

# Faith in and for the Holy Spirit

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the critical role of the Holy Spirit in restoring the church to its original purpose and power.*

**Duration:** 1:14:35

**Scripture:** Acts 1:8, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 9:17, Acts 10:44-47

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Faith Revival"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the need for faith in and for the Holy Spirit, focusing on the New Testament model of revival as a restoration to God's original plan for the church. It challenges the audience to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit for transformation and revival, highlighting the importance of faith, sincerity, and expectancy in experiencing God's fullness and anointing.

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## Transcript

My name is Jim Symbola, I'm so happy to be here tonight, and excuse the way I look, when I saw you looking so comfortable, I feel so out of place. I spoke to my assistant just yesterday, and I said, I don't have to wear a suit there, do I? Both times I speak, she said, I said, it's rather casual, I remember that. She said, no, they said they're taping something, and you have to wear a suit.

And it shows how important communication is, because I'm the only one in a suit in all of North Carolina, I think, tonight. But it's a joy to be here, so forgive me. God is great, isn't he? Isn't our God great? Well, amen, let's put our hands together and just praise him for his greatness.

I want to talk to you tonight about having faith in and for the Holy Spirit. I'm not going to use the term revival much, because we all know what it is, we all long for it. A lot of us have read a lot of books about the different revival times.

But I want to couch all of my comments in the terms of the New Testament, which doesn't really speak so much to that word. But it talks about, really, revival being a restoration, revival, revitalization, revival, getting back to life the way it was at the beginning. The way God intended the church to be, which was a Spirit-filled, Holy Spirit-permeated, lead-governed church.

So, as people who live in the New Covenant era, we have to be people of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father. He's not here now, he's coming again.

When he says, two or three are gathered, I'll be there. He's speaking, of course, of his presence through the person of the Holy Spirit, who's called the Spirit of Christ. God's only representative on earth at this moment is the Holy Spirit.

Any time of, quote, revival is a time of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, where hopefully God is restoring the church, his people, back to what was in the beginning his original plan for the church. Not Baptist, or Pentecostal, or Methodist, or Lutheran, or those who are not Calvinist or Arminian, but the church as we find it in the New Testament. That's why he gave us the book of Acts, and the letters, the epistles, so that we wouldn't have our own vision and blueprint for his church.

It's his church, not my church. Many people visit me and say, what's your vision for the Brooklyn Tabernacle? I didn't know I was supposed to have one. I thought that's why God gave us the New Testament.

Oh, there's a specific application granted, and there are things God leads you to do based on your gifting and personality, and where he's placed you. But really, the reason he gave us 1st and 2nd Timothy, and Titus, and the book of Acts, is he's saying this is the way it's supposed to be. Not the way you grew up.

Not what you read in some book about the Welsh Revival or the Great Awakening. All of that is judged by the Word of God to get back to what God intended his church to be when he gave birth to it in the 2nd chapter of Acts. And although my remarks are going to be kind of a running commentary on some verses that we're going to read through, I never was more sure that I'm speaking about the right thing than I am tonight.

Although I was somewhat unsure as I was praying in my room, because, as you'll see, the comments that have preceded me, including the video, lead perfectly to what I want to talk to you about on the Holy Spirit, the book of Acts. If anybody thirsts, let him come to me, and out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. This he spoke of the Spirit, which had not been given yet, because Christ had not been glorified.

But to start off, I wanted to tell you about the wonderful power there is in the Holy Spirit to pray, get people to pray, and to change somebody. My wife and I started in the inner city more than 30 years ago, and we've seen some marvelous conversions. Our church, Carroll's Choir, almost 300 people, is made up of stories that would stagger your mind of how God has changed people.

But we have one that has just stood out and I learned about this person by a woman in the choir coming to me and entreating me to pray some years ago. She was a former Miss Mississippi who had finished second runner-up to the winner that year, and she came to New York, and she became a model, and then she came to our church, and although she had been raised in, quote, a church setting, she really had not committed her life to the Lord, or whatever her situation was. She wasn't walking close with the Lord and God began to work in Wanda, Getty was her name then, and she became Wanda Bruckner, and she married a children's school model, and she came to me one day and said, Pastor, there's an impossible situation except for God in a guy that I've been working with that I met through my job, impossible.

This guy is as far out as you can get. I said, What's his name? She just said, Danny. I said, Have I ever met him? She said, No.

If he doesn't meet God, he's going to die. She said, But I got some people fasting and praying with me because I'm believing God for Danny. This is the story.

Would you please watch? That says it's like oceans and oceans. That's what it is because it's all just a reminder to us as saints, as followers of Jesus Christ, to say, Listen, I know it's hard, but there is something so much, so much better than what we have. This is my story.

It's supposed to go past this. There's my pretty wife. I didn't think you'd see this.

Here we go. When someone is touching your face and touching your hair, you become somewhat conversationally intimate with that person almost instantly. And when I met him, he was still Mr. Fabulous.

I mean, he had on his black cashmere, and he was drinking his martini and living on top of the world. And at the time, I didn't realize that he was on the beginning of the slide downward. As a hairdresser and makeup artist for a lot of celebrities and fashion magazines, at one time, I was pulling in \$3,000 a day.

That was my rate for me being in the studio. But that kind of all fell apart. I began to overdose a lot on photo shoots.

And once you start overdosing, you cross a line. And when you cross that line, you become an insurance risk. And suddenly, I was more or less blackballed in the business.

Did you know who you were? Did you have any kind of sense of who you were? Even when I was at the height of this amazing career, I always felt like I didn't really belong. I always felt like empty and lonely and just like out of place. It was through relationship, through time, and through listening to some of the details of his life, and then through kind of seeing him sliding downward, that I knew, this is someone I have to share the gospel with.

I was willing to let go of my family and my friends and my career and everything that I knew, everything that I knew that was my life, that I wasn't willing to let go of the drugs. I was just praying. I was petitioning God specifically for Danny's salvation, knowing that everything else that was wrong would straighten out.

So that was the sole focus of my prayer for him. I just thought she was crazy, to be honest with you. I thought she was like a religious fanatic.

That was my impression. She's a beautiful girl, she's really sweet, but she's a religious fanatic. By the time our lives had become intertwined, he was losing weight at a very fast clip.

He was no longer wearing cashmere. I had the sense of, wow, if he doesn't find God, he's going to die. He's going to die.

Drugs had just taken me to a point where I, one day, my whole world had collapsed, and I took a garbage can and I pulled it between my legs and I began to cut up anything that had my name on it. I cut it up and I walked out of a 5,000 square foot loft. And pulled the door behind me and I just never went back.

And I began to live on the street. But why did you cut up your cars? Why did you destroy your identity? I think I just didn't want... I knew that I would die on the street, and I didn't want to be recognized. I didn't want my family to be called.

I mean, I was resigned to the fact that I was going to die on the street, and that was it. Did you do drugs out here? Oh, yeah, sure. Just sit around here and shoot dope.

I mean, in the mornings, you'd see just all syringes around here. I had an agent that I used to call from the streets every couple of days, collect from a pay phone. And every once in a while, she would say, let's go to Wanda, this model from Ford's been calling.

You know, she wants you to call her. So I would call Wanda because I knew I could make a few dollars. I didn't know that you could go out and do heroin for \$20.

I said, if you'll come to church, I'll give you the \$20 there because I'll meet you there at the church to give you the money. And somehow I would make him come in, and, you know, then he would hear the gospel, and then I'd give him his money, and he'd go on his way. I distinctly remember this, her saying to me, you know, Danny, the day you call on the name of the Lord, he's going to set you free.

She said, well, you know what, that'll never happen because I will never call on the name of the Lord. She said, well, I just want you to remember that, you know, when you're really backed up against the wall. When you call on the name of the Lord, he's going to set you free.

I had gone from this kind of celebrated, you know, person to this crazy man living on the streets of New York, talking to himself, laughing, cursing, like an animal living on the streets, you know, where one voice just started spewing filthy language in my head, just filthy words, like unconnected, disjointed, filthy words, while the other voice was accusing, and then another voice had joined in that was just laughing and laughing and laughing. I was starving to death. I had gotten down to 108 pounds.

I had Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C all at the same time. I got off the train, I remember that, and I remember kind of stumbling to this hospital that I saw. When I woke up, I was in a hospital bed, and I was laying like in my own vomit, and all the voices were screaming in my head.

But there was just one moment where I heard like a sweet voice that said, the day you call on the name of the Lord, He's going to set you free. And then right behind it, all the voices kept screaming in my head. And then again, I heard that the day you call on the name of the Lord, He's going to set you free, and that's when I began to just cry out to God, and you know, I didn't know how to pray.

I didn't know really what I was saying. I was just saying, you know, Jesus, help me, save me. You're my only hope, but I have no other hope, you know.

And that's the moment that I'll never forget, because it was like at that moment that the spirit of the living God just swept into that hospital room. And at that moment, all the voices in my head stopped, and like all the fears and all the phobias just dropped away from me, and I knew that I was in the presence of God. I knew that the spirit of God was in the room healing me and changing me.

I went directly from that hospital into a Christian rehab, and I just began to devour God's word, you know. It was like I was a hungry man just feasting on the word of God. The first chance that I got, I wrote Wanda that letter, and I told her kind of everything.

I opened this letter, and it's from Danny, and he began to tell me about how he had become a Christian. I came, and I stayed with her and her husband in their apartment, and we went to Brooklyn Tabernacle. Pastor Simbler said something from the pulpit.

I was like sitting in the second row and said, you know, you want to hear a great miracle? He goes, you think God parting the Red Sea was a big miracle? Well, Danny Velasco got saved, and he's sitting right

there. And the place went nuts. They all knew me as this 108-pound drug addict, you know, that was living in the street, and they had all been praying for me.

I'll be sitting in Brooklyn Tabernacle, and I look up and I see him sitting in the choir, and it just, it breaks me all over again. It just breaks me. I know that God is real, and that he heard me, and he was as close as the mention of his name, and whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Amen! Whoever calls on the name of the Lord. Let's put our hands together. Isn't that amazing? Come on, let's thank God for Danny Velasco.

We praise you, Lord. He was as close as the mention of his name. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

You know, I found that a lot of people who are serious about God have faith in the Holy Spirit, but what they're lacking, what we struggle with is faith for the Holy Spirit. Faith in the Holy Spirit, and his work is different than faith for the Holy Spirit. And we live in a day now where somebody's got to get a hold of God, and somebody's got to hold up a different paradigm, or a different model of how to do church, because just since I was here two years ago, I can't tell you all the stuff I've heard and seen as I've traveled around the country and around the world of the declension of real Christianity in churches today.

It's astounding. How many know what I'm talking about saying amen? I mean, it's scary. I'm not trying to be melodramatic.

This is heavy-duty stuff. Even groups and churches and denominations that have just given lip service to the Holy Spirit for decades or even a century, you know, just no openness to the Holy Spirit, no belief in what he can do. And as Samuel Chadwick, the great Methodist preacher said, Christianity is hopeless without the Holy Ghost.

It's hopeless. You can bang the Bible all you want and get people to look inside and be introspective. Without the wind of the Holy Spirit, the whole thing comes to nothing.

It comes to absolutely nothing but self-effort and depression. But forget those groups of people. Now people at least thump the Bible and preach the Bible.

They're throwing over the Bible now overboard like nothing. You cannot believe now in Baptist churches, Pentecostal churches, Nazarene churches, all kinds of churches, they're not even preaching the Word of God anymore. Not even using the Bible as a reference.

Are you living in the same country as I am? Do you know what I'm talking about? And these are becoming the models. Has all the spiritual weight of popcorn, has just nothing to it. And it's becoming the craze.

I talk with my friend Warren Wiersbe, who a lot of you know of or know him. He and I talk every week or a couple times a week. And I thank God he prays for me every single morning.

He has a picture of Carol and I and our family, an extended family, my children and grandchildren. And we talk and one day he just about broke down. He broke down on the phone.

He's not an emotional man. But he broke down and said, I'm struggling, brother, because this place where he was at with his wife, he said, they're into antinomianism. There's nothing wrong.

God's grace is so great that nothing's wrong. Nothing's wrong. Because God understands you're going through something.

You're sleeping with somebody. You're messing around with this or whatever. Don't worry.

What's a little pornography? God understands, you know, that nobody's perfect. I mean, it's really weird. Do I get any witness here from you? Is this what you're also sensing? I mean, I talk on the phone to some friends.

They have like Brother Wiersbe and Dave Wilkerson, some other friends, Tony Evans and some other guys. And we're just talking and going, wow. Rabbi Zacharias was just at our church two Sundays, on Palm Sunday he was there and spoke.

And we were chatting before the meeting and we were alarming each other. Things he saw and had heard and seen I had not and things I experienced, he said, no, that's not true. I mean, by the way, isn't he a wonderful gift to the body of Christ, Rabbi Zacharias? He was so good.

He preached on the love of God from Hosea. I never saw him get so emotional. The spirit of God was on him.

He preached the prophet who married a prostitute. Sometimes though he gets so deep, I mean, I have no idea what he's saying. I mean, one time I was in Moody Church and I heard him speak.

I lost him for at least ten minutes. I just kept going, amen, it sounds good to me. I have no idea what you're saying, but praise God.

I mean, wow. So brilliant. Oh my goodness.

What I'd like to do, talk about talking faith in and for the Holy Spirit is do nothing more than not do an exhaustive study, but read a whole bunch of verses in the book of Acts about the Holy Spirit. And could we ask God to help us to clear our minds of our biases? Because you know what I've learned? Look at me for a second. We'll start reading in Acts 2 in just a second.

Here's what I've learned. You know the first thing God said to Abraham on this walk of faith? The first thing he ever spoke to Abraham, the first words was leave your home. Leave your home, leave what you're used to and step out, I have something better for you.

You don't know where you're going? That's the first thing. And I have found spiritually God's been applying that to my life and I see that as such a hindrance for people. They want God to do something, but they're not leaving what they grew up in.

You know, God knew do a new thing, but I ain't changing. I'm not changing one of my views. I'm born and reared this way, praise God I'm going to die this way.

I mean, who would, in sports, in anything, in science, who thinks that way? Who would, who would 10 years after starting school still be going over ABC? And it's so hard for us to read the Bible without the lenses of what we're already committed to so God can't break in and show us anything new because uh-oh, we don't believe that. Well, what would it matter what you believe or I believe? Don't we want to know God's truth? Isn't there something better than we're experiencing? Must God have something better? I mean, can't we show somebody something better than just stories about what used to be? Aren't

people really longing for where's the beef? I talked to a minister not long ago of a well-known church in Texas and he said to me this remark and I don't totally agree with him but I saw his point. He said, you know a lot of these revival people and these holiness people, you know what I don't get about them? How come if they're so close to God they don't produce more converts? They look down at everyone else and say you're not praying, you're not digging, you're not searching.

So where's your beef, where's your fruit? Jesus said you'll know a tree by its fruit. Not by its doctrinal statement, by its fruit. He had a point.

That's why I'm driven back again and again to the book of Acts and to the epistles. Like Alexander White said he never liked to be more than a couple feet away from his New Testament. I like to keep that New Testament.

I tell you that blesses me so much. Keep it with me. Just reading, trying to catch the aroma and the rhythm of how it was in the beginning.

Not how what you grew up in or what I grew up in. Listen, I grew up in a church that preached Jesus but they wouldn't want a black person within 100 yards of the church. These were my ethnic ancestors.

Aunts and uncles, Eastern European, Polish, Ukrainian, that's what I am. So what am I supposed to do? Keep the tradition of my elders? Be a bigot and a racist the rest of my life? Talk about God and the Holy Ghost but just don't like people? A lot of people are like that. They're talking about God and they walk with God.

They just have no use for people. They're always getting alone with God. Listen, you can't love the head without loving the body.

This is how you know people who really love God and are close to God. They weep over God's people. Because they see people the way Jesus sees them.

Well listen, I'm here to encourage you and encourage myself. I've never preached this before. It's not really a sermon.

I just thought we could look at some verses together and see what do we learn about the Holy Spirit but take off your glasses. Take off your glasses of what you're used to and what I'm used to. And I don't want to be controversial.

That's the last thing I want to be. I want to stay on a controversial subject because I know at this conference we have different denominations and different doctrinal emphases. But let's talk about the person, the beautiful person of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit. Oh God, what would I, Carol, do without the Holy Spirit? I never went to seminary or Bible school where God put me. Oh my goodness.

And there's so many problems. And without the faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, what would I do? I wouldn't even go to church this Sunday because only God could help me. Only God could help me.

But I'm glad where I am because I can't depend on anything else. It's God or bust. It's not in the culture where I go to church.

Maybe where you live it's in the culture to go to church. Somewhere you live, somewhere you live in a place where, you know, it's hard to know who's just going and who's a real born-again Christian. In the inner city that's not so much so.

You don't need a scorecard there to tell the Christians. It's not in the culture. If they want entertainment, they'll go to Broadway.

Why would you go to some silly church? Acts 2, verse 1. Acts 1. Let's go to Acts 1. Start at the beginning. So when they met together, they asked him, the risen Lord, Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, it's not for you to know the times or dates. The Father has said by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and to the ends of the earth.

After he said this, by the way, he was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid them from their sight. Acts 2, verse 1. When the day of Pentecost, that feast came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They weren't kneeling or standing. They were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

And all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Verse 28.

Peter replied, 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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord, our God, will call. What we notice here in these passages is a couple of things I just want to touch on.

We know from Acts 1 there were 120 at least in Acts 1 and it seems like all of them and maybe more were there in Acts 2 including Jesus' mother Mary. And the beginning point was to be filled with the Holy Spirit. God's intention for the Christian religion was that the vessel would be cleaned by the blood of Jesus so that the vessel would be made ready to be filled, not touched, not a trickle, rivers filled.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Now since the Holy Spirit is not a gas or a vapor or a liquid or a solid, but is a person, that means it would seem a totality of control by the Holy Spirit which in this case sent them into an ecstasy where they began to speak in ecstatic tongues of languages they didn't know. But the Spirit gave them the ability to speak.

Only foreigners who happened to be there for the feast understood that they were praising God and speaking of the great things He had done when they heard them speak. Notice, this was the beginning, this was the essential. God had given them a commission, God had given them a mission, going to all the world, but you cannot do it without the power of the Holy Spirit.

They were the only people with the message that could save people, but He told them, do not go, tarry. So how important is the filling of the Holy Spirit? That they were the only people who had the message, people were dying all over Jerusalem and in Samaria and in Galilee, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, they were dying and He said, still don't go. You're the only ones, you know I'm alive, you're the only ones with the message, don't go because what you're going to encounter, satanic strongholds, opposition, the wisdom

that you're going to need to do this, the power, the boldness, you do not have.

Although you are cleansed and believe in me and you see me now risen, you need something else, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Without that, they couldn't do the job and brothers and sisters, if anything is true, this is true, nothing has changed to this day. We cannot do it with computers, we cannot do it with talent, we can't do it with cleverness and productions and relating and all those other things.

We need wisdom in all our communication but we need whatever this anointing and power is of the Holy Spirit, we need it and a lot of you already might be pausing and saying, oh where's he going? Because the so-called charismatic movement has had so many excesses and so many weird things, people barking, crawling, screaming, yelling, disrupting meetings, doing all kinds of bizarre things that many people who are serious about God have withdrawn and said, if that's the Holy Spirit, I pass. And that's just what the devil planned for you to do. You throw out the baby with the bath water.

So you go around America, I have for years now and you see that pendulum, it's funny but it's not funny. Churches are either cemeteries or insane asylums. There are many exceptions to that.

I don't want to generalize but you know exactly what I'm talking about. Either north of the neck intellectualism, glorying in, I have super orthodoxy, nobody else does, we're the only ones who have it right. Or on the other side, forget the Bible, throw it out, we're just going to race around the building and have church, praise God, whatever.

And either one of those is a trap. It's Satan's way of getting us to not focus on the one that we desperately need. I will send you another comforter.

You cannot do that work. I don't care what seminary you went to. None of the original 12 went to any seminary.

They were fishermen. That was the point. And I want to just press that upon you.

Isn't it amazing these people who were filled with the Holy Spirit, one of them a few weeks earlier had cursed and denied he knew the Lord and now he was filled with the Holy Spirit. Which of us in our churches with that track record would have him preach? With our sense of decency and a reputation, who would have Peter preach? Oh yes, here's Peter. He's coming to preach.

Just recently he cursed and denied he knew the Lord and let's give him a hand as he comes up here to speak. Oh, I'm so glad God is not like us. How many say amen? I'm so glad God is a God of grace.

And this is the point about faith not just in but for the Holy Spirit. They were all filled and they were a motley crew. Because after three years of living with them how important is the Holy Spirit? What in the world did Jesus produce after three years of living with them? With perfect teaching.

Not much. Because when he got arrested none of them hung around. And on the way to Jerusalem they were arguing all of them who was the greatest.

He could not get it through to them. That's the limitation of preaching and teaching. Preaching and teaching can never do what God the Holy Spirit can do.

The best we can do is point people to God so they have their own encounter with God. If all I do is talk and you take notes and you go home it's just more head knowledge. Unless we meet God here tonight in some new way through the Holy Spirit we're going to go back and be the same old same old in our church.

And I don't want to do that. I want to be a better pastor. I want to be a better husband.

God knows I want to be a better grandfather. I want to be a better man of God pastor. How many want to be better by the power of the Holy Spirit? Wave your hand at me.

Come on, better. Better. We can be better.

The Holy Spirit baptism was not the conclusion. It was the beginning. It was the beginning.

They were filled with this promise, this gift, this overflowing of this stream. And that was to bless others. You know in John 4 he talked about if you knew who was talking to you Samaritan lady you would ask for this water and you would drink it.

But in John 7 he's talking about a river. If anybody thirsts notice the qualifications. If anybody thirsts let him come to me.

Anyone. Thirst. That's all.

Oh no, there's got to be 20 other conditions. We'll get to that in a second. If anyone thirsts let him just come to me.

But am I ready? Am I really sold out? Am I totally consecrated? Have I really searched my heart? If anyone thirsts let him come to me. While you're going through that for 20 years a lot of people are dying and going to hell who need your ministry. And they were all filled very quickly.

Obviously don't want to be controversial again but let's state the obvious. Not all Christians and not all churches are Spirit filled churches. That is obvious.

Three quick proofs from the Bible I'll give you. Number one one of the qualifications of the seven was choose out men for you the apostles said that are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. If every Christian was full of the Holy Spirit how could that be a qualification for position of leadership? That would be like choose out a Christian among the Christians.

No. Known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. Not everyone was.

Second proof. Ephesians 5 28 isn't it? Don't be drunk with wine but continuous present tense be being filled with the Holy Spirit. If everyone is always filled with the Holy Spirit why would Paul tell the church in Ephesus don't be filled with wine where it is excess debauchery but be being filled.

Keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit. That's for us. How are we going to help others who are lukewarm and cold if we're not where we need to be? Remember if you preach from your head you only reach their head.

If you preach from su corazon your heart filled with the Holy Spirit you can reach their heart. Third proof. Church of Laodicea one of the seven churches Jesus was walking among.

Christian church no doubt. You're neither hot nor cold but you're lukewarm I'm going to vomit you out of my mouth. If that church was spirit filled and Jesus was going to vomit it out of his mouth then words don't mean anything.

I wonder how many churches in this country are spirit filled. How many pastors are spirit filled? Controlled and filled and led and anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. I'm not talking about fanaticism.

I hope you can look at me and hear my words and understand what Carol and I have been doing for more than 30 years that I'm not a nut. I'm not for running and jumping and carrying on let everything be done to edification. Yes, let everything be done decently in order but not the decency and order of a cemetery.

The decency and order of the Holy Spirit. Breathing, moving. All you pastors that are here we can go back and we can lead people into spirit filledness.

That will be the judgment on me when Carol and I stand at the judgment seat of Christ. Not what you thought of me. Not what my peers thought of me.

Some years ago I won the book of the year award. What am I going to do when Jesus comes? Hold up my plaque for book of the year. He wrote the Bible.

What am I going to do? Hold up my, you know, book of the year. Fresh wind, fresh fire. You know.

Oh, please. So, what I will be judged by is did I lead the church in the way that the New Testament talks about. Not Evan Roberts.

Not Finney. Not Jonathan Edwards. The New Testament.

And where those men can help encourage me and show me as instruments how these things worked out in their lives, I have been blessed. Listen, when I was just in the ministry a couple years, I was bothering Mr. Roberts here at his store in Chicago and spent too much money there filling my bookshelves with books that have blessed my life. I thank God for my friend.

Now, I want you to also notice that wide open promise. Anyone. Believe on the Lord.

Just be baptized. Believe on the Lord. Be baptized.

Repent. Be baptized. And you will receive the same gift we have.

It's no big thing. It's the beginning. It's the start of the Christian life.

It's not a sign of maturity. The church at Corinth was filled with the Holy Spirit. It wasn't mature.

It was carnal. They had all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they were arguing. One says, I'm a Paul, Cephas, Apollos, Baptist, Presbyterians.

No, we're assembly of God. No, we're this. Are you not carnal? You're thinking like men.

Not because they didn't have a flow of the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit is just the beginning. I wonder if Paul and Peter and James and John, if they were to come to earth today and walk among our churches in America, what would they say? They might possibly say, What are you doing? Where did you get the mandate to do what you're doing? Oh, but this is what we learned. No, we're not supposed to learn from

men.

Men were supposed to learn from God. Let's go quickly so that I don't go over my time and they don't get upset with me here. Acts 4, verse 31.

We can learn something there. Another reference. After they prayed, this is after Peter and John were let loose by the Sanhedrin and threatened not anymore to preach in the name of Jesus.

They went back to a prayer meeting. They all lifted their voice. Look, 24, verse 24.

When they heard this, their report, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. Sounds kind of noisy and nice, doesn't it? They all raised their voices together to God in prayer. Oh, we don't pray that way.

Well, again, what you're used to or I'm used to is irrelevant. It seems like this is the way the Holy Spirit was helping people to pray back then. But look at verse 31.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled. Wait a minute. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Notice, they had a baptism in Acts 2, but they had repeated fillings, it seems. The place where they were was shaken and they were all filled, no mention of them speaking in tongues, but the manifestation that came about from this fresh filling was they spoke the word of God boldly. I have learned that without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, I am a coward.

I will not speak what God wants me to. I will begin to fear the face of man and I'll cave in to certain pressures. I need the power of the Holy Spirit.

And because of the lack of the Holy Spirit, that's the genesis, one of the genesis of this entire user-friendly seeker-sensitive foolishness. It's because instead of declaring the truth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, you're trying to find out what do you want to hear? I'll tell you. What do you want to hear? You don't want to hear a mention of sin? Okay, I won't mention sin.

It's like this radio evangelist who promised his audience, imagine, promised, as long as we're in this building and I'm preaching to you, just remember, you'll never hear a message on hell as long as I'm alive. That was his promise. And if you don't believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, you will not have the boldness to proclaim the truth.

But notice, not just power with love. When Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost, it wasn't just a bull in a china shop. It wasn't harsh.

It was powerful, authoritative, but tender. They were pricked in their hearts. But if you don't believe in that power, you would never say, as Peter did in his first sermon, I believe, in Acts 2, you through the hands of evil men have crucified the King of Glory.

I mean, talk about not user-friendly, not seeker-sensitive. How would you tell an audience, by the way, you killed the Messiah? Just want to inform you of that. That makes no psychological sense, but it makes godly sense if you believe in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you don't, you then get logical and you get clever. And the church is dying for cleverness. It's dying from cleverness.

You know, Dr. Roberts, I read in a book that I bought from you, oh, I don't know, 20 some years ago, on one of those Yale lectures on preaching. I can't think of the person it was, but I wrote it in the fly leaf of my Bible because it had such an impression on me. I think it was A.J. Gossip who said, you can't be clever and have Jesus wonderful at the same time.

You can be clever, but Jesus won't be wonderful. If you want Jesus wonderful, you better not be clever. There's no superstars in Christianity except for Jesus.

As James says, we all stumble in many ways. Now, let's just look in Acts 8 and learn one or two more things about the Holy Spirit. We're saying that although they were baptized in chapter 2, the same group of people need to have a fresh filling.

Now, Acts 8, verse 14. This is the Samaritan revival under a former deacon or one of the original seven, Philip. And when the apostles in Jerusalem, verse 14, heard that Samari had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and when they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them, they had simply been baptized into or in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon, formerly Simon the sorcerer, saw that the Spirit, that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, give me also this ability.

Notice, not to have the Holy Spirit, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit. Peter answered, as you know, may your money perish with you because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money. What gift was that? It wasn't the gift of the Holy Spirit.

It was the gift of being able to lay hands on people, and they received the Holy Spirit. Now, not to get into controversy again, but we can summarize it. We all agree on this.

Philip went and preached in Samaria. There was a great revival. He did signs and wonders through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Multitudes repented, including Simon the sorcerer. I don't think Philip was so obtuse that he would baptize non-believers. They were believers, which means the Spirit of Christ dwelt in them.

If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. But having the Spirit of Christ in us and being filled with the Holy Spirit, as we've already established here, must be two different things. The church at Laodicea was a Christian church.

That means they had the Spirit of Christ within them, the Holy Spirit, where they Spirit-filled. They could not be and be lukewarm. They could not be.

Well, now, these people believed, became Christians, were baptized, it seems, but something wasn't happening the way they thought Christianity worked, the early church, because they said, no, it's not just believe and be a new creation and believe and be cleansed and it's be baptized and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And Philip, for whatever reason, could not take them there. So Peter and John were sent forth and they came down, really not down, but up north into Samaria.

And now we see through the laying on of hands, they had some ability. It doesn't say that they gave them 30 days of teaching, 17 steps to receive the Holy Spirit, 14 things you have to let go of before God will fill you. I do not see that in the text.

I see they laid hands on them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They must have had some physical manifestation. I only say that because when Simon the sorcerer saw that through the laying on of hands, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, he said, hey, I'll give you some money.

Let me give you some money. I want to buy that a gift. I want to be able to lay hands on people so they would receive the Holy Spirit, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And then Peter rebuked him for his heart wasn't right. He didn't say he wasn't a Christian, although probably opinions differ on that, whether he had slipped by even though he had been baptized. But certainly, his heart was wrong.

But now we learn that through the laying on of hands and praying for people, the Holy Spirit, baptism, fullness, came upon people in the Bible. In the Bible, that's what happened. And there's no verse anywhere that I know of in the New Testament.

If there's one, you can tell me about it later, that we cannot expect to lay hands on people today and see them filled with the Holy Spirit and live in a new dimension of living, live in a new overcoming way with a new anointing of power to do God's assignment for their life. That's what happened at Samaria. That's put in the Bible for our learning and our encouragement and our endurance that we get from the Scriptures.

Note, these were brand new converts. They had just gotten saved. And they got the same exact gift that Peter and James and John who had walked for three years with Jesus.

But now, let me close by asking you to turn to Acts 9. Let's just stop in two other places. Acts 9, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Verse 17, you all know how he got saved on the road to Damascus.

You know he's blind. He can't now contact anybody, see anybody, I should say. He's three days like that.

Then the Lord goes to Ananias, a disciple, and tells him to go to Saul of Tarsus and lay his hands on him. Verse 17, then Ananias went to the house and entered it, placing his hands on Saul. He said, Brother Saul, the Lord, Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here, has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In other words, let's begin at the beginning, Saul. He's got his hand on your life. You've got to do a lot of work for him.

And by the way, I found out you're going to have to suffer a lot too. And to do all of that, let's start at the beginning. You believe now, obviously, you've seen him.

You've been three days by yourself blinded. Now he has sent me here to do two things, that you might see so you can go on with your life. And number two, it doesn't mention how it happened, but we assume it's inferred it happened because he was sent there by the Lord to do it.

Now, be filled with the Holy Spirit. And now, the apostles are not laying hands on people. Now, a humble disciple is laying hands on the greatest of all the future apostles.

And he's filled with the Holy Spirit. No manifestation is mentioned. Nothing is mentioned about it.

But we know that Paul was full of the Holy Spirit, if anyone in the Bible was. So now we learn that God uses strange people in strange ways. Peter and John, I could understand, but what's Ananias doing going over there laying hands on a famous, soon-to-be famous Christian? Because the wind blows wherever it wants.

And you can't put God in a box. Lastly, Acts 10. You know how the gospel came to the Gentiles through Peter? That's so odd because Peter was the apostle to the Jews but when God is always up to things, isn't he? He's always switching things around when he wants.

We like to be neat and in order and he's saying, yeah, you're the apostle to the Jews, but you bring the gospel first to the Gentiles. And in chapter 10, verse 44, Peter is now preaching. We know the beginning of the message.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. By the way, look up here for a second. Who was the all? I want to tell, look up here for a second everyone please.

The all happens to be Cornelius, his relatives and his close friends if you look at the beginning of chapter 10. He was the one who had given alms and prayed. He was the one whom the angel was sent to.

He is the one that Peter was sent to bring the message of salvation. When Peter walked in the house, Cornelius was not a Christian. We know that.

By the way, that is a very good message. I found to bring or a good point to bring before a Jehovah Witness or a Mormon, especially a Jehovah Witness. When Cornelius' house was entered by Peter, he was not a believer because he said, the angel told me, this man is going to come to show you the way of salvation.

So whatever the true gospel is, it must be in Peter's sermon because while he yet spake, they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. So whatever you need to know about Jesus has to be in Peter's sermon to convert you. It wasn't a seven-month process.

It wasn't 34 points. While he yet spake these words, look at verse 44. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

The circumcised believers, the Jewish people with Peter who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.

Isn't that amazing? Why are you all so quiet? So different than our formulas. Soldier friends and family members who didn't have a clue were herded in to Cornelius' house. His heart was searching after God.

Peter's preaching the gospel and while he was still speaking they received, everyone received the same gift that the apostles got in Acts 2. So how awesomely anxious is God to fill people with His Holy Spirit? That's my point. All of them were filled. Peter said, when they questioned him in the next chapter, what are you baptizing Gentiles for? He said, wouldn't you baptize Gentiles if they received the same gift that we had in Acts 2? God gave the proof that they were in the body of Christ.

We saw them. We saw it. Nobody didn't say, I think I received something by faith.

We saw it. We experienced it. Is there that kind of expectancy hardly anywhere in the body of Christ today? Haven't we buffaloed God into a corner? Don't we have our preconceived ideas how, quote, revival, i.e., the Holy Spirit comes? Wouldn't we be suspicious? I know some people who say, what? You just walked in this building? You weren't even a believer? And while He's not halfway through His sermon, you're speaking in tongues and now He's going to baptize you? Has God done some necessary heart work? Were you properly prepared? How long did you mourn over your sins? No, that's what we've learned.

That's not what's in the Bible. Is there mourning for sin? Look, the last thing I want to talk to you tonight is to be shallow about how people live. The last thing I want to convey to you tonight here as I close is it doesn't matter how you live, you don't have to confess your sins.

Yes, you have to confess your sins, but I know people who have been confessing and digging for 20 years and instead of looking away to Jesus, they're always looking in and you're not going to see anything in there. I mean, look in for a while and get the work done, but please, let's get on with it. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

How am I going to look at Jesus if I'm always searching my heart? That's very depressing. I one time read a book on the deeper life. I wanted to take my life by the 10th chapter.

I mean, what are you going to look in and see your flesh? I know what Jim Simbala is. He's a scoundrel, was a scoundrel, is a scoundrel. I've never changed.

Apart from God, I will always be a good for nothing, but through Christ, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Come on, can I do all things through Christ? Can we put our hands together? So what are you looking in there for? Are you ever going to look to a point, brother, if you come to the piano, are you going to look for a point where you won't see your flesh in there, where you won't be tempted? I mean, what are you looking for? I was just so disappointed by a book that I got from, I don't know where I got it, but it wasn't, it was from, you know where I got it? They had a big bargain sale before they closed up over in Grand Rapids at Cregel's. And I said, And it was a book, the introduction was written, Dr. Roberts, by Andrew Murray, and it was on the Holy Spirit.

And it was so many good thoughts in it. But then after chapter four, I just wanted to pull my hair out again. The same old stuff.

And now 11 things you got to do to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And all in the Bible, but out of context with the verses I just read, because I read to you just now the way it really happened. How many would agree? We just read through a lot of the New Testament book of Acts.

How many say amen to that? Didn't we? We read an account here of how the Holy Spirit was poured out. But maybe we're not ready for it. Maybe our traditions are overpowering what the Word of God says.

That could very well be true. Maybe some of us want to be more Baptist or Evangelical or whatever than we do want to be New Testament Christians. I mean, God has dealt with me about that.

Why read the book if you're not going to be open? I got to pray every time I open it. God, please help me because I'm prejudiced. I got leanings in me.

Many of them are wrong. So God, take the gauze off my eyes so I can see. So there comes the chapter and all these things you have to do.

And my question again is to people is this. This is why there's such death around that kind of teaching. It sounds pseudo-spiritual.

It sounds probing and searching and righteous. But it's death. I'll tell you why.

How can you have sanctification without the Holy Spirit? In other words, it's get holy without the Holy Spirit so that you can get the Holy Spirit. Well, wait a minute. Yeah, you got to stop that, do that, don't do that, let go of that, do that.

How am I going to do that without the Holy Spirit? No, you have to do that before because you qualify. Where would that be? I thought it was a gift. How deep probing the Cornelius's soldier friends while Peter spoke and they just came in the house they never knew anything about anything and they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Think of the power of faith. Danny Velasco didn't even know what he was saying when he said, Oh, Jesus, help me. Did you know you should have him one day.

He's a great speaker. You can tell, can't you, that he's eloquent. He can give his testimony in 20 minutes or half hour, 40 minutes because he was years out in the street.

After being the youngest hairdresser, gay, makeup artist at Bergdorf Goodman on 57th Street near Fifth Avenue. Big time. He was the youngest in their history.

Went to France, got real famous in France. That's what earned him the \$3,000 a day rate but in France he also picked up a heroin addiction. In France, he had it delivered to the shooting set or his hotel, but in New York when he came back into Soho, 5,000 square foot loft in Soho, you don't get drugs delivered in New York.

You don't get heroin delivered anywhere. You gotta go hustle. You gotta go down Lower East Side, Alphabet City, East 2nd between B and C. We have a church there that we helped start that I oversee.

More drugs passed his hands there per square foot than any place else in the world until recently now. It's getting yuppified and condos are going up, but it was back in that day, that was the place you went. Did you know he knew so little when he was laying in his vomit in that hospital room, he knew so little about God and praying that he used Wanda as his reference to Jesus.

He said, Jesus, Wanda told me if I called on you, you would help me. And guess what? And guess what? God heard him because God wants to save people more than you and I could ever dream and God wants to fill us more with the Holy Spirit. So instead of all this thing which I went through for years, picking at scabs and going through and looking in and always looking in and there's a time to look in.

I'm not talking about being shallow, please, because that is a dilemma that we have. But after you do the best you can by God's grace to repent and say, God, I don't want to live in any sin. Convict me of any known sin and things I don't see.

Show it to me. Open my heart and all that. But I mean, after that, the change doesn't come by searching.

The change comes by a good rainstorm coming inside. You ever see how the streets get clean after there's a huge burst of rain? I was once in Manila years ago and it was poor. The streets were filthy.

It was in the summer, hot, filthy streets where I was living. I was in a bad neighborhood and just filthy streets and a rainstorm came like I had never seen rain like that. It amazed me.

I stood back. I had never seen rain come down torrentially like that. When it was over, those streets looked like spotless almost because the water came and just got all the garbage out.

We're trying to get the garbage out for the Holy Spirit but there's a lot of stuff only the Holy Spirit is going to get rid of. If you look in about where you're not, Lord Jesus wants you to be, you'll be looking forever. And James, who was no slouch in the spiritual walk, said when he wrote the book of James, we all stumble, we teachers, in many ways.

We all stumble. How many are not a finished product? God's still working on your life. All right, so we're not going to be light about it and be cavalier about our sins.

I'm not talking about that. Do you understand me? Do you hear me? Say amen if you hear me. But what I'm talking about is are we going to believe the promise of the Holy Spirit or are we going to just operate with self-effort and sincerity? I told you that I told you that the church is dying for cleverness, by cleverness, but I'll say something else.

What else will kill you is you think sincerity is the answer. Oh, do you have to be sincere? Oh yeah. Sincere, when you're preaching, if you're sincere, in my judgment, 80% of the battle is won if you're sincere because God can never use an actor.

If you affect any voice, anything, if you affect trying to be spiritual, quiet, or boisterous, loud, praise God, I'm going to throw this microphone at somebody, praise God, anything that you affect out of your personality trying to be spiritual in any way, the Holy Spirit just withdraws because He never blesses an actor, even if you're spiritually acting. But sincerity alone won't cut it. I know all kinds of people in New York City who are sincere.

They haven't baptized 10 people in 3 years with all those sinners all over there and with the precious gospel of Jesus Christ which is the power of God into salvation. Come on, brothers and sisters. Doesn't something tell you inside God wants us to move us to a whole different plane? Come on, come on, come on.

How many want to see more fruit in your church so that you get tired, your back gets tired baptizing people? Come on, come on, come on. How many want to see prayer meetings where there's, you know, what an encouragement that is to me. I left a prayer meeting last night.

I was telling them, what a prayer meeting, 2,000 people in an auditorium. Listen, wait, listen, calling on God and I stopped praying myself for one moment and I heard that sound and I've told God many times, God, I'd rather be here than any place in the world. I don't want to meet President Bush.

I don't want to see the Queen of England. I don't want to go anywhere that there's a sound when people are praying and you sense God's presence. Why can't that happen in your church and my church in a greater way? Do you think God doesn't want it? Well, am I sincere? Listen, if you're here, you're sincere.

You paid all this money to come to this conference to what, live in sin? Are you out of your minds? Come on, come on, do I get a witness? I mean, there might be some hypocrites here, but I feel such a good spirit among you. We want the Lord, but are we going to believe not only in the Holy Spirit, are we going to believe Him for the Holy Spirit? For without faith, it's impossible to please God. This is where sincerity breaks down.

Without faith, it's impossible to believe God. The first rule of spiritual life, Jesus said is, according to your faith, so be it unto you. Little faith, little God.

But I'm sincere. Fine, you're sincere, but you have little faith. Great faith, great manifestation of God.

This rule, this law is so strong that Jesus Himself couldn't do many miracles in His own hometown of Nazareth because of their unbelief. The demons weren't too difficult, the sicknesses weren't too complex, but because there was unbelief and no expectancy, His hands were tied, and He was the Son of God. And that's why if you're always, God's going to do it someday, someday, hey listen, 30 years can go by and that someday hasn't come yet.

We got to start believing. Do I believe that we need to see an outpouring for the opening of the heavens that God will come down? Yes, but too many people are dying for me to wait for that. I got to have revival right now in Brooklyn Tabernacle.

You got to have revival right now in your church. If not, whose fault is it? Whose fault is it? It's not God's fault. Don't tell me God doesn't want to help Carol and I. Do not tell me that.

Yeah, but Pastor Jim, you're not what you should be. I know I'm not. But I'm all God has there.

I'm not trying to be funny. I'm being serious. I see so many sincere people going nowhere because they're always waiting to be ready.

But tell me, brothers and sisters, please tell me, when will you be ready? When will you earn the Holy Spirit? Just tell me what you have to do to earn the Holy Spirit. If Cornelius' whole house got filled halfway through a sermon, what will you have to wear? At what level? And don't you know the devil will use that? Many people who think they're being convicted by the Holy Spirit. I met one today.

They're not being convicted by the Holy Spirit. The devil is accusing them. As long as he can keep me looking in, you're not ready.

Of course he'll say that to me. Doesn't he come as an angel of light? Some of you are not believing what I'm saying. But I'm preaching the truth.

God is my witness. He wants to change us. And He wants to change us tonight.

Because I'm a Christian, the blood has never lost its power. How many do not want to live in sin? You want to be like Jesus. Come on.

Does God see that or not? Close your eyes with me. Every pastor that's here, get up out of your seat and come up here in the front. Let's pray together, pastors.

Don't kneel. Stand. Come up here in the front.

I need thee. Oh, I need thee, brother. Play it.

Come on, every pastor. Come up here as close as you can to the front. So we can get close to each other.

No, go down one step here. So we'll go down one more step here so I can lean over you that way. But come behind him here.

Come on. Oh, it's good for men to pray together. Let's pray just for a moment.

God, if I have said any sentence that would twist the truth about you, forgive me, Lord. But God, we are hungry. We are thirsty, Lord.

Not for little drips and drops and little quiet moments with you. We want rivers. We want all those good things.

We want the dew upon the grass. We want all those moments. But God, I need rivers of living water in downtown Brooklyn, Lord.

I need rivers. I need rivers flowing out of me. When I preach, I need authority and power, and yet I need tenderness, God, so that I can weep over people and see them the way you see them.

I cannot do that, God. Only you can do that for me, Lord. I need wisdom.

We all need. All of us pastors, Lord, we need wisdom. Teach us how to preach.

Teach us how to pray. We don't even know how to pray. The Holy Spirit has to help us with groans too deep to be uttered.

Save us from saying prayers in church and not praying. God, many times I have said prayers. I haven't prayed because I was self-conscious.

I ask you to forgive me of that, Lord. I want to pray like I would in my room alone with you, even though people are listening. Save us from preaching sermons while we pray.

Cause us to just call upon you and get desperate. But God, one thing I know, if you filled Cornelius' house with the same Holy Spirit that Peter received, then I know I am a candidate, Lord, for something more from you. And we know we're not what we should be, but God, we do lay our lives down before you.

Work in us, Lord, to will and to do according to your good pleasure. I need thee, O. I need thee every hour. Oh, bless my cup.

I need thee, O. Sing with me, everyone. I need thee. Touch me, O. Do what the Bible says, Old and New Testaments.

Sing together. We praise you, Lord. We magnify you.

We're not embarrassed.

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