

Discipleship Lesson-4: The Spirit of God Teaching them about the Source of an Endless Stream of Divine Power for Abundant Living

John 7:37-39

As we open to John 7 today, we are doing so because:

DISCIPLESHIP IS ALL ABOUT THE BASICS:

1. **Salvation:** First we covered understanding salvation & baptism.
2. **Scriptures:** Next we covered the Scriptures and feeding our souls daily.
3. **Spirit Fullness:** Today we learn about the Holy Spirit.

At the instant of salvation each of us became the Temple of God: Who begins to live within us as God the Spirit, the Comforter.

That truth is the source of a lifetime of wonderful blessing, and an endless supply of Divine power in order for each of us to live the abundant life promised by Jesus Christ our Savior.

Welcome to the lesson in personal discipleship when we introduce the work of Spirit of God in our lives as believers. The best place to start is where Jesus explained what the Holy Spirit does inside of us. Turn there with me to John 7:37-39.

AN OVERFLOWING LIFE IS A CHOICE

Jesus explained the Holy Spirit in our lives by using the image of a strong river of water flowing out of us. Each day we must choose to seek after God in our lives as believers. Not making a choice is the choice to neglect God. We either choose or neglect God each day.

Just as getting into the Scriptures is a choice each day, so also is staying filled with the Holy Spirit. It's not automatic, like an online payment. Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, and Spirit-prompted life is a series of choices. Choices to love, obey, follow, surrender, and seek God's control and power.

A lot of people think the Christian life is like auto-pay—it's not. We have to discipline ourselves to be remaining full and controlled by the Holy Spirit. In John

7:37, first Jesus describes salvation when He said: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." That is salvation. That is coming to Him in faith and being supernaturally saved. Then Jesus described the result of salvation in verse 38: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

Did you hear how Jesus described the normal life of the believer? God planned that the life of a born again person become like a flowing river of life. Not anything like a little trickle—He said Rivers of water. What does that mean?

Rivers of water would mean that when we were saved the Spirit of God comes into our lives making us joyous and thankful.

RIVERS OF JOY

When God's Spirit flows out of our lives we are so excited about all our sins being gone. In fact when we are involved with communion, it is such a time of remembering of what Jesus did.

This morning as we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we remember that He gave Himself for us. I have known about that since I was old enough to sit up and stay awake in church. I had been in church every Sunday of my life except when I was sick or my parents were on vacation; and even then we acted like we were at church on Sunday. You know what? I got used to it.

I remember when I first married Bonnie and we were standing at Grace Community Church, our first time as a couple. We were at a communion service and all of a sudden I looked over and my brand new bride had tears run down her eyes—she was just crying. I said what's wrong? She said nothing's wrong, I just can't believe the Lord forgave me. I said—to cry about it? And then I thought, yes.

The joyous streams of the Holy Spirit cause us to be so thankful that we are forgiven.

When God's Spirit flows out of our lives, the Bible seems just like having God talking to us. When we are full of Him as you read this Book and start over again, perhaps in the New Year, it's just like having God talk to us. That's what it's like Jesus said- when out of us flow rivers of living water.

When God's Spirit flows out of our lives, prayer is so natural and uncluttered. It feels like the stars overhead have parted and we are walking right

into Heaven before God's Throne. We just talk and walk with the Lord. Each day it seems like all of life is brand new.

SALVATION STARTS THE RIVER FLOWING OUT OF OUR LIVES

That's what Jesus says in verse 38—Rivers, literally torrents, cascading, gushing waters coming out of us. That is the normal Christian life. God wants us to have a mighty river of water of the Holy Spirit flowing out of our lives.

New life as God made it, is to be with that mighty river of water flowing out of our lives.

At salvation we were refreshed, we were victorious, we were rejoicing, we were serving joyfully. The Holy Spirit was flowing through our new lives like the rivers of water. That is the life of a believer as God intended it to be.

But what happens when we slowly neglect to make that choice to surrender and seek the power of the Spirit filling our lives?

OUR NEW HOUSE LESSON

In 1995 through the love, prayers, and hard work of so many friends we moved into our very first new home of our lives. I still remember walking around that house—everything worked. It was fun—every fixture, every faucet, every light, every door shut, it was unbelievable. It was fantastic, especially considering the size of our family.

The bathtub was the size of our old plastic swimming pool, and easily held all three of the little buddies and all their toys in an ocean of warm water. In fact the water roared out of that new plumbing with a roar and flow that sounded an awful lot like the Niagara Falls. It seemed the water lines into our house were enlarged and very strong.

The washing machine was stainless steel, oversized and of such oceanic capacity -- that any mountain of laundry would just disappear into that huge cavern. It was a small wonder to hear and see how fast the load would start as a torrent of water cascaded down upon the clothes like a geyser. It seemed like the water pressure into our house was like a fire hydrant.

The dishwasher was huge and once the dishes were parked in their spaces the roar of water and swishing was amazing. In fact it seemed that it started almost as soon as we shut the front because the water pressure of this new home was so strong.

And the shower, whew, what an experience. Hot and strong came that flow. It was almost like we had built the house over Old Faithful the geyser. Just turn the handle and POW, out came the waterfall. What a shower system we had.

We thought it was a great house and we all loved it. That was just before Thanksgiving. We had family coming in for Christmas to show off our new house.

Bonnie used to be able to get a load of clothes done in a half hour. But something happened one day the week before our first Christmas there in Tulsa. Bonnie noticed that the washer slowed down day by day until it took all day to just do one load. We didn't think any thing about it after a while.

Then we noticed the dishwasher took 3 to 4 hours to do one small load, instead of 30 minutes. Then, the shower began to wilt, until the only way to get wet was to stand directly under the trickle out of the showerhead, and even then it was pitiful.

At first it was just a bother; but then even the toilets, joined the bathtub and washer slowing to nearly a stop. We were horrified, our new home was ruined, it was broken plumbing we thought. A pipe burst in the slab or worse, the city waterline that ran under our cement approach to the garage. We had nightmare scenarios of backhoes and mud and a torn up lawn and yard as we called our builder. He smiled over the phone and said he knew exactly what was wrong.

In 15 minutes he arrived whistling and still smiling. While we wrung our hands showing him all the terrible non-functioning appliances and fixtures – he just smiled. And then after all our grief and disappointment at our new home was all spilled out he said to follow him. He walked to our coat closet, a.k.a under stairs tornado closet, a.k.a. kids hideaway; and knelt down chuckling.

He asked “Do you have any two or three year olds that play in here?” In a moment he stood and said, go try the shower.

We ran and voila, Niagara Falls was back. He opened his hand and there was the small shut off valve handle that one of our precious buddies had been slowly turning bit by bit each day, until the rivers of water into our home were choked, quenched and nearly shut out of the house.

Why am I giving you the My Old House show? Because the experience of the water, slowly getting choked out of our home, is so clearly a picture of what happens so often to so many believers!

ARE YOU QUENCHED

Jesus talked about such a strong flow of water in a spiritual sense. Lets turn there to John 7.37-38. Rivers of water is the way Jesus describes the normal life of believers, His children. Please stand and join me reading these verses:

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus said I want rivers of water to flow out of your lives. Rivers of water would mean that when we were saved He flowed out of our lives making us joyous and thankful.

I want you to be excited about your sins being gone.

I want you to read the Bible like it was God meeting with you and talking to you.

I want you to be flowing in your prayers to Me. He flowed out of our lives making prayer was so natural and uncluttered. It felt like the stars overhead had parted and we were walking right into Heaven before God's Throne.

THE JOY OF OUR SALVATION

You know what? That's how people are when they get saved. It's unbelievable. They just can't get enough of the Bible, they can't get enough of the fellowship with God's people, they can't tell enough people that their sins are forgiven. They can't tell enough people how they can be saved.

And that is life as God made it to be with that mighty river of water flowing out of our lives. We were refreshed, we were victorious, we were rejoicing, we were serving joyfully. The Holy Spirit was flowing through our new lives like the rivers of water that flowed in that new house of ours. That is the life of a believer as God intended it to be.

Then slowly something happened. You know what? The little "turning off the water valve" of the grieving and quenching of the Holy Spirit starts constricting little by little the water pipe of the Holy Spirit in their life.

Almost imperceptibly things start drying up in their life; and almost without knowing it, their lives become waterless and barren and dry.

WATCH OUT FOR SIGNS OF SPIRITUAL DROUGHT

That is exactly what happens when the water valve of our spiritual lives is twisted shut by sin. And that is what the Bible describes as Quenching and Grieving the Holy Spirit. We are given the command to keep our lives filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are to walk in Him, live through Him, bear fruit by Him, and overcome sin with Him as our Sword of the Word.

Look at Ephesians 4:30 with me.

Have you entered a time of spiritual drought in your spiritual life? You have:

—If you have gone from first being saved and excited to: **now being not even sure you are saved;**

—If you have ever gone from overwhelming desire to flee sin and resist temptation to: **now you are so discouraged you can't resist anything and you are just taking anything that comes;**

—If you have gone from voraciously reading your Bible and marking and underlining and memorizing to: **now you would rather sit and fall asleep in front of the television...**

TIME TO CALL YOUR BUILDER FOR A REPAIR VISIT

Then let me give you a little diagnostic here because I think you need the Builder to come by and go into your closet and find out what has turned your water valve off—OK? This is what it says in Ephesians 4 starting in verse 25:

²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. ²⁶"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷nor give place to the devil. ²⁸Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. ²⁹Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Now that's an imperative- a command- a direct command from God. He said your responsibility verse 30- do not grieve the Holy Spirit. He is the one who has sealed you for the day of redemption. What are some grievors? Well, verses 25 to 29 are a bunch, verse 31 continues:

³¹Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. ³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

For all of our earthly life it is God's Holy Spirit that is our lifeline for all that we need to make it. It says in verse 30 if we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, it is like we are cranking down the water line of our life. We grieve Him and cause his influence to be abated in our lives. That is what happens- the spiritual water valve of our lives is twisted shut. That is what the Bible describes as grieving and **quenching** the Holy Spirit. We are to keep our lives---- in fact, look at chapter 5 and verse 18 because here is the parallel commandment---- as much as the Holy Spirit---- we are commanded by God in the imperative mode not to grieve Him. We are equally commanded in chapter 5 and verse 18--

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.

Be constantly being filled.

Make it your constant endeavor to never allow the Holy Spirit to not be filling and overflowing your life is what Paul is telling us.

That is what the great training coach of the winning lifestyle believers—the apostle Paul tells us. Let's look at a little theology of the Holy Spirit and I want to make this morning, this communion a morning of preparation for the fullness of God's Spirit.

WE NEED THE SPIRIT'S POWER SO WE CAN GLORIFY GOD

Look back with me at 1 Corinthians 6, and ponder whether or not the Holy is cascading out of your life or whether you are in spiritual drought.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (this is His headquarters, His abode, His ministry center, His home, His holy place, this is where He comes and abides) who is in you, whom you have from God (He is a gift from God), and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore **glorify** (**ao**rist

active imperative this is God's request) God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Whenever you bump into these imperatives and there are 562 of them in the New Testament and they are a great study as you are reading through the Bible—you ought to find them and underline them—but as you go through these are not the options, these are the commands, these are what God wants).

Therefore **glorify**: What He is saying is because the Holy Spirit is making headquarters in you, do everything necessary to keep Him from being grieved and quenched.

It is my duty to say no to any thing that will shut off the valve of the Holy Spirit's working in my life. It's my job to make sure that nothing constricts Him, nothing stops the flow of the Spirit in my life. That's a command.

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HE CAN RESTORE THOSE RIVERS OF JOY

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When God's Spirit flows out of our lives, prayer is so natural and uncluttered.