



CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613
(319) 277-0924

INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

Aligning Our Lives With the Holy Spirit

Luke 24:45-49

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

And we've been talking about how you and I can tap into the power and work and guidance of the Holy Spirit. And we've been saying, not directly this way, but we've been saying this: to know more of the resurrection or spirit empowered life, you and I must align ourselves with what the spirit is doing here on the earth. We pray this when we pray the Lord's Prayer, not my will be done, but your will be done. We're asking God to bend our will towards his will. And as we do that, the Bible says we experience more of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We have been saying that this is an art, that people learn how to get in the flow of the spirit in their lives. We've contrasted it to the idea of sailing with sailboats in all of our slides, where we get into working with the flow of the wind to empower us. I don't know if you've ever tried sailing before, but it's not something you pick up well on the first day that you begin learning this craft. My father bought a little sailboat when we were younger, a little single man sailboat, and I went out on the lake in southwest Iowa near us. And I attempted to sail to catch the power of the wind to move me along. And I can tell you, I ended the day with lots of bruises on my shoulders and even some bumps on my heads as that sail shifted back and forth because I didn't know quite how to angle things to catch the wind.

Any of you have ever sailed? Maybe you've experienced this. It's an art. It's a craft to learn how to be empowered by the wind. So we've been encouraging all of us to slow down wherever we're at in our lives, take assessment of what the spirit is doing, how the spirit works as he gives us revelation, to surround ourselves with the things that God has said about how His Spirit is working.

To get scientific for a moment, I want to mention the idea of electromagnetic induction. Some of you will know what that is. Some of you won't. Electromagnetic induction is the idea that there's a magnetic field around a power line. All these power lines, when they're infused with power, have an

electromagnetic field that's generated around them. And this is what happens if you bring another line that's not infused parallel with those lines. You get electrostatic coupling, big words. But what happens is as a deadline gets closer to a live line, if it's parallel to it, some of the voltage from the power line starts to come over in that field and infuse the deadline.

And what we're saying, God created the physical world and the spirit world. And what we're saying in this series is that if we will align ourselves with the work and power of the Holy Spirit in our world, we will start to experience sort of that spiritual electromagnetic induction and the work of the spirit empowering us in life.

He certainly doesn't empower us to do the things of the flesh, the Bible says, but he is working to bring the things of the spirit into your life and into my life. And we've been talking about last week some of the major overarching things that the Spirit's doing in the world. And the first one would be opening people's eyes to the revelation of the Scripture given to us in Christ, who is the truth, and giving us an understanding of why the world's here, why we were created, what it's all about, where we're headed. He's trying to birth in our hearts and minds a biblical view of the world based on the revelation of the Bible.

And that includes an understanding we've already talked about here this morning, that all of us, the revelation that we're sinful, we miss the mark of God's intent. We've fallen short of God's standards. These two are together. He's convincing the world of sinfulness before a holy God, and that we fall short of his righteousness. We understand sinfulness not when we compare ourselves against each other, but when we compare ourselves against the righteousness and the holiness of God. And then we see we all fall short, and we're separated from God because of our sinfulness.

And the Holy Spirit is convicting the world of sinfulness and this grand, righteous standard so that individuals in the world might come to that point where they cry out for salvation. They ask for help outside themselves and say, God, I need help. I don't know what to do with my sinfulness. I see I am not good compared to you. And then the revelation of the message of Jesus, the mystery hidden through the ages, is that God sent His Son to do for us what we couldn't do, pay the penalty for our sin, and then we'll celebrate it here in a little bit, forgive our sins through his shed blood, and adopt us into his family through the righteousness that we get through Jesus.

And in doing this, he's helping people be prepared for all eternity for the judgment to come. Broad things the Holy Spirit is doing now. Once a person has opened their heart to the gift of Jesus, been forgiven and cleansed, then the holy spirits inside of them. And now this deeper work begins in a person, and we see an. And I believe the Bible teaches this, that God is inviting us now into a personal walk with him. It moves from the idea of a religious sort of institutional idea of religion to a very personal relationship that God's children have with him.

And in that sense, the Holy Spirit is inviting us into a deeper walk with him by cultivating in us a more authentic prayer life, to walk with him and talk with him as we would with a person. The Holy Spirit is a person, and the language that the Holy Spirit speaks and how we speak to the Holy Spirit, it doesn't matter our tongue. He knows all the languages of the world. We speak to the spirit from our soul and our spirit through prayer, talking with an unseen God. And the Holy Spirit is working to help you and I walk

with him in this harmonious, ongoing communication that we have with him called prayer. It's our way of personally connecting with God.

It's God's will that you and I have a deep, abiding relationship with him in a community of faith and as individuals. Young Timothy was being mentored by the great Saint Paul. And in Paul's first letter to Timothy encouraging him in his faith life, he said this: I urge you then, first of all, first and foremost. Paul knew this is what the spirit does with young believers, draws them into a life of prayer. I urge you first of all, petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving be made for all people. He was training Timothy to be a spiritual leader. Pray for all people, for those in authority, for kings, so that we could all live and continue to live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness, walking in harmony with God, experiencing his kingdom here on the earth.

Paul then capped it off, saying, this is good and pleases God our Savior. It is pleasing to God when we walk with him in prayer, not just to walk with him and experience the fruits of his life, but this is how we move into a victorious, spirit led resurrection life. When Paul was writing to the believers in Ephesus about the resistance that we experience in this world because of the circumstances we encounter in a fallen world and the spiritual forces of darkness that are here, he was describing how we need to gird ourselves up spiritually, put on the helmet of salvation, know we're saved, the shoes of peace, walk in the peace of God, the breastplate of righteousness that comes to us through Christ so he can be the lifter of our heads, so the shame is lifted out of us.

And he ended all of this in terms of living a victorious resurrection life. He said, pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. The spirit is drawing us into a life of prayer, walking with him and talking with him. And this can be a natural for people. If you weren't raised with this, if you weren't taught this, if this wasn't modeled for you, this is talking with an unseen being.

I remember when I started deepening my prayer life. I did it through writing things out, and I was writing all the things that were going on in my life, and it was just kind of a convoluted mess at different times. And then I would just sort of hold it up to the Lord and say, Lord, here's my prayer. Make sense of this. And then as I started to walk more closely with the God, my prayer life evolved into what I would say from the secret place of my spirit and my soul, just sort of an ongoing type of communication with God.

And of course, because I have an old nature, I don't always stay in touch with God, but I'm wanting to grow and I feel the spirit drawing, and he's doing that for all believers, wanting to draw them closer to him, to abide with him. So the fruits of the spirit can come out of our lives. If this is you and you don't have a very deep and prayer life or this feels uncomfortable to you, the spirit knows. And so we read in Romans chapter eight how much the spirit wants to help with this.

The spirit helps us, it says, in our weakness. We do not always know what we ought to pray, even how to pray. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans, and he searches our hearts. He knows what we need even before we ask. The Bible says the mind of the spirit, because the spirit then goes before the throne on our behalf and intercedes for us, and he wants us to learn to join him in this, to be in line with the will of God, to align ourselves with God's purposes, his plan in the world.

And so the Holy Spirit is consistently working in God's people here on the earth to draw us into a deeper, more authentic prayer life so that we might be birthed into new people, new creations by the spirit. That's what's happening. God is not here to sort of on an outward change behavior. He's working on the inside to change the very nature of who we are, to transform us into different kinds of beings, to give us a new life, a new heart.

He's trying to birth us in our faith into an. Peter says it this way, an unquenchable hope, like a supernatural optimism in life. A living hope. We sing about it here sometimes when we sing about a hope that springs eternal. No matter what our circumstances, no matter what our situation, God wants us to live with a great hope in him, in the midst of a world that's filled with tragedies and hurts and heartaches. God is working to create a new people that cannot be snuffed out in their hope and their faith and their optimism. Not because we're focusing on the things of this world, but in our inner being, we're coming to terms with the living God who's putting in us a living hope, a confident faith, a peace, a joy, and a love for the world around us that cannot be snuffed.

Peter said it this way to God's elect, writing to every one of God's children in the world, those who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God through the sanctifying work of His Spirit, as he calls us out, and then cleanses us in our lives by the work of His Spirit. All for the purpose that we might be obedient to Jesus here on the earth.

And then he gets so excited about what he's going to say here. He just says, praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, his kindness to us, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What is a living hope? What is a life that can't be snuffed? He's talking about this is a hope that can never perish, kept in heaven for us.

We have a new grandson named Brody. Brody is just coming alive. He is alive. But as he learns things, he's coming more and more alive. He's recently learned how to sit up. Now, he doesn't always have good balance. So you'll watch him just sometimes just tip over. Sometimes now he can climb up on the side of a couch and he'll stand there. He'll really think he's something. And then he'll get excited and just fall over.

Pretty soon he's going to try and move in a walking form, and the falls are going to be harder and more harsh. He's going to have more bruises because the momentum of the fall. But he's alive. He's going to keep getting up again. He's going to keep going until he learns how to walk and learns how to run. And that's the spirit inside of him, the fuel of life inside of him.

What is a living hope? It's a hope that cannot be snuffed out. Yes, our hopes can be dashed. Yes, we can lose our focus. But inside of us, God is birthing us into a hope and an optimism and a faith in him that cannot be kept down. Though a righteous man falls time and time again, he will rise again, the Bible says, because of the supernatural power of the spirit.

This is a hope that's displayed when Peter was walking on the water and he's coming out to Jesus, and he's living in a supernatural way. He's tasting, hoping in Jesus powerful work in his life. But as he's walking out there, he sees the wind and the waves and the circumstances, and his hopes are dashed. But

Jesus comes to him again and holds out his hand, and the hope is renewed because it's an unending fountain of hope coming from God.

I want to ask you a question today. When should you and I give up hope in our lives? The world is filled with complaining and whining, murmuring and attitudes that are not filled with hope. It's evidence of the lack of the Spirit of God. But when we come to God in prayer and we're deepened in our walks with him, and we get to know him through His word, it starts to overtake us. This is the God who created all that is. This is the God who shut the mouths of lions for Daniel. This is the God who came and spake, spoke to Moses through the burning bush, and then led the people and parted the Red sea for them. This is the God who stood in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fiery furnace, and carried them through.

When our eyes are focused on this God, when should we give up hope? Knowing that some 2000 years ago, this spirit that we're talking about came into Jesus dead body and breathed life back into it? When should you And I say he's not enough to handle what we're facing, to handle what's going on in the world, to handle the craziness around here? What is your level of confidence in God in the end being ultimately victorious over all evil, all darkness, all of the chaos in a broken world? The Bible says he wins, and he wants us to walk in the confidence and hope of that even when we approach the doorway of death, because it's a hope that we have forever and he's birthing us.

The spirit is birthing us in our walks with him into an unquenchable optimism. But then beyond that, he wants you and I to be messengers of that hope, that our whole lives will bear loving and courageous witness to this hope. It's the center of our gospel text.

Behold, Jesus said to his followers, I am sending the promise of my father upon you. Wait for the promise to come until you are clothed with power from on high. To do what? You will receive this power when the spirit comes upon you, to bear witness to the greatness and the goodness of God.

I don't know if you've ever experienced this. If you've experienced the power of God coming upon you when you are sharing of his majesty, of his goodness, of his. This, friends, is not just for preachers. This is for all people. All followers of Jesus. We are all ambassadors for Christ. And as we come to him and walk with him and start to be transformed on the inside, eventually our lives start to testify to this hope that we have, and eventually it's one of the Old Testament prophets says it starts to burn so much within us that we can't help but speaking of the goodness of God to the world around us.

The power comes for you and I to ultimately open our mouths and bear witness to the goodness of God. And when we align ourselves this way, friends, I believe he infuses it. But our nature resists this. And we'll talk more about that next week.

But to all people, Peter said, the followers of Christ writing to them all around the world, our hearts should be holy, undistracted by the things of this world. We should set apart Christ as our King, as our Lord, and we should always be ready to give a reason for our hope. And the Holy Spirit is working in all of his people to bring us where we will give testimony to the goodness of God and the generations coming behind us.

Friends, they need to know about his faithfulness, his kindness, his saving work. And may the Holy Spirit work this in us.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the opportunity to look into Your Word today and continually be made aware of what you're doing. I am mindful that we often stray from you. We have our own ways of going about things. But then your spirit gently leads us back to yourself, calls us closer to you, and then also continues to do the work of helping us put to death the deeds of the flesh, the works of our natural man, so that we can be fueled by the new nature within us, infused and empowered by your spirit. We pray it in Jesus name. Amen.