

# Holy Spirit

by Stewart Ruch

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of humbly asking for the Holy Spirit to experience transformation and spiritual fullness in our lives.*

**Duration:** 26:44

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing our own brokenness and our need for help from others. He highlights the cultural tendency to avoid asking for help and encourages humility in seeking assistance. The speaker then delves into the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, emphasizing the significance of Jesus asking for her heart and her asking for the Holy Spirit. He discusses the power of the Holy Spirit in revealing the truth of our sin and the importance of confessing everything to the Lord.

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## Transcript

Jesus said, I who speak to you am he. For Jesus is here now. So let's pray for the Father in the power of Jesus, asking for the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Father in heaven, we are asking for the descent of the Holy Spirit. We're asking for an encounter this morning, now, in this hour, with your Holy Spirit, given to us by the gift of Jesus Christ, given to us and won for us by his death and victory over our sins and by his being raised from the dead.

And so even now, O Lord, as we prepare to study the Bible, we ask, O Lord, that we would allow you to study our hearts. We ask that we would allow you to take our hearts and to fill them with the power of the Holy Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. You may be seated. I got an extraordinary phone call a couple of months ago.

It was one of the most surprising phone calls of my entire life. It actually started with a text that morning. Someone that I knew reached out to me and said, could we touch base this evening by phone? And I said, sure.

We set up a time and I called. And this friend of mine, not clearly a follower of Christ, someone I've known, said, you know, I've been thinking about you. And I just wanted to call and say, if you ever have any significant financial need, I would love to take care of that financial need for you.

You guys look like you always get phone calls like that. Is that just normal for you? OK, well, I wasn't in on your club. I didn't know that people got phone calls like that all the time.

I'm like, I can't find words. I'm so shocked to get this call. Now, I'm all the more shocked because it's pre-spring here and back up a few days earlier at the kitchen table at the Ruck House and I'm juggling the accounts, we call it.

I'm kind of going through home administration, doing the bills, and it's middle of December and Christmas is coming and we're looking for that fat goose. And I get a call from the mechanic where I thought I had our van in for a minor repair. But there are no minor repairs with 15 passenger vans, which is the van that we own.

And the mechanic actually said, as a matter of fact, Mr. Ruck, this is going to be \$1,200. And I was stunned. I had no idea at that point where that \$1,200 was going to come from.

And there were a few other significant financial necessities as well at that point. So go back now to that conversation in that moment where my friend said, if you ever have any financial need, please let me know. I could have kept it theoretical.

I could have kept it. Wow, that's so nice of you to call, but you know, I'm great. No problems.

I've got so many extra funds in so many different places that it's just never an issue for me. I'm a completely financially independent person. I would like to be able to say that, honestly.

But in that moment, I realized he was really asking, but he really needed me to ask him. He'd opened the door, but I had to walk through it. And I took a deep breath and I humbled myself and I said, yeah, we actually have some very pressing financial needs right now.

I said, great. Checks come in FedEx. You'll get it in two days.

And it was an extraordinarily generous, generous gift. I am still processing that experience. I did nothing to earn that moment.

I did nothing to deserve that moment. It came out of the blue. It was initiated toward me.

I hadn't shook the tree to get the fruit to fall. And we have this morning a story about a woman. We're not given her name.

She's called the woman at the well or the Samaritan woman. And she had an experience where she had somebody, Jesus, initiate with her. She has somebody, Jesus, who says, essentially, I want to give you a gift.

He calls the gift living water. That's a bit of a confusing phrase. It's explained later in this very book, the book of John, where John explains to us living water is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus comes. He has a gift. It's the Holy Spirit.

And he wants to give the Holy Spirit to her. But she has to ask. She has to ask.

And he wants to give the Holy Spirit to you and to me. But there has to be an ask. There's actually two asks.

The first is he wants us to ask him. He wants us to engage. He wants, like in that moment that I have where I could have said, no, we're good.

But I had to decide, no, I need this too much. I need this help too much. My pride be forgotten.

Yes, I need help. He wants that moment where we ask. And then as that ask comes and we ask of him, he then asks of us our heart.

He wants our heart. He wants all of us. And you'll see her ask.

You'll see him ask the Samaritan woman that as well. She asks for the Holy Spirit, the living water. And then he asks of her, her heart.

Come with me in the text in John 4. As we look at this incredible, incredible story of Jesus sitting at a well. It's the middle of the day. It says sixth hour.

That means noon, the middle of the day. A woman of the village comes to get this water from the well. A little bit of background on this.

It's important to understand a couple of things. First of all, the middle of the day in the Near East, especially the ancient Near East where this is set, is like our midnight in this way. Nobody does anything in the middle of the day.

It's so absolutely hot. So if anybody's out doing something in the middle of the day, that's unusual. That's somewhat even suspect.

People aren't around. If you're acting in the middle of the day, you're acting because you don't want anyone else to see what you're doing. And she has reason for that, we find, because she's actually had an immoral past.

And in a small village like that, an immoral past would be known by everyone. And she's likely been shunned by everyone in the village. No one wants to be around her.

Now, Jesus is going through this area. It's called Samaria. Jesus didn't have to go through Samaria to get where he's going.

As a matter of fact, Samaria is an extremely problematic reality if you're Jew. And Jesus is a Jew. The Samaritans are like Jewish half-breeds.

What they've done is they've taken some of Jewish thinking and Jewish religion, but they've mixed Jewish religion with their own thinking and their own ethnic background. They've actually kind of half-married or married into Judaism. So you have some Jewish background and some pagan background.

And for a Jew, they cannot stand that. They never want to mix. They always want to keep everything absolutely pure.

And if you find purity in a very rigid way, that excludes someone like a Samaritan. And especially in that culture excludes someone like a Samaritan woman. And Jesus has to find her.

Because Jesus is out on the lookout for those who have been excluded. He's out on the lookout for those who've been shunned. He's out on the lookout for anyone who might have the courage and might have the

humility to ask him for the Holy Spirit.

He's seeking. He's searching. He's looking.

He goes to Samarias and he goes to places where nobody else will ever go because he's hoping that maybe there, where everyone's been forgotten, where someone's been left behind, they might have a broken heart enough to ask for the Holy Spirit. The religious leaders, for the most part, the religious will not ask for the Holy Spirit, for the most part. The civic leaders, the governmental leaders, they will not ask for the Holy Spirit, for the most part.

But he wonders, is there someone here who has the courage to ask? Just to get clear, what is it that we're asking for? What is it that we're asking for when we ask for the Holy Spirit? Jesus says in verse 10, in your bulletin there, if you knew the gifts of God and who it is that's saying to you, give me a drink, you would have asked him. I want you to ask him. I have something to give you.

Would you ask me? And he would have given you living water. And then bump down to verse 13, excuse me, verse 14. The water that I give will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

The Holy Spirit, the living water, is compared to a spring of living water. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the gift of life, the fullness of life, the power to live our lives. To be given the gift of the Holy Spirit is to be given a gift that allows you to live beyond your natural capabilities.

It gives you a gift to live beyond the scope of your own narrow thinking. And every human being is narrow in their thinking without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes and gives you a supernatural life, a life that meets your natural life, but fills out your life, exceeds your personality, exceeds your possibilities.

Indeed, it creates an entire new life for you, but not just for you. The Holy Spirit wants to well up. He wants to spring up and create a new life for everyone around you to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and to live in the power of the Holy Spirit is to have a kind of profound influence you will never have by your personality, by your own natural leadership abilities, by your own intelligence.

It's to be overwhelmed in the best way with someone greater than ourselves. And if you don't think you need someone greater than yourself, if you don't think that you have some kind of profound emptiness that has got to be filled, then you will not need the Holy Spirit. And this teaching will not be helpful for you.

But perhaps you need a little bit of time in Samaria. You need a little bit of time to realize yet again just how broken you really are, just how unable you really are to put everything together. As I'm teaching, would you fight the temptation that I had in that moment when my friend called me to go, I got it all.

I think one of our kind of maladies in the western suburbs, and it affects our culture here at Resurrection as well, is that one of the big rules that you never want to break is needing something from someone else. You don't want to ask for a ride to O'Hare. You hire a car.

You don't want to need somebody to accompany you somewhere. You go by yourself. Indeed, one of the things we say that you never really want to do is ask someone or put yourself in a place where actually they might say no.

So just never ever be in a position where you ever need anything from anybody else. That way, nobody ever says no to you. And then nobody ever says yes to you.

And then nobody ever says anything of real import to you at all. So many marriages lived as two independent people managing their lives. So many friendships, truly deeply independent.

And so many of us in relationship to God saying, I got it. I got it. I got it together.

Christians have the Holy Spirit. If you have received Jesus into your heart, the teaching of the scriptures is in receiving Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit. There's also a teaching in the scripture though that we're to receive more and more of the Holy Spirit.

So it's very possible that some of us, many of us here have the Holy Spirit, but we have underestimated what a well, what a living water spring can do in our lives and how it would change how we think and how it changed how we work and how it changed how we love others. We've underestimated the power of the Holy Spirit. My son and I were hiking in an area about two hours north, Kettle Moraine.

It's a phenomenal area in Wisconsin. What we discovered in our time out hiking is that there were all these living wells, these springs. And these springs, they were just everywhere.

You'd go to a creek and you'd look in the creek and there'd be all these things bubbling up from the creek bed. And there were just all these springs. And I began to look here and I began to realize there was this entire glorious kind of marshland ecosystem filled with birds, tons of flora, tons of fauna.

And it had all been created because of these living springs. These little tiny springs that you may not even be able to see. You wouldn't even know that they were there unless you were looking for them.

But they'd been created an entire world of a marshland. People had built resorts there just to be around these living springs. And that's what happens with the Holy Spirit when we don't underestimate His power and we have the humility to ask Him to fill us is we actually create entire spiritual ecosystems where people can come in and they're safe from the evils and the darkness of this world in our own hearts.

They're free from chronic addictions and sins. They're given purpose and creativity and life. That's what every Christian's life is supposed to be.

What every church multiplied beyond that is supposed to be. Just springs flowing up and just giving water to everything that needs it. How can we not in the face of that ask for more of the Holy Spirit? Jesus will not let us pretend.

If we say that we're going to follow Him, He will not let us pretend that we don't desperately need Him. Why does He want us to ask? Because asking humbles the mind and opens the heart. Asking humbles the heart and opens the soul.

To ask of God is to humble the mind and it is to open the soul. It is to put yourself in a moment of profound vulnerability. Even though my friend had called me.

Even though he said, I'd like to help you. I still didn't want to ask. And aren't we like that? Even though Jesus has come to you.

He said, I want to give you a gift. I want to give you the Holy Spirit. There is still part of us.

It's the sinful part of us that doesn't want to ask. But asking humbles the mind and it opens the soul. To ask for the Holy Spirit is to be very concrete in saying this.

I need God. I need His power. I need His strength.

I need His freedom. And He is to run my life. I'm in worship.

He tells me to kneel when no one else is kneeling. I kneel. I'm at work.

And as somebody who actually needs to hear of the love of God. I tell them. I have to give up all that I'd hoped for.

In a particular marriage dynamic for the sake of bettering my spouse. I give it up. So how do you ask for the Holy Spirit? Well, you can ask generally.

You can simply say. Lord Jesus, I want everything the Holy Spirit wants to give me. I want whatever gifts the Holy Spirit wants to give me.

Holy Spirit, if you would like me to prophesy of the goodness of God. Of the reality of God to others. I want to prophesy.

If you would like me to live in greater peace. I want to live in greater peace. You can give me your gifts.

You can give me your fruits. You can do the work in me. I want, Holy Spirit, whatever you want to give me.

Have you learned to pray that throughout your life? That's a constant Christian prayer. Would you give me, please? Whatever you desire to give me. And I won't control it.

I won't manage what you give me. I'll just receive it. Or you can pray very specifically.

Holy Spirit, I need your power in this particular situation. I am praying that all the time. When I remember.

But I forget to ask. I need your power in this particular interaction. Isn't it strange how we forget to ask for what is promised us? Can we stop? Let's just stop.

Pull out of this kind of listening to me. And let's practice this right now. So just bow your heads.

Give yourself a sense of space with the Lord. Just bow your head. And let's just right in this moment.

The hour is here, as the Bible says. To just ask the Holy Spirit. Maybe you want to ask him generally.

Maybe you want to ask him specifically. But I really would like you to have the courage to humble and ask. So we just say, come Holy Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit and give us courage to ask for more of you. As we ask for the Holy Spirit. That then draws us all the closer to Jesus.

Let's look at this next section. This Samaritan woman has asked. She says in verse 15, Sir, give me.

May I have this water? But I will not be thirsty again. And after she asks, then Jesus makes an ask of her. He wants to give her the Holy Spirit.

But her heart must be ready to receive the Holy Spirit. So now he asks, go call your husband and come here. Yes, I know it's not punctuated as a question.

But there's a question there behind it. Go call your husband and come here. What he's really saying is, can I have your whole heart? Will you tell me the entire truth about your heart? Will you tell me the reality of how you've truly lived your life? And the woman says in verse 16, 17.

I have no husband. Jesus will search for at least three years on this earth. And he will find very few who have the courage to tell the entire truth and say, in essence, I have no husband.

He's asked her for her heart and she has said, I have no husband. Jesus says to her, you were right in saying you have no husband. You've had five husbands and the one you have now is not your husband.

In ancient Near Eastern culture, it's very unlikely that she'd actually have like five marriage ceremonies. What's really being said is she's had five lovers. She's had at least six men there in the village, which is why she's coming out in the middle of the day and why she has been shunned.

She has lived an immoral life. She has lived a life that is contrary to the way of God. But she is open to admitting that.

She is humbling herself. Jesus now wants her heart and she says, I have no husband. To receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, we ask for the Holy Spirit and then we let Jesus ask of us our heart that he might fill our hearts when it is cleansed from sin.

The Holy Spirit is called the Holy Spirit for a reason. He is holy and holy means wholeness. Holy means living.

Holy means the reality that comes into ourselves and takes us over. And sin means death. Sin does not mean some exciting thing that you wish you could do, but you can't because it would be the wrong thing to do.

That's not what sin means. Sin means death. Sin means taking down wholeness.

Sin means fragmentation. The Holy Spirit will come in when we open up our hearts. Jesus comes very close.

We're absolutely honest. We tell the entire truth about our lusts. We tell the entire truth about our envies.

We tell the entire truth about our greed. We hold nothing back because his warmth has come so close and he's come with such mercy. He's come with such love.

How can we resist it? If you've never told the entire truth of Jesus, it's perhaps you haven't understood how close he wants to come. You haven't known how warm he is in his plea. Would you give me your heart that I can fill it with the Holy Spirit? I'm asking you.

There's this phenomenon in Chicago with the snowbanks and when they melt. And thank God we're enjoying this phenomenon finally. Okay, so we've had these epic snowbanks and they're really the size of this altar and higher.

We had them in front of our house and all of a sudden like in the last several days when we hit 60 on Friday, the snowbanks are gone and there's all this really nasty debris left behind. Have you noticed this? So like just in my yard alone, I didn't know that I had a two-month-old newspaper in there. I had no idea.

Must have been thrown on a day there was a blizzard. I had two large like broom brushes. They're this big. Two of them. Where'd they come from? They're not mine. 17 cigarette butts. Wrappers to some nasty piece of junk food. I don't know. It's just all over my yard.

I had no idea that stuff was there until the warmth of the spring sun came and melted it all down and then it's exposed. So Jesus comes. He has incredible warmth.

He melts the ice in our hearts and you see what's really there. But He melts it. He wants to show you.

I don't have to go looking around for nasty debris. There's plenty in my front yard. That's how it works with your sin being revealed.

It's a mercy to have your sin revealed. It comes from a closeness to Jesus. But He wants you to tell Him the entire truth.

Don't hold anything back today from the Lord. Big sin. Small sin.

Whatever sin is being exposed, don't hold anything back. I was in a meeting very recently and someone had come to me. They wanted to reconcile with me.

They had actually done some things that were very difficult against me and it had been several years and I just kind of had to live with that. It had been a very challenging relationship and they emailed me and said, I really want to meet with you. I didn't know what it was about.

I didn't know if they were going to apologize or not. I had no idea. So I showed up at the meeting and they said, I want to just start by saying this, Stuart.

I utterly sinned against you. I misperceived you. I misunderstood you.

I acted on things I never should have acted on. I did some really bad things against you. I wanted to pull you down.

I am so sorry. We began to talk about what had happened. We began to have a conversation, a very real conversation.

And what began to happen in the course of the conversation is I began to realize, as I began to unpack the circumstances around the way in which he had sinned against me, that I had also sinned against him. I hadn't remembered it until that moment. I hadn't remembered the circumstances.

But as they were being described, I realized that actually I was complicit in the whole situation. And frankly, to my horror in that moment where I wanted to come out clean and basically receive and do the work of saying, you're forgiven, I forgive you and be done with it and kind of make sure that we didn't get into a 50-50 thing because what he had done, I thought was so bad that my own sin was being exposed. And I had sinned against him as well.

I had gossiped against him. I had not been direct with him. I've been cowardly.

And in that moment, I had a choice. Will I tell the entire truth? I did. It was really hard.

But that's what Jesus wants. He wants the entire truth. Because He wants your entire heart.

Because He wants to give you a spring of living water welling up to eternal life. Ask for the Holy Spirit today, you all. Ask for the Holy Spirit.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

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