of the attacks again.

But I thought, just to kind of wrap up our whole Strange Fire experience, at least here on our campus for us on Sundays, we don't need to drag this out. It will be ongoing on line, it will be ongoing as we develop a book, it will be discussed, I'll be interacting with people on it. But from the standpoint of our church congregation, I just want to...I just want to give one message to you this morning, and I actually in the first service never got to the message that I prepared, and that was okay because I think the one I gave was better than the one I had prepared. Hopefully you'll never know that. But I just want you to know about one issue that I think is very important. There have been many, many criticisms on many, many levels. But the criticism that I think demands an answer and this is not self-serving in any way, I hope you'll understand when you hear me, I'm not trying to defend myself, I'm not trying to elevate myself or change how people feel about me. That really is not important. But the criticism that concerns me is this criticism that if we're not hearing the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit is not revealing Himself to us now, personally, presently, we are somehow cut off from the Movement of the Holy Spirit. We're somehow cut off from what they call the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit. People...people have said this about me. I read one gentleman who wrote, "I used to listen to John MacArthur, read his books, when I heard him say, "I can't say the Holy Spirit has ever spoken to me personally outside of Scripture to give me a divine message, I decided I could never listen to him again." So here's somebody who listened to me, but now that he knows that the Holy Spirit doesn't speak to me directly, he has no interest in listening to me at all because I'm sort of locked in some time warp, disconnected from the fresh wind of what the Holy Spirit is saying today.

Whether the Holy Spirit is coming upon people and causing them to speak gibberish which gives them some kind of a warm and fuzzy feeling, or whether He's coming communicating to them through visions or dreams or intuition, or trip to heaven, or some sort of prophecy, this Movement chases that and it assumes that if you're not in that communication with the Holy Spirit that somehow you're void of the Holy Spirit...void of the Holy Spirit. In fact, there was one guy who said that John MacArthur believes in the Father, Son and Holy Scripture, so that I have literally substituted the Bible for the Holy Spirit. And this has been something that's been said about me for years. People have said, you know, MacArthur has a good ministry, has an effective ministry, imagine what it would be if he had the Holy Spirit. That's been a kind of repeated criticism.

So that needs to be answered. Are we devoid of the Holy Spirit. Are...are...are we denying the Holy Spirit, are we cutting ourselves off from the work of the Holy Spirit, we who are so relentlessly and faithfully committed to Holy Scripture, have we somehow alienated ourselves from the voice of God through the Holy Spirit? That is a very important question to answer.

Now we all understand, and I think many people in the Charismatic Movement would agree, that there's no more Scripture being added to the Bible, because Revelation 22 says if you add anything to what's in the Bible, it will be added to you the plagues that are written in it. So 66 books, once for all delivered to the saints, we certainly affirm that. But we're not talking about that, we're talking about this idea, this notion although some of this revelation people are literally adding to the Scripture and making equal to Scripture and some are even saying it's superior to Scripture because it's new. For the most part, let's leave that alone and assume that people, sensible people, are saying no, this is not...this is not adding to Scripture but this is the personal revelation of the Holy Spirit for your life and my life that gives us His purpose for us and His will and direction and it can be constituted as divine revelation. If you're not getting it, you're really cut off from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. You need to be personally hearing the voice of God. Books have been written on this outside the Charismatic Movement for the last 25 years about how to hear the voice of God. You have a book that sold nine million copies called *Jesus is Calling*, this is a book by Sarah Young which basically is Jesus talking in the first person. You're listening to Jesus talk in the first person, she purports to be able to write down in the first person what Jesus is saying, and put it in a book, nine million people have bought that book to hear what Jesus is saying.

If you're not listening for the voice of Jesus, something is seriously wrong. I received a letter two days ago from a man who said to me, and he was a former pastor, well-known pastor who said, "His fear is that I have passed the point where I could ever be recovered, that I have gone so far in denying the work of the Holy Spirit, that I'm beyond recovery." He fears for my salvation.

So are we outside the ministry of the Holy Spirit because we don't affirm these things? Those who do affirm that the continual, revelation from the Holy Spirit will all admit that most of what is said to be from the Holy Spirit is not. They will all admit that, that this is fallible prophecy, or fallible revelation from the Holy Spirit. It can't all be trusted. One...one spokesman for the Movement says as much as 80 percent of it is bogus and how you know the twenty percent that is not is very difficult because there's no objective external criteria. So how do you know? They don't know. This is non-authoritative, non-binding, fallible word from heaven. That is to say we can't know for sure about any of it.

So here are these people milling around trying to hear the Holy Spirit who at the same time are acknowledging that most of what is ascribed to the Holy Spirit is not the Holy Spirit at all, a small portion of it is and they will admit that they don't really have any objective external criteria to know what is of the Holy Spirit, but it feels like the Holy Spirit... That's actually language they use.

So you hear people say, for example, we felt the presence of God. I've never felt the presence of God, I don't even know what that means. Haven't got a clue what that means. But if you induce people in lights and music and the right kind of emotional experience musically and then tell them they're feeling the presence of God, they'll believe they're feeling the presence of God. If you really felt the presence of God, you'd fall on your face and cry for mercy, like Isaiah did. Or you'd fall over like a dead man, like John did, or like the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration. So they're not feeling the presence of God. They're feeling the emotion stirred up by the manipulation of music and the environment.

So even they who want so much to hear the Holy Spirit talk to them, don't have any way to really know that He's doing that. On the other hand, they look at us and say, "You guys have...people like you have insulted the Holy Spirit and seriously cut yourself off from His power." If you're not audibly hearing the voice of God, if you're not getting visions and dreams that are some form of revelation, if you're not getting strong intuitions and impressions and impulses, and even prophecies, you're denying the work of the Holy Spirit and you are...you are Spiritless in a sense, you are cut off from the power source of the Holy Spirit.

Is that true? Is that true? Are they the ones that possess the power of the Spirit? Are they the ones who possess the fullness of the Spirit? Are they the ones that are genuinely experiencing the Holy Spirit through their impressions, feelings and experiences? Or not? That really matters. That's at the heart of the Movement. And are we the ones dishonoring the Holy Spirit? Are we the blasphemers? Are we the ones who with our singular devotion to Scripture have cut ourselves off from the real power and what the Holy Spirit is doing today?

Let me break it down into just a simple way to understand this. When you look to the Word that comes from heaven, two things to be concerned about. Is it actually the Word of God? Secondly, what does it mean? Is it actually the Word of God? What does it mean?

They would have us believe that this cacophony of ideas, impulses, feelings, dreams, visions, imaginations, impulses, intuitions, impressions, supposed trips to heaven, that all of this cacophony of experience is from the Holy Spirit. And they would have us believe also that the Holy Spirit is doing this with people who basically have bad theology. So the Holy Spirit in some strange way is giving these supernatural revelations to people who believe the wrong things about the Bible, as if to reinforce them? It's a very strange and ridiculous notion, by the way. And they would also admit that most of what they say is from the Holy Spirit is not, and that even what they think is from the Holy Spirit can't be verified cause it's personal, it was me, it came to me, He talked to me. So it can't even be verified that it was from the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, its meaning is subject to the interpretation of one person...one person, the person who received the revelation.

Paul understands the folly of that. The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians in his second letter says that he was caught up into the third heaven, he saw things too wonderful to talk about. And he said I'm not going to talk about them because it's not useful. This is a real experience. He doesn't know if it's in the body or out of the body, but he was transported by some miraculous means into the presence of God. He says it's not useful to talk about it. Why? Because it's not verifiable. It's not reproducible. It can't be analyzed. So I won't talk about it. It is not useful. It was what God did for me like the experience on the Damascus Road in the apostolic era, it had a point for me. But it has nothing to offer to anyone else cause even though it was a true revelation, and even though it was from God, it is not at all helpful. So I won't even talk about it, very different than the people who are not having real revelation but having imaginary revelation and are so very eager to talk about it.

Furthermore, it needs to be stated that if you are the single source of a divine revelation and the single interpreter of a divine revelation, then we have to have a pretty high degree of trust in you. And since you're not an Apostle or a writer of Scripture, you're asking to be classified with a very elite group of people who came and went a long time ago.

Now let me compare that to the Scripture. If I were to come in here on a Sunday morning, like today, and say, "You know, in the couple of months that I've been away, I just want you to know the Lord spoke to me, and this is what He told me to tell you..." and launch off on some personal prophecy that was given to me. And then I were to say, "Now let me tell you what this means, and the Lord showed me what it means..."

First of all, that would never happen so you can rest. That will never happen. But you would have every right to be suspicious. You would think he just turned in TBN and somebody was channeling some Charismatic, right? Cause that's how they talk. But if I were...but I would have to admit to you, now I can't prove this is from the Holy Spirit, and I cannot prove that this is a true interpretation. "I can't prove this is revelation and I can't prove that my understanding of it is illumination. But I'm just telling you, you've got to believe in me because I have the anointing. I'm not like you, I'm not like you, I've been elevated above you and you have to trust me." You'd have every reason not to trust me. You would have every reason not to touch me...you'd have every reason not to show up next week. But if I walk in here and say this to you, "I'm going to tell you this morning exactly what the Holy Spirit said, and I'm going to tell you what He meant by what He said, open your Bible."

Now when I point you to the Scripture, I know this is what the Holy Spirit said. And you know this is what the Holy Spirit said because the Holy Spirit moved on men to write it down, 2 Peter 1:21. It's God-breathed. So when I take you here, listen to this, you are never more in communion with the Holy Spirit than when you're hearing Him speak through His Word. And then when I say to you, "Let me tell you what this means." And how do I know what it means? Because the rest of Scripture comments on this and Scripture interprets itself, and so the first interpreter is the Holy Spirit Himself,

and then let me take you back through church history and show you how the Holy Spirit has illuminated faithful students of Scripture throughout the centuries since the New Testament time to come to a true and proper understanding of this which has been passed down through the church through all these centuries. Now you've got something you can put your life on.

Why? Because you have a true word and you have a historic interpretation. If you tell me the Holy Spirit tells you something and then tells you what it means, I can't bank my life on that. And you have no mechanism to know that and you cannot prove that it's any kind of divine reality at all. But when I point you to the Bible, I can say without equivocation, "This is the Word of God, every Word is pure, every Word is authored by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the interpretation that I will give you is not the novel interpretation of a corrupt deceiver, but this is the interpretation that the true church has always held. Now you've got something you can build your life on.

So-called new revelation can't be verified. And its interpretation is subject to the individual. If you go back through church history, just locate every place where so-called prophets showed up with new revelation and see what you get. You get disaster every time. The church is never helped, the church is never blessed, truth is never clarified, and advanced, when people start saying they're getting revelation from God. You can go back to the Zwickau prophets, bizarre revelations from God, heretical, you can go back to the Munster Rebellion, the prophets in Munster, Germany who said the Holy Spirit was speaking to them and they were heretics, they were murderous, one of them, one of their leaders said the Holy Spirit told them that polygamy was in, had 16 wives, he met another one, he wanted to be seventeen, she wouldn't comply so he chopped her head off under the authority of the Holy Spirit. You get Mormonism, you get Jehovah Witnesses, you get Christian Science, you get... wherever you see a revelation or prophets getting messages from God outside Scripture, it's always bad through the history of the church, the Irvineites(?), the Jasonites(?), and on and on it goes.

Wherever you find people faithfully engaged in the study of the Word of God, with sound, biblical interpretation, the church is enriched and advanced throughout its history. So because I'm devoted to Scripture, am I thus disconnected from the Holy Spirit? I would like to suggest the very opposite is true. I know I'm connected to the Holy Spirit. I'm connected to the Holy Spirit as the author of Scripture, and I'm connected to the Holy Spirit as the illuminator of Scripture. You are never more engaged personally with the Holy Spirit than when you are coming to understand the truth of Scripture. Whether it's in your own study, or whether it's in hearing a teacher, or reading a book, or listening to a message, this is profitable so that you can be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. That's why we study the Word of God. We have the promise that we can, first of all, understand it...we can understand. The natural man, 1 Corinthians 2:14, doesn't understand the things of God, right? They're foolishness to him, he doesn't comprehend them, he can't grasp them. The preaching of the cross which is essentially the gospel which is essentially the revelation of God is either foolishness or a stumbling block.

But on the other hand, the student of the Bible who is a believer, an obedient believer, and you need to have a pure life to be a faithful interpreter of Scripture. That's why Peter says, "Laying aside all evil, all deceit, all malice, then desire the pure milk of the Word that you may grow thereby," 1 Peter 2:1 and 2. But if you are redeemed, you have the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16, right? You have the mind of Christ, you can know the thoughts of Christ revealed in scripture, and if you're walking in obedience, you're going to be aided by the Holy Spirit in understanding the true meaning of Scripture. So again I say, the student of the Bible is communing with the Holy Spirit in the purest possible form.

These people who are running around from one traumatic emotional experience to another are not communing with the Holy Spirit. They may be communing with spirits, but not the Holy Spirit. The student of the Bible, the one preaching, the one hearing, the one studying is under the direct tutelage of the Holy Spirit Himself.

Now we read earlier in 2 John 4 that we are to walk in the truth, walking in the truth is critical. We are to avoid deceivers. We are to have to do with deceivers. We're not to let them in our house. We're not to bid them God speed, give them a greeting, wish them well." Because they're antichrists. We're the people of the truth and the truth is contained in the pages of holy Scripture. Thy Word is true, John 17:17. So in contrast to what we're accused of, we are the real people of the truth and consequently we're the people of the Holy Spirit.

I want to show you this in an illustration and this was just going to be a comment in the first service, but it turned into the whole thing, so that's what it will be now. Turn to 1 John 2--- 1 John 2. Now we know John is concerned about the truth, he mentioned the word "truth" five times at the beginning of 2 John, he mentions the word truth five times at the beginning of 3 John. And truth is the foundation of everything. So we're going to take a look at what John tells us here that is so important to this matter of walking in the truth. If you go back to chapter 2 of 1 John, verse 3, "By this we know we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments. Verse 5, "Whoever keeps His Word, I him the love of God has truly been perfected, by this we know that we are in Him." How do you know you're a believer? You know you're a believer because you keep His commandments.

What does that assume? That assumes that you understand them. Verse 6, "The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked." So walking a biblical lifestyle, walk is life, lifestyle, walking in truth, walking in obedience, walking in love, conducting our lives that way. The assumption then, if you're a believer is that you obey the Word of God which assumes that you can understand it, that it's not hidden, it's not mysterious, it's not obscure. You can't even live your Christian life unless you walk in the truth, that's what it is to be a Christian, you can't walk it if you don't understand it. So an orthodox understanding leads to an orthopraxy, orthodox leads to orthopraxy, an orthodox understanding leads to an orthodox practice of life. That's what it is to be a Christian. You know the Bible, you understand the Bible, you believe the Bible, you walk in its truths

because they're accessible to you, they're understandable to you.

Now in contrast to that, drop down to verse 18. "Children, it is the last hour," and that means it's the apostolic term, John's term, for the time of Messiah, when Messiah came the last hour began, it is the last time cause the last times were initiated by the coming of Messiah. It's been going on for two thousand years, but it's still the last epoch of history leading up to the return of Christ. It's the last hour and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, there is an ultimate and final Antichrist coming, even now during this period of time, many Antichrists have appeared, many Antichrists and from this we know that it is the last hour. When Christ appears, you can have Antichrists. Christ comes, establishing the last hour and the Antichrists begin to appear. What are Antichrists? Antichrists are deceivers, they are false teachers. They distort the truth. And, for sure, they distort the truth not only by misinterpreting the Bible, but by bringing in new revelation to study the history of the cults and the false religions and you will find that inevitably they distort the truth by adding to the Bible their own revelations, their own visions, dreams from heaven, they claim.

So Antichrists are going to be everywhere, against Christ, against Him, not holding to the teaching of Christ, as you read in 2 John, deviating from the gospel, that's their mark. They are Antichrists. They don't declare themselves to be Antichrists, they are, however, in fact, Antichrists. And very often, as I said, they have as a component of this Antichrist system, new revelation, prophecy, supposed words from heaven.

So how do we survive in the last hour when there's this massive influx of Antichrist deceivers, and they're going to be around, they're going to be banging on the door wanting to come in because John warns the lady, "Don't let them in your house." They're going to be as near as near can get. They're going to infiltrate the churches, Acts 20 Paul says they're going to rise up from among you and they're going to come in from the outside. You're going to be literally in a field of these Antichrists, these false teachers and deceivers.

Now what are we to do? We're to walk in the truth. We're to walk in the truth. In the middle of this, we don't flinch, we don't turn aside, we walk in the truth. How is that possible? How is that possible? Well, you say, somebody might say, "Well, you need a word from the Holy Spirit, you need the fresh wind of the Holy Spirit, you need...you need a revelation to keep the Spirit new and fresh in your life to be able to withstand this."

Not at all. I want you to drop down to verses 20 and following, and particularly in verse 20. This...this is such a simple and yet clarifying statement. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know." I can't tell you even this morning in the time that I have the vast reality that's contained in that statement. The end, let's start there..."You all know...You all know." You all know everything you need to know to walk in the truth, in spite of the Antichrist that are ubiquitous, you all know. How is it that you all know? You have an anointing from the Holy One and you all know...you all know? These

are young believers that John's writing to. These are Christians who are first generation. You all know. I want you to look at the word "anointing" and let me see if I can't unfold a little bit of this for you.

The word "anointing" means oil, or ointment, *chrisma*, not *charisma*, but *chrisma* and it was a symbol of something being placed on a person. If you were anointed, that was like a blessing being placed on you. Kings were anointed, priests were anointed, and this was sort of the symbol of divine blessing placed on you. False teachers coopted this term. Ancient false teachers who threatened John's spiritual flock employed certain terms to convince people that they needed to follow them. They talked about knowledge. They loved the word "knowledge" that they had the elevated knowledge, they had the secret knowledge, they had the esoteric knowledge, they had the transcendent knowledge. They had the elevated knowledge. They had the wisdom because they had the anointing. And they used that as a label by which to separate themselves from everybody else and elevate themselves as the ones who were connected to God. They arrogantly sold themselves as possessors of an elevated anointing from God, an esoteric transcendent knowledge, an access to divine mysteries and to heavenly wisdom. They had been specially favored with this rare and exalted anointing, granting them super knowledge that didn't belong to the hoi polio. This is the birthplace of Gnosticism, a philosophy that developed up right after this era in ancient history, the people with the secret knowledge. And they started writing all kinds of things, that's where the Gnostic gospels come from, because they claimed the secret knowledge. And all the Gnostic gospels are right from hell, they're all packs of lies. But this was the secret knowledge, the elevated knowledge.

So in the early church, you had these false teachers coming in, these Antichrists trying to seduce John's congregation and other congregations by saying we have the anointing. I mean, you just hear that word and ask yourself how many times you've heard an evangelist on TBN call that word out as what he possesses? I have the anointing. I have the anointing and that's why I can knock people over, that's why I can heal people, and that's why I know things, and that's why God talks to me and He doesn't talk to you, that's why the Holy Spirit reveals things to me, that's why I see visions that you don't see. It's a staple among Charismatic fakes. It's a staple term to try to elevate themselves above everybody else. They have the anointing. They have the anointing, the secret knowledge.

Now let me tell you something. There are even good preachers and there have been through history, good preachers, men that I respect and revered now with the Lord and alive, who think this exists, or something of it exists and who chase it. Like I want the anointing. I want the anointing. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, one of my spiritual heroes, actually said that he thought in his whole life he only preached real...really only preached three sermons, three true sermons under the anointing. I don't even know what he's talking about. And he didn't either because everything he ever preached was powerful and God blessed. He was chasing some...some transcendent kind of experience. There are others who pursue that as if he is up there in the air somewhere and we can latch on to that and it takes us to a higher plain.

I have good news for them and for you, look at verse 20. "You have an anointing." You...who is John writing to?...he's writing to his congregation. I'm here to tell you you all have the anointing. You have the anointing.

If you go down to verse 27, "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you." You have the anointing and it's in you and consequently, verse 27 says, you have no need for anyone to teach you. That is to say you don't need some elevated guy with knowledge, secret knowledge, secret information. Or somebody with some esoteric transcendent kind of gift. You have the anointing. You all have it.

Can I make it practical? I do not have any special ability in the interpretation of Scripture that you don't have. None. You may not be able to preach, cause preaching is a little bit rare, not everybody does this or wants to. So the gift to communicate it is a gift that God has given. But I have no insight into the significance of Scripture that you don't have. And if you applied yourself to the Scripture in the same way with the same diligence that I do, you would come up with exactly the same material. You might not be able to express it like I do, but I don't have anything you don't have. I don't seek anything. I don't want anything more. I'm not pursuing something. We all have the same anointing, all of us...all of us. Nobody is left out. We are the anointed. I want to announce to the Charismatic world that the anointing has fallen on all believers at the moment of their salvation...the moment of their salvation.(applause) We're not waiting for anything and we're not seeking anything. And Oh by the way, where did it come from? Go back to verse 20. You have an anointing from the Holy One. You have an anointing from the Holy One.

That you didn't earn it, you didn't work yourself up to getting it, you didn't prove worthy, it's an anointing from the Holy One. You say, "Well, who's the Holy One?" Well you ought to know that, even the demons know that. You say, "How do you know the demons know that?" Listen to Luke 4. "Jesus went into Capernaum, a city of Galilee, teaching on the Sabbath. They were amazed at His teaching. His message was with authority in the synagogue. There was a man possessed by a spirit of an unclean demon and he screamed with a loud voice, 'What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? You come to destroy us. I know who you are, you are the Holy One of God.'"

Who's the Holy One? Jesus and He gave you the anointing. He gave you the anointing. What is this anointing? Who is this anointing?

Listen to what Paul says, 2 Corinthians 1. "Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God who sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts."

Who anointed us? Christ. What is the anointing? It's the Spirit. Christ said He can't come till I go and send Him. Christ went back to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit. That's the anointing. No such thing as a

Christian without the Holy Spirit, right? “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he’s none of His,” Romans 8:9. “You all have the Holy Spirit, you all have the author of the Bible living inside of you, you all have the illuminator of the Bible living inside of you. You have the one who makes the scripture alive, who makes the Scripture understandable.”

First Corinthians 2 verses 6 to 16 explains all of that, how the Spirit searches the deep things of God and discloses them to us. And again let me say this. It may surprise you so I want you to remember it. “I do not have any spiritual, dynamic, going-on in me that is any different than every other believer in the world possesses the Scripture. If you work at it diligently the way any other believer works at it, you will come to the same conclusions. The Holy Spirit is given us by the Holy One. Again in Acts 3:14, Jesus is called the Holy One and the Righteous One. All believers have received a divine anointing. That anointing provides a true understanding of God, a true understanding of Christ, a true understanding of the gospel. And that anointing is a person. That anointing is the Holy Spirit Himself who takes up residence in the believer, becomes the believer’s resident teacher. There is no greater anointing in one believer than another. There is not more of the Holy Spirit or less of the Holy Spirit any more than there’s more of Christ or less of Christ.

And verse 27 says, “He abides in you, He lives in you and that’s why you have no need for anyone to teach you.” Any of these supposed elevated teachers, obviously there re teachers who are also full of the Holy Spirit who are our pastors and shepherds and teachers, and we benefit from them. That’s not what he’s referring to. He’s referring to some human person who has some elevated anointing. His anointing teaches you about all things. And it’s always true and never a lie. I don’t want to live in a world of fallible prophecy, do you? I don’t want to live in a world where people are saying, “The Holy Spirit spoke to me, I think. I think He said this, and I think that’s what it means.” I don’t want to live in that world. I want to live in the world that says this is what the Lord has said and this is what He meant. That’s the world we live in.

We don’t need supposed elevated teachers, we all have the anointing. And because of that, we are taught and we are taught the truth by the One who abides in us who abide in Christ.

So let me respond by saying this. Who really is in communion with the Holy Spirit? People chasing their intuitions, who have no idea what the source is? People who interpret things personally? I don’t think so. I think you’re in communion with the Holy Spirit at the most intimate level. You can’t be in a more profound communion with the Holy Spirit than when you’re pouring over His revelation and He is speaking to you and at the same time revealing the meaning of what this Scripture says.

Now it’s not magic. Look, did God save you, right? You believe in sovereign salvation, God saved you, right? Not apart from repentance and faith. Sanctification, is that your work? Do you sanctify yourself or is that the work of God? That’s the work of God but not apart from obedience. And illumination and understanding of the Scripture is the work of God but not apart from diligent study.

There's always a means by which God does His sovereign work by which the Holy Spirit does His work. The Spirit regenerates, the Spirit sanctifies, and the Spirit illuminates. He's the anointing who is in us, abiding in us, leading us to an understanding of Scripture so that we can know the truth, walk in the truth, obey the truth and demonstrate the reality of our redemption. And we're committed to that truth.

Look at verse 24. "As for you," John says, "let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning." Huh...what an interesting statement. Let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. You don't need new revelation. You don't need anything added. Just be faithful to what you heard. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you will abide in the Son and in the Father. Stick with what you have heard from the beginning.

It's really an amazing...it's an amazing thing how...how much these folks have gotten away with in terms of accusing us of being void of the Spirit, who whenever we open the Bible are listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit for real and who upon diligent study of the Bible are being illuminated by the Holy Spirit Himself as He helps us to come to an understanding of its meaning. You are never more in communion with the person of the Holy Spirit, personally and intimately, than when you're hearing the truth of Scripture.

So that is why in Psalm 119 you have what you have. Let's go back to Psalm 119. Just a perspective on it in the last couple of minutes here. Psalm 119 is an ode to Scripture, written by David, built around the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. But all 176 verses do two things. They extol the Scripture and they plead for understanding. This is where we live. This is where we live. It's all about the Word of God, the statutes, commandments, ordinances, precepts, all those different words refer to Scripture. They're used all through this and they're synonyms for the divine revelation of God inscripturated. And so here you have this model of a believer committed to the Word of God. Psalm 119 is an all-consuming commitment of a lover of God to his love of Scripture. "Oh how I love Your Law," He says, "It's my delight...my delight."

But I want you to notice there's two things that go on here. One, and we won't look at that, one is the affirmation of what Scripture is. The affirmation of its truth and its divine reality, divine source, divine origin. But parallel to that are constant cries for understanding where the Psalmist does what every believer does, help me understand. The first dramatic one you see is in verse 18, "Having already affirmed the Word of God, affirmed the Word of God for 17 verses, he then says, 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from Your Law.'" Open my eyes, you're asking for illumination, for the Spirit of God to lead you to that understanding. Open my eyes.

In verse 26, "I have told of my ways and You have answered me, teach me Your statutes." Verse 27, "Make me understand the ways of Your precepts." Verse 33, "Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes." Verse 34, "Give me understanding that I may observe Your Law and keep it with all my

heart.”

Jumping a little bit further for the sake of time, you can go over to verse 73, “Give me understanding that I may learn Your commandments.” Maybe verse 108, “Teach me Your ordinances,” or verse 125, “Give me understanding that I may know Your testimonies.” Verse 169, “Let my cry come before You, O Lord.” What’s your cry? “Give me understanding according to Your Word.” You know, in all the preparation that I ever do to preach and teach, I have never said, “God, give me an anointing. God, do some supernatural sort of miraculous, elevated thing to me.” I’ve never prayed that. What I pray every time is, “Give me understanding.” And if you’re a preacher, this is a desperate cry. “Give me understanding.” That’s...that’s where we live in commune with the Holy Spirit, in affirming that this is His Word and crying out for understanding that we may grasp it. On the road to Emmaus, remember, when Jesus explained to them the meaning, the understanding, what did those disciples say? “Did not our hearts...what?...burn within us?” The fellowship of the burning heart. The joy that comes when you understand the meaning.

We are in communion with the Holy Spirit. We’ve been in communion with Him this morning. You are when you open the Word of God and you study it and you have the same anointing that I have, I have no more anointing, no higher anointing, no elevated anointing, I am exactly where you are. When I sit down in my chair and open my Bible, I have all the same things working for me that you do in terms of I have the revelation of God written by the Holy Spirit in my hand and I have the teacher in me and I cry for understanding.

You know, that’s what the Scripture says. You want wisdom? How bad do you want it? Remember Proverbs? How...are you willing to cry. Are you willing to dig deep? Are you willing to unearth things? Calvin referred to giddy men who were not so much under the influence of error as madness. Calvin called an interest in going beyond Scripture as an infatuation with the devil. Luther said of people who pursue these things, they were like swarms, bees flying around looking for a place to land. But Spurgeon tops everybody. Spurgeon said, “Take care never to impute your vain imaginings of fancy to the Holy Spirit.” I’ve seen the Spirit of God shamefully dishonored by persons. I hope they were insane. He says that because it’s better to be insane and irresponsible than to be sane and blasphemous. Then he says, “Every week for years I have been pestered by the revelations of hypocrites or maniacs, semi-lunatics coming with stupid messages. Clear enough. Never dream that events are revealed to you by heaven or you may come to be like those idiots who dare to impute their blatant follies to the Holy Spirit. If you feel your tongue itched to talk nonsense, trace it to the devil, not the Spirit of God. No longer insult the Holy Spirit by saying...or by laying your nonsense at His door.” I would never say those things, of course, pretty strong. He must have just gotten a ridiculous prophecy from somebody before he went into the pulpit and it was just—he couldn’t hold it back.

It's really a sad thing to chase that kind of stuff because the backside of that is you've just depreciated the true work of the Holy Spirit and the real communion of the Holy Spirit in and through His Word. That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit. It means let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.

Everything that's ever happened for good through my life or your life is the work of the Holy Spirit. But certainly you are in personal, private, intimate communion with Him when you're in His Word.

Father, we thank You that You have allowed us, this morning, to come together and to fellowship, first of all, and then to worship and to pray together and hear Your Word and think about these things. It's really a painful experience to realize how many people are caught up in this chasing what they think is the Holy Spirit, while all the time somewhere there's a Bible in which You live and move and have Your being. That's where communion with the Holy Spirit really takes place. Blessed Holy Spirit, thank You for giving us the Word. and thank You for coming to dwell within us as a gift of the Son and the Father that we might not only know it is the truth, but know what it means so we can walk in it. We're so thankful. May we love Your Word like the Psalmist and love that communion with You.

Father, we pray that You'll do Your work in every heart and accomplish Your purpose for Your glory in Christ's name. Amen.

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