

# A Wonderful Reality The Spirit's Grief

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon delves into Ephesians 4:30, emphasizing the importance of not grieving the Holy Spirit who seals believers. It explores the practical and experiential aspects of our relationship with the Spirit, urging sensitivity to His presence and the reality of His grief. The sermon warns against grieving the Spirit, leading to a loss of His manifestations and a season of darkness, but also highlights the Spirit's faithfulness to restore and bring peace and joy in Christ.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:30, Romans 8:16, Romans 5:5, Romans 8:26, Zephaniah 3:18

**Topics:** "Grieving the Holy Spirit", "Restoration and Peace in Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We are in Ephesians 4. And this morning, God helping us, I intend to have us look at v. 30. Ephesians 4, v. 30, "...And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Again, "...And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Now I know some of you may not have been here from the beginning of Ephesians. You may be visiting with us.

You may have come after we started. Some of you may not remember. If you let your minds go back, chapters 1, 2, 3, Ephesians is a glorious, glorious letter.

And among its glory, it's kind of like Romans. Just glorious. And yet, in the midst of that glory, there are those verses that we go to often.

There are those rare jewels that just shine more magnificently than the rest. At least in our own estimation. This is one of those verses.

This verse right here, 4.30. If you were to ask me, okay, Ephesians, and even after preaching through it, what are the verses that I would go to? God being able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think. That's one that comes to my mind often. But this is also.

This is, think about this, this is a mighty verse. This is a theological verse. And this is a very, very practical verse.

And you understand what I mean. Practical. It's experiential.

You know what Paul's doing? He's envisioning something here. There's an encounter. This has to do with the life of the Christian.

This has to do with a relationship that we have with the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is being grieved. The Spirit of God is being grieved because of something we do.

There is a living encounter with the third Person of the Godhead in this passage. Paul assumes that we as Christians, he assumes first off these Ephesians, have some awareness of this reality. Now this is a practical application of the verses that we saw back at the beginning of Ephesians.

Ephesians 1, verses 13 and 14. In Christ, you also when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation and believed in Christ, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory. And you see, when he gets to the practical part of this letter, he's looking at these Ephesians and he says, you know, that's nice theology back there.

That's good to know. That's very rich doctrinally about the third Person of the Godhead and what happens and how we're sealed. But he comes in right here and he says, you know, there's a living relationship and that Spirit can be grieved.

He assumes an awareness of something. Now, right here, Paul actually gives us Luke probably gives it to us, an encounter that Paul had with some of these very Ephesians. Paul's writing this letter to the Ephesian Christians.

There was a time when Paul was traveling and he came to Ephesus. You don't have to turn there, but just listen to this. Acts 19.

Some of you know this. This is Ephesus. You know what I suspect? I suspect that when Paul penned this letter, these guys were probably there in the church.

They would have remembered. Here's Paul talking about the Spirit of God. They would have remembered another day that they had interaction with Paul where they were talking about the Spirit of God.

Listen to this. Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples.

And he said to them, did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? And they said, no. We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Now, let's just think about this passage for a second before we go back to Ephesians.

And what's going on here? Paul says, listen to what Paul says. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? The King James Version says since you believed. I mean, what's going on there? They say no.

No? No? No? You're believers and you didn't receive? Why is Paul even asking believers if they've received the Holy Spirit? Listen, isn't this the same guy that wrote Romans and said that if you don't have

the Spirit of Christ, you don't belong to Christ? Isn't that the same apostle? I mean, doesn't Paul have proper theology to know that if somebody's a believer, they must have the Spirit of God? Where does a question like this even come from? Now, look, I know this account might raise all sorts of questions in people's minds. And I'm not going to deal with that. That's not the text I'm preaching on.

But it's the question itself that I want to challenge us with. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Now let me ask you that. Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Now, you know what you can do? You can approach this one of two ways.

You can approach it theologically or you can approach it very practically, experientially. See, from a theological point, you know what you do? You say this. Theologically, I know from Scripture there is a Holy Spirit.

Number two, Scripture teaches that if you belong to Christ, you possess the Holy Spirit. That's your second proposition. Third proposition, I'm a Christian.

What's the conclusion? I have the Holy Spirit. You see, deduce that theologically. Now, you know where the problem can come in is if you're wrong on proposition number three, then you assume you're a Christian.

And you say, well, I'm a Christian, therefore, I must have the Spirit. Well, if you're wrong on that proposition, then you don't have the Spirit. You see, it can be faulty because the third proposition is very subjective.

It's about what happens to you. And that determines whether four is true or false. But then you can also approach this thing in a very experiential angle.

I mean, when you believed. Here's what I would ask you is this, from an experiential standpoint, when you believed, did you experience something? Because you know what happens to these guys? Whatever you want to say about them. What could you say about them? Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? They say no.

I mean, we might say, well, they must not have been true believers. A, that could be a possible answer. Two, this is a transitional time in the book of Acts and things didn't really stabilize like they are today.

Maybe you could reason that way. I've heard people talk about the transitional nature of the book of Acts. Or you could say, well, yes, they possessed it in the sense of being sealed by the Spirit.

But Paul's talking about something far more experiential, far more external, far more manifest. I mean, whatever you want to do and however you want to do this, I'll tell you what happened. These Ephesians had some correctness to their answer, maybe perfect correctness to their answer.

Because what happens is when they say no, we don't even know that there is such a thing as the Holy Spirit. What does Paul do? Paul baptizes them. And it's interesting that when they say no, Paul is immediately interested in their baptism.

That ought to... And there's some different reasons why that probably comes in to the equation. But we don't want to get into all that right now, but I'll tell you what happens. Paul baptizes them.

Paul lays hands on them. And then what happens? The Spirit of God comes upon them and they begin speaking in tongues. Something very external happens.

Something very practical. Something very experiential happens to these guys. And you know what? As we dive into Ephesians 4 and verse 30.

You know, when Paul's talking to these guys at Ephesus, think about these guys right here. They're sitting in the crowd. That letter came to Ephesus.

Somebody probably, one of the elders in the church stood up, hey, we've got a letter from Paul, and began reading it to the gathered assembly. Can you imagine these guys that were there back at that time? And they're like, oh yeah, we remember Paul. We remember things that had to do with the Spirit.

We remember how he laid hands on us. We remember how suddenly something had happened. And you know what? The Spirit of God is very real to them.

And now, Paul's talking to them about grieving the Spirit. And they're like, yeah, we know about the Spirit. We've had experiential dealings.

We've had an encounter. But see, I might ask you the same thing. And I think it's good to ask.

Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? I mean, are you aware of His presence? You know, you don't even talk like Paul talks in chapter 4, verse 30 of Ephesians, unless he's got some idea about the third Person of the Godhead actually being real to us. And there being some kind of relationship between us, some kind of experience between us. Are you sensitive of His presence? That would be the question.

Have you even heard that there is a Holy Spirit that experiences grief? I know theologically you might know it, but I'm saying personally and practically and experientially, do you know about this reality? Are you even gripped by it? Are you motivated by it? Are you pressed by this? Does this have any bearing on your life? Do you live your life in light of this reality? See, I think about this verse all the time. We're going to get into that more. But do you live your Christian life in the face of this reality? I might ask myself this question and you as well, all of us.

Did we receive the Holy Spirit when we believed? The grievable Spirit. Did we receive that Spirit? And do we know about that? Have we experienced that? I'm not so much interested in hearing what the proper theological answer is to this, but practically, experientially, or would we have to answer, no. We're not even aware there is such a Spirit.

I want us to put these two realities together. The Holy Spirit of God and grief. Grief.

I want us to put those two together. Listen, if there's a member of the Holy Trinity that is most likely to be depersonalized, it tends to be the Spirit of God. You have cults.

You have non-Trinitarian groups that want to relegate the Spirit to a force, to an influence, to a power. But you can't grieve lightning. You don't make gravity sorrow.

People, persons, experience grief. This is one of the most telling passages in our Bible about the nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is a person.

We disappoint persons. Think, if you start looking at the lexicons about the meaning of this word, oftentimes we think about grieving the Spirit because that's the way it comes across in most of our translations. Do you know Jung's literal translation? Very literal.

It has to do with making the Spirit sorrowful. Do you know that Thayer's Greek lexicon actually says that this word means to throw into sorrow? It's almost like we can even depersonalize grief because we so often heard grieving the Holy Spirit. We disappoint persons.

We hurt persons. We cause sorrow in persons. That's what grief is.

It's an emotion ascribed to a person. It means to cause sadness, to give pain to, to distress. Brethren, God help us to never forget the tenderness of the Spirit of God.

You know how I entitled my message? A Wonderful Reality, the Spirit's Grief. You say, is it really wonderful? It's wonderful in what it tells us about the Spirit of God. His sensitivity.

His feeling. It tells us that in salvation, the Spirit has put Himself into such a relationship with us so that it's possible for us to hurt Him. There is something incredibly precious about that.

There really is. Because I'll tell you who you have the ability to hurt most are the people who are closest to you. This says something about the relationship that we are in with our God that ought to be wonderful to you.

I mean, it's an astounding statement. Yes, now listen, there's something going on. There's a buzz.

It's been years now. There's a guy that was pastoring. And I knew him from when I lived in Michigan.

He was actually an elder up in Grand Rapids at one time. And he wrote an article on the emotions. And it stirred this whole movement of Reformed Baptist churches to begin to discuss the impassibility of God.

You know, this comes from the Westminster Confession of Faith that says that God has no passions. God is without passions. What do we say to that? Well, I would say this, I would say certainly, Scripture teaches that God does not change.

Don't we say God is immutable? But that doesn't mean that God is incapable of entering into deep and real and authentic personal relationships of love with His own creatures for whom He deeply cares and He feels and He responds to them. He responds to their condition. He responds to their sorrows.

He responds to their sins. You know, in God's immutability or whatever we want to call impassibility, God is very dynamic in Scripture. He's not stoic.

He's not static. And He's not immovable when it comes to the condition and the actions of men. Right? I mean, every page of Scripture, God is acting.

God is reacting. We need to face the God of Scripture. And you know, this whole association Reformed Baptist Churches of America split over this issue.

The God of Scripture reveals Himself as constantly involved in men's lives. I mean, what we have to recognize about the Spirit of God being able to be grieved is that one day, the Spirit isn't grieved with you, and on another day, He is. That's what Scripture means.

And obviously, He's talking to Christians. This is no eternal grief. The Spirit of God can be grieved with you.

But do you think that that's going to be God's condition and His reaction towards you for all eternity? Of course not. Was He grieved with David when David sinned and He sent the prophet to him? Of course He was. But was He grieved with him perpetually? Is He grieved with him now? No.

But God can react to our sin and He does react to our sin. Of course, His character does not change. His attributes don't change.

His promises don't change. But He is ever lively, dynamic, reactionary in His immutability. He's never impassively distant or unconcerned, impersonally detached.

There's never insensitivity, indifference. Look, and I recognize this, for a creature like me or you to be able to inflict sorrow upon the Person of God, He has to be willing for that to happen. But, brethren, nothing happens against His will.

But God is willing to have His Holy Spirit experience grief and sorrow and hurt over what Christians do or don't do. That's clear from this passage. You can't get away from that.

God Himself says so. So before we all split over the impassibility of God, let us just remember these words. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Brethren, I want you to feel this. And I don't want you to turn to all these, but you just listen to these. You know them.

But let's just pack them all together to get a feeling about the Spirit of God. We have just a marvelous, an amazing God. Listen to what Scripture says.

Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. You say, wow, that's severe. I mean, if that's so severe, what happens if you speak against Christ? It must be really bad, right? Right? Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven.

Does that rock you a little bit? Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin. Why? What were they saying? They were saying He has an unclean spirit. You call the Spirit unclean? Wow! What happens? Acts 5. Ananias and Sapphira, the land was theirs to do with what they wanted to.

They sold it. They had the money from it. They came and they gave part.

They didn't give it all. Peter says it was yours to do with as you wanted. But you see, the problem with Ananias and Sapphira was that they lied.

He doesn't say you lied to the father. He doesn't say you lied to the son. He says you lied to the Holy Spirit.

And then Sapphira walks in and he says, not you tested the father, not you tested the son. Why has Satan put it in your heart to test the Holy Spirit? Do you remember Stephen with the Jews on the day he died? He said, you guys are just like your fathers. Stiff-necked and you're always resisting.

Not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He says, resisting the Spirit. This is how Scripture talks.

Paul says this isn't a spirit of slavery. This is the spirit of adoption. He causes you to cry, Abba, Father.

You read a little further in that chapter. We heard this when our brother Mark was here just a few weeks back. You know what that spirit does? He aids our prayers through groaning.

You move further through Scripture, you know this. You know that the author of Hebrews, he starts talking about if you go on in your sin after you've come to a knowledge of the truth, he says, how much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who is trampled underfoot? The Son of God has profaned the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified and has outraged the Spirit of grace. And a lot of the translations say insulted.

I mean, look, you may think of other adjectives when you hear all these verses besides sensitive. And there are. But certainly, the Spirit of God is set forth as that Person of the Holy Trinity who feels and responds.

It's almost like the Spirit of God is set forth. I mean, if you lie, it's to Him. If there's an unpardonable sin, He's there.

If there's groaning, He's there. If there's grief or sorrow or hurt, He is the one that steps forward. That's how the Spirit is set forth in Scripture.

Sensitive. Sensitivity. The Holy Spirit of God is personal.

He reacts. He responds. He groans.

He feels. He grieves. So here's a question I want to ask you.

What's your greatest motive to not sin today? Take it in context. What's your greatest motive to no longer walk like Gentiles do? What's your greatest motive to put off the old man which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt? What is that? What's your greatest motive to put away falsehood? V. 25? To not let the sun go down on your anger? To not steal? To not speak corrupt communication? What is your greatest motive? What is that? Right here is where I ask you this. Do you even know that there is a Holy Spirit? You see, it comes in very practically right at this point.

What do we say to that? How do we respond? Those Ephesians of old said, no, we've not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Is that what we sound like we're saying when we ask what the greatest motive is for us no longer walking like we had never been taught by Christ? You see, it's the thing. It's that thing.

It's the thing a man puts first to this question that really tells us where he stands and how biblical his view of Christian sanctification is. This is the test. Is the whole of our life and our conduct centered primarily around how our sin affects our relationship with God? Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Why put off the old man? Why put on the new? You say, well, that's the right thing to do. Yes, but is that all? I mean, why would you tell yourself don't sin, I shouldn't sin, I should refrain from that, I should flee that, I should flee fornication, I should flee youthful passions, I should run, I should gouge out eyes, I should cut off hands. Why? Well, it's in my best interest.

Yeah, it is. But you know, so much of the popular pop Christian psychology, I mean, isn't that what it's all about? The counseling today centers around come to us and we'll fix you. We'll make your life good.

We'll fix the troubles. Are you constantly defeated? Are you constantly falling? Come to us, we'll fix it all. It centers around ourselves.

Fix your marriage, it's good for you. It's great for your family. But what isn't Paul saying here? He isn't saying, hey, Ephesians, you know what? You want to stop being defeated? You want to start being happy? You want to start getting great enjoyment out of your life? Well, then, stop doing this and do the other.

I mean, look, of course, sin is destructive. Not doing it is going to be beneficial for you, but is that all? You say, well, God commands that I live a certain way. And yes, He does.

But I mean, I would ask you, is Paul simply appealing to these Ephesians to conform to some law or moral code? Is his appeal here even remotely on a legal level? I mean, look, commandments, they're good. Christ says if you love Me, You'll keep My commandments. Commandments are good.

They give us direction. They give us expressions of God's will. They're necessary.

But is that all? It's not all. Here's the Christian way of killing sin. This is the biblical way of looking at the whole subject of sanctification.

It's being mindful of the place God plays in this. It ought to never be a question of simply, how can I get rid of certain sins? Instead, Paul would have us think of the Spirit. Yes, we could think of the Father.

Yes, we could think of the Son. But you know what? This ought to give us sufficient incentive. We have been sealed.

We have been sealed by the Spirit. He hasn't sealed us. The Spirit hasn't sealed us.

God has sealed us with the Spirit. The Spirit Himself is the seal. We've been sealed by the Spirit of God.

In him, remember, Paul's drawing on something that he already said here. I already read it, but listen to it again. In Christ, you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believed in Christ, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

Our lives are marked. They're stamped. They're sealed by the Holy Spirit and His presence.

Scripture says, do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you? And think about this. What a gracious, willing, powerful, sensitive guest you have that has come and taken up residency within you. The very greatness of His Person ought to be enough to compel you to holy living.

Do you even think that way? I'm thinking all the time, I don't want to do this because I don't want God grieved. And if you think about what the opposite of grief is, what are the antonyms of grief? Yeah, that's an obvious one. Does God constantly rejoice over His people? Is there a verse somewhere in the Bible that says that? Like Zephaniah? That's one of the minor prophet texts you should all know.

Zephaniah 3.18. But anyway, don't turn there. Let's press this further. What is it that grieves Him? We need to ask that.

Now, we might want to start with what should be most obvious, but perhaps is not. How about when Christians say we've not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit? And look, I'm not talking about denying the theological reality of that. I'm talking about you living your life where you're just basically indicating you're not even cognizant of that reality.

You don't live your life day by day in light of Ephesians 4.30. Sinning, you don't think about how it affects God. You don't think about how it affects the Spirit of God. You don't think about how it grieves Him.

You don't think about how it affects your relationship. Isn't that a good place to start with the things that grieve the Spirit of God? What kind of things grieve Him? Well, how about this? How about ignoring Him? How about living like He's not even there? Not caring how what we do or do not do affects Him. I mean, I think this is a good place to start.

Am I even conscious of Him? This comes down to God's glory. This comes down to the greatness of His Person. This comes down to the fact that, look, what do you think? You think in the course of your life and all the people you interact with at work, at home, at school, out in the world as you go out there, let's evaluate the greatness of all the Persons and then dwelling within your body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, you have the Holy Spirit.

Let's rate all these people from least to greatest. Who do you think's on the end of the greatest? And yet, you live your life like He's not even there? You make decisions? You sin? You grab hold of that mouse? Think about the things that you do. Are you even conscious of Him? I mean, you think about a man and a woman.

You know, man meets girl. What immediately begins to happen? They begin to fall in love with each other and what's happening? You know what? More and more, He is making decisions based on how they affect her. And if He's not, the girl shouldn't marry Him.

He doesn't care anything about her. But when a man falls in love, what does he start doing? When these two fell in love, here they are, happily married. David began to think about her.

How does this affect her? How does this impact her? That's what happens. Can you imagine this? Imagine David comes home from work tomorrow and he walks past Ruth like he doesn't even know her. He doesn't talk to her.

He doesn't look at her. And he just lives his life like she's not there. You want to know a certain way to grieve her? Fill her with sorrow? Fill her with anger? Fill her with some kind of hostility? Fill her with deep hurt? It would be that.

I mean, one of the things you don't want to do with chapter 4, verse 30, is just live like it's not a reality. You want to know a certain way to grieve. In the very text that says not to grieve Him, if you live your life where you basically deny and refuse and ignore that passage, that's a good way to grieve Him in itself.

Just ignore Him. Live like He's not there. Brethren, the reality is that it's always the case that the closer you get together with somebody, the closer you come together, the closer the more love there is, the closer the affection, the more we can hurt one another.

People who are far and distant from us, they have the least ability to hurt us. It's the people that are closest. And you know what the Spirit of God is saying here? I love you.

I have come into your life. I have come into your life to help you. I have come into your life to show you Christ and to glorify Him to you and to change you into the image of Him.

I have come to put on your lips, Abba, Father. I am the Spirit of adoption. I have come in as that seal that you are a child of God and to resonate in your own spirit.

I'm going to be the voice that speaks to you. You are a child of God. You are a child of God.

In those dark seasons, you are a child of God. He has come in there to love you and to help you. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, He's there to sanctify you, to give you the power for Christ to dwell in your hearts by faith, to empower you to resonate with the very image of Christ in your own life.

That's the reality. Let's take Ephesians 4.30 in context. Listen to this.

You should grab this. In context. This hasn't just come out of nowhere.

When Paul says, in Him you also, when you heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, let me tell you something. Oftentimes, when Greek passages are translated over into English, pronouns aren't in the original and they're assumed. Sometimes it's based on the verbs in the original, but you know what? Paul, on purpose, puts two pronouns in the original.

You and your. And you know what? They're plural. You say, what does that mean? What it means is this, the way we interact with each other, you and me as Christians, I have the Spirit in me.

You have the Spirit in you when we do not live with one another like you do things like the Corinthians did. The rich don't wait for the poor. You think you're taking the Lord's Supper.

It's not really the Lord's Supper. You sue one another. You see how the Spirit is doubly grieved? Because He's in me and He's in you.

The same Person deeply loves you and deeply loves me. And when there's conflict there, listen, you get that from those two pronouns? I'm just saying this, that when He talks about us having this Spirit as a seal, He's not just talking about one person here. He's talking about every one of us that are children of God possess the very same Spirit.

And you know what happens as you move further through this letter? You get this, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love. Listen to this. Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit.

The unity of the Spirit. There's one body and one Spirit. And you know what happens? Right couched around this verse that says that we should not grieve the Spirit, remember, why do we put away falsehood? For the sake of speaking to one another truth.

For we're members one of another. Why don't you let the sun go down on your anger? Because you don't want to be angry with one another. Why do you not steal anymore? So that you can work labor with your

hands.

You can be doing this hard work, honest work with your own hands so that you can share with one another. Why do you not speak corrupting communication? It's so that we can administer grace to one another. And then you know what happens right after this verse, verse 30? If you go to verse 31 and verse 32, let all bitterness, wrath, eat, anger, clamor, slander be put away from you, along with malice.

Why? Just to do it? Just because that helps you be a better person? Look, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. You see all the one another's here? You want to know what grieves the Spirit? What obviously is grieving the Spirit is when we don't pull for this unity of the Spirit. The Spirit has been given to every one of us.

You want to grieve the Spirit? You know what cheers the Spirit, makes glad the Spirit, causes rejoicing in the Spirit? It's not just that you don't sin. It's that you're loving one another. The things that seem to grieve the Spirit so much are things like people in the church and one group's following one preacher and one group's following another preacher.

And you get people taking one another to court before the unbelievers. You'd better be defrauded than do that. You see, this is the level at which the Spirit is sensitive that we maintain that relationship between ourselves.

Now I just want to finish with this. I want to warn you. This is a warning.

Because this verse is a warning. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. If you grieve the Holy Spirit, you will suffer for it.

And you'll dishonor Him. You hurt Him. Listen, He's hurt by things that dishonor Him.

He's hurt by things that are bad. He's the Holy Spirit. He's hurt by things that are unholy.

Listen, we need to face the facts. We need to face ourselves. I come across people... I mean, in 20 years of pastoring, I come across people that are in the midst of some kind of spiritual depression.

They're down. They're out. They're cold.

They're defeated. They're dry. The passion that they once had is gone.

Their first love. They wonder where it went. It flew away like a dove.

You ask them, you know what happens? You get around people like that. And you say, tell me about your life. Well, you know, tell me about your sin.

Well, it's not really that bad. You know, I'm kind of okay. I've seen this over and over throughout the years.

People try to deflect the question. Oh, you know, yeah, I'm not doing perfect, but things are not that bad. I'm not really suffering that bad.

I'm alright. But you begin to press the issue. You press them about their sin.

You find that most of the time, we come into seasons of cold, dry, damp, discouraged, depression. Look at your life. Face the facts.

Face the reality. Face your sin. Face yourself.

The reality is that these people ultimately when you press the issue, they've departed from God. They've drifted from God. They've become worldly.

They've fallen into sexual sin. They've become a couch potato. They have resisted the Spirit's impressions, the Spirit's convictions.

They've done it over and over. And they've gone headlong into something and they've allowed it to take a grip on their life. And that's the reality.

And they're responsible. And they've grieved the Spirit. And I warn you, I warn you, people grieve the Spirit.

And yes, there is forgiveness. If you confess your sins, you know what Scripture says. He is faithful and just to forgive our sins.

And yes, that is a reality. But you know what happens? People by their own grievous conduct bring such responses upon themselves from the Holy Spirit of God as to throw themselves into the abyss of darkness for a season. And if you grieve Him, it will inevitably result in the loss of the Spirit's gracious manifestations.

The manifestations of His presence. And you will lose them. Well, you may get them back, but I'll tell you what, oftentimes that season where you have lost them goes on far longer than you ever imagined it would.

And even sometimes when you start confessing those sins, the light doesn't come, the sun doesn't begin to shine again for a good season. Brethren, I warn you, you don't want to go here. You grieve Him and He will withdraw from you.

And that's the grief that you will feel because of His grief. He'll disappear. And I've been witness to this.

Over these years, I've seen Christians go through the most dark and horrid seasons imaginable. Why? Why? Because they grieve the Holy Spirit and He's withdrawn His manifestations from them. You lose a sense of God's love.

You know what Scripture says. Scripture says in Romans 5 that God's love has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. You grieve that Spirit, you don't feel that love being poured into your heart.

You know what else Scripture says? Scripture says there in Romans 8.16 that the Spirit Himself, Himself, He bears witness with your spirit that you're children of God. But you want to quiet that voice? Just grieve Him. And you know what will happen? Oftentimes, you don't find it so easy just to run to God and confess your sins.

You don't find it so easy just to believe that if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. You know why you don't believe that so easily? Because the Spirit is withdrawn and He's let the devil in there. And the devil comes right in.

He strips away your confidence. He tells you you're lost. He tells you there's no hope.

You look up. You don't have assurance. It's gone.

It's got wings and it's flown away. The joy is gone. You no longer possess that certainty that you had.

You think you're hell bound. The devil is just screaming. He's laughing at you.

Though you are a child of God, listen, if you're sealed, a seal is permanent. And the Spirit is that seal. You can't be unsealed.

That is the seal of God Himself. But you will have that season and you will have no peace, no confidence, no certainty, no joy. The evidences of being sealed will become faint or they will disappear altogether.

You know what Scripture says. Comfort ye, comfort ye My people. No, but you look up after you've wallowed in that sin and resisted the Spirit of God when He's been calling to you.

That is not the right way. Come away. And you've gone headlong into that sin and now there's no comfort.

And you wake up and you're just gripped by fear and you're gripped by a sense of abandonment. Where is He? Helpless, hopeless, abandoned. By your presumption, your persistence in that resistance of Him, the Spirit has been made to sorrow and He's grieving.

And He'll immerse you in such grievous experiences and agonies of soul that you never need to have endured. But because of your own hardness, your stubbornness, your lack of sensitivity to Him, you run into sin. Listen, we're not islands.

You run into sin and you begin to affect those other people that He wants you, all the one and others, that He wants you forgiving, He wants you giving to, He wants you building up, He wants you administering grace. You know what happens when you come in seasons like this? You don't even want to be in here. You don't want to be around God's people.

And you're not the help to them because your joy's gone. You come and there's this look on your face, on your brow. You make the Spirit to sorrow.

What does He always do? The beauty of all of it is that the Spirit of Christ never abandons a child of God. A seal is a seal. And the seal can never be broken.

And the Spirit is that seal, God's seal. And you know what the Spirit does even though we go through these seasons. He comes again.

And He begins to speak peace. And all afresh and anew, He will put the Lord Jesus Christ before your eyes. And you will once again anew and afresh see Him as King and Lord and Savior who shed His blood, who died in agony and did it for you and paid the price.

And the Spirit will let you know once again that you're still a child of God. And suddenly, the smile of God will break in upon you again. And He'll restore you to the joy of your salvation.

But I warn you, do not grieve the Spirit. Because look, what Paul is saying to you is you need not go through that season. You need not experience that.

Don't. Don't hurt Him who means to do you so much good. Don't hurt Him who gives you the power to put to death the deeds of the flesh.

Don't hurt Him who groans with you and over you in prayer. Don't do that. Don't hurt Him who is the Spirit of adoption and loves to have it so that you're crying, Abba, Father, and to make you certain that the Father receives you as a son.

Don't hurt Him who came to glorify Christ and to make Him great. Don't hurt Him who is the Lord, who is the Spirit, who transforms you from one degree of glory to the next. Don't hurt that Spirit.

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. He cares for you. This is the matter.

This is the real substance of the Kingdom. It's this. It's that righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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