

The Salvation of the Gentiles, Part 5

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Some of you may remember reading *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* at some time in your life; and, if you did, you will remember there was a rather troublesome character by the name of Huck Finn; and Huck Finn was in the...the simplest sense a rather undesirable type. On one occasion, Huck had tried to infiltrate Tom's gang; and the dialogue went something like this, as reported to us by Mark Twain:

"Now, Tom, hain't you always been friendly to me? You wouldn't shut me out, would ya, Tom?"

To which Tom replied, "Huck, I wouldn't want to, and I don't want to; but what would people say? Why, they'd say, 'Humph, Tom Sawyer's gang, pretty low characters in it.' They'd mean you, Huck, and you wouldn't like that, and I wouldn't, either."...

You know, adults play games like that...less obviously, but, you know, we want an exclusive fellowship. We want the fellowship of the pure. The pure are those who think like we do; and we want the fellowship of the deserving, those who would be so gratified to have your presence around; and we usually manage somehow within the framework of our structure to screen out anybody who doesn't enhance our image, strengthen our viewpoint, boost our pride, reinforce our prejudice, or feed our ego; and we...we sort of clannishly group in these little kind of identifying circles; and it's amazing how difficult it is for us, who are in another circle, to break into another circle, or for us to feel at home.

I had a perfect illustration of this as I was taken through the Canyon Country Club in Palm Springs by a very wealthy oil man from Canada who, after he had shown me his \$500,000.00 summer home, winter home there, then decided to take us to play golf when I was in Palm Springs; and it was funny, because I didn't know what to do. I'd never been around rich folks, and the first thing I tried to do was open the car door myself. Can you imagine? And I was immediately reprimanded, because there were people who did that; and then I tried to take the golf bag outta the trunk; and another man said, "Sorry, sir, you don't need to do that. We will take care of that." I even tried to open the door, you know, going into the building, and there were ladies there who did that; but I just was way out of my...I got in there, and a man asked me if I wanted me...if he wanted to shine my shoes, you know, and I...I couldn't believe what I was seeing, you know, and hearing.

But it was a whole different...of course, they knew I didn't belong. I mean I wasn't dressed right to begin with; and, secondly, I kept doing the wrong thing; and I just didn't fit, you know. But, very often, we see...we recognize this within our society. There are these...these segmented groups of people...and, you know, it's an interesting thing; but if you go back to the early church, you find the same thing was in reality happening there. It shouldn't have, but it did.

The church was born in Jerusalem, and it was comprised mostly of Jews at the beginning. In fact, exclusively of Jews with only some half-breed Samaritans incorporated with Jerusalem Jews, Hellenistic Jews, and then this group of Samaritans; and the church had become pretty much identified with Judaism; and, in fact, there had grown up within this wonderful church that's been just blossoming in the first nine chapters, there had grown up within this a party, a faction of people called the Circumcision Party; and they had come to the conclusion that the only way into Christianity was through the foyer of Judaism. You couldn't get into Christianity unless you came through Judaism; and in order to fence out undesirables, they made circumcision the standard; and that was their way of keeping Gentiles at arm's length. Unless you had the physical rite of circumcision, you could not enter into Judaism; and...and they made Judaism sort of the...the room before Christianity; and so they had decided that the way to keep undesirables out was to make them be circumcised; and circumcision became the fence that kept the undesirables out.

Well, Jesus was in the business of smashing fences, and this was one that had to go; and so as you come to the 10th chapter of the Book of Acts, the Lord adds to the church Gentiles. The pagans who were despised by the Jews and who, incidentally, despised the Jews, as well, who were thought to be unclean, in whose home Jews would never go, whose food Jews would never eat, and so forth and so on. He includes them into the church, into the one body with the Jews. Now, this is not going to be an easy thing, but our Lord had already designed to build one body. As Ephesians 2 says, "To make one new man, to join together Jew and Gentile. As Ephesians 3 said, "The mystery of the church was Jew and Gentile one in Christ."

This was God's design to have one group of people who were His own, His body, His channel to the world; and so the Gentiles had to be reached...but the Jews believed that the uncircumcised were alienated from God. They were corrupt, and so forth and so on; and this ultra-Judaistic, ultra-conservative group segmented away within even the framework of the early church and tried to hold onto such distinctives as circumcision; and, really, they shouldn't have. There was no basis for it, because, in the Old Testament, the Bible had very clearly outlined the fact that God didn't play favorites. Peter says in verse 34, "I perceive this. I'm learning this. That God is no respecter of persons." That's not anything new. That's something old. Way back in the Old Testament, and last week I gave you three or four passages where it indicates that God says, "I am not a respecter of persons. I play no favorites."

And so Peter should've known that at this time, even though it took him a while to get it; and the Jews should've known it who knew the Old Testament. In addition to that, Jesus Himself had even said as much. Jesus said to them in the...in the parting words, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to Jews," right? No, "To every creature." And He said, "Make disciples and baptize 'em in the name of Christ." And so Jesus had clearly indicated that the...that the fellowship in Christ was non-exclusive, that it was wide open, and it was available to all. So there really shouldn't have been any reason for this whatsoever; but, nevertheless, in the Judaistic traditional framework, it had grown up.

In Galatians 3:26, Paul says, "You are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. As many as you have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, so there is neither Jew nor Greek. You're all one in Christ. That's the message of Christianity. There's no distinction of race at all."...When Christ came, God's promise was fulfilled, and God's promise was this: That in Abraham's seed, all the families of the earth should be blessed, and it was not that salvation was of the Jews inclusively, but that it was of the Jews in order that they might preach its complete freedom to the rest of the world. And so, really, they weren't given the Gospel as an end, but a means.

Now, when you look around the world, you find that all men are equally in need of salvation. All men are equally unable to provide it, so God provides it equally for all men, and there can be no prejudice. Christ came to be Savior to the world.

Well, this didn't come easy to Jews, believe me; and Peter had to learn through a series of things. First God had given him a vision. God had broken down his prejudice in regard to Samaritans. In the house of Simon, the tanner, he had broken down some of the other things that Peter had felt strongly about in terms of traditional background; and little by little, Peter's attitudes were beginning to break down; and, finally, here, he says he admits, "I see God's no respecter of persons," and so God has prepared him; and he's ready to preach to Cornelius.

Now, Cornelius is a Gentile, a ruler, really in a real sense, because he ruled over a hundred men in the army of Rome; and Cornelius is a man who has attached himself to Judaism, because he believes that God, the true God, is represented by the God of Israel. He doesn't yet know how to be saved, but he does know that he's found the right God, and so God brings Peter to him, and Peter's gonna preach beginning in verse 34. Cornelius is not alone. He has gathered together a whole household of people, and they are all eagerly waiting to hear what Peter has to say.

Now, this chapter then becomes a major chapter in the Bible, because this chapter presents for us the presentation that explodes the Gospel to include the world; and it becomes very important; and, thus, we've spent some time and some detail on it. In the chapter, we see the salvation of Gentiles, as well as the salvation of individuals. We look at it both historically, then, and personally, and both are important.

Now, we've seen...lemme just quickly review...the first three points already in the past. Today we'll consider the last three. We saw that, first of all, in order for this salvation of the Gentiles to happen, there had to be a sovereign call, how that God moved in and prepared Cornelius. Then there had to be submissive will. Cornelius needed to respond with a desire to come to know the Gospel, and so we saw a sovereign call and submissive will; and then once that had been already set in motion, all you needed then was simple proclamation. Just the facts. The heart of Cornelius was ready from God's standpoint. It was ready from his standpoint. He only needed information, and so Peter appears with a simple presentation.

Now, last week, we considered the presentation. Lemme just take you through it very quickly by reminding you what it was. Peter introduced it in verses 34 and 35, and his introduction was this. "Cornelius and friends," and he's standing in their house, "I'm happy to announce in the city of Caesarea and to you and all Gentiles, salvation is available." That's what he's saying. It's available. God doesn't play any favorites. Any man in any nation who fears God, does righteously, God'll accept him. So it's available.

Then his second point, the major theme is this. Salvation is in Christ; and that's what Cornelius needed to hear. Who is the Savior? Who is the Messiah? Who is this Redeemer? And he says, "It's Christ," and he goes all the way down the line; and he says, "You see, Christ is your Savior," or verse 42, "He is your Judge." And he exalts Christ and says, "Christ is the Judge." You can compare John chapter 5 with that, because John chapter 5 presents the fact that Jesus Christ was given judgment by the Father. So he presents Christ as the way of salvation, and the only way of salvation.

Then he concludes with a powerful invitation in verse 43. "To Him give all the prophets witness." In other words, this testimony isn't just mine. "That through His name," and that means through His person, through all that He is, "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive forgiveness of sins." All right, salvation is available, introduction. Salvation is in Christ, main theme. Salvation is by faith, invitation. This is a beautiful thing, because Peter simply says, "Cornelius, you can have it. Here's what it is. Here's how to get it." That's all you need to know, isn't it?

And fantastic thing, it doesn't tell us what happened. It just says the Holy Spirit interrupted Peter in verse 44. You say, "What were the results?" Well, believe me, Peter had results. Peter never preached without results. They either came running to Christ, or they got mad. And, for example, in Acts chapter 2 in Peter's great sermon, 3,000 people were saved. Why? Because the Spirit of God had done preparation work in their hearts. The next time Peter preached, he preached to the Sanhedrin. What happened? They got furious. Why? Because there was no work of the Spirit preliminary to that. Why? Because they had already willfully rejected again and again. They really were apostate by that time. Peter presented the Gospel to them, even offered them an invitation in chapter 4, when he said, "Neither is your salvation in any other. There's no other name under heaven

given among men whereby we must be saved." He lays it all out, but nothing happens but animosity and bitterness and hatred; and there's two things that make the difference.

Sovereign call and submissive will. Where they are present, salvation occurs. Where they are not present, salvation does not occur. When God has not done the preparation work, and the heart of man has not responded, there can be no response to the Gospel but animosity or indifference. But, here, God has done the work. I mean I've been showing you 30, the first 33 verses of the chapter is the work of God in the life of Cornelius and Peter. And so Peter just gets up and says, "Salvation's available. It's in Christ. It's by faith," and, whammo, they all believe. On the spot, the whole bunch believed. You say, "Where does it say that?" It doesn't.

You say, "You mean you just say that when it doesn't say that?" Yes. "On what basis?" The fact of the results. Verse 44, "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the Word." Now lemme tell ya, God doesn't give His Holy Spirit to unbelievers. God gives His Holy Spirit to believers; and, you know, it's a beautiful thing that it doesn't say in there, verse 43a, "And Cornelius believed, and everybody else believed, and they all said, 'Come into my life, Christ,'" and all that. It doesn't need to be that. All he needed to do is say, "Here's what happened to them," and that verifies their salvation. And let's be honest, friends, from a human standpoint, that's the only way we can verify anybody's salvation, right? By their fruits you shall know them.

The only way you can really see what God did in a life is to see what happened in that life...Now, three things followed. Three things led up to their salvation: sovereign call, submissive will, and simple proclamation. Bang, they got saved, and three things follow. Spiritual power, symbolic confession, and sweet fellowship. Let's start with spiritual power.

The first thing that happened in verse 44, "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the Word." Well, what a thrill to preach the Gospel and have everybody in the crowd get saved. Fantastic. What an exciting thing for Peter. His message was suddenly interrupted while he was speaking. Look at 11:15, he goes back to...to report to the folks in Jerusalem, and he says, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning." He didn't even get warmed up. Just gave his message, and the...got going, and the Spirit came. You say, "Why, well, what does that mean?" It just means this, and, hang on, I'm gonna expand this thought. The minute that Peter said, "Salvation is available. It is in Christ," and then the minute he said, "It is by faith," bang, they believed.

That's all they needed to hear; and immediately when somebody believes, God grants that somebody His Holy Spirit. That's not something you wait for, contrary to...to what you hear so often. It's amazing that it doesn't say, "And then they went out, and Peter told 'em how to get the Holy Spirit." You know, there are...there are some Pentecostal friends who teach us that you get the Holy Spirit later on; and you know that they have to take this passage, Du Plessis does this. You have to take this...he's a

writer for the Pentecostal viewpoint. He then says Cornelius was already saved, and this is only the time that he got the Holy Spirit. The problem with that is, in chapter 11 verse 14, Peter was telling the people in Jerusalem what he said there. "Who shall tell thee words by which thou and all thy house...what?...shall be saved." Not only that, if this was the occasion of Cornelius getting the Holy Spirit, why did Peter preach him the Gospel? Why didn't he give him something on the Holy Spirit? Doesn't make any sense.

This is his salvation, believe me; and the moment he believed, God interrupted Peter. In effect, He said, "All right, Peter, that's sufficient. They've got the message. I gotta give 'em the Spirit, because they believe." God withholds not the Spirit, friends, from the believing heart. It is wrong to say that somebody can be saved and not have the Holy Spirit. Here, they believed; and God even interrupted Peter's sermon and gave them the Holy Spirit. This was the Pentecost of the Gentiles. God gave them the Holy Spirit when they believed.

Now that becomes the norm, watch this, for every believer from then on. When a man believes, God gives him the Holy Spirit. There are no tricks to getting Him. He's yours at salvation. The first thing that happens when you put your faith in Jesus Christ, instantly God gives you the Spirit of God who dwells within you from then on, and His presence is as eternal as your salvation...

Now, God even interrupted Peter to bring it about. This is the immediate result of saving faith. The Spirit indwells the believer instantly. I wanna expand this, because this is a very confused issue today, and people are forever and ever saying, "I'm searching for the Holy Spirit," or, "I'm seeking the baptism of the Spirit," or, "I'm saved, but I've not yet received the Spirit." And I wanna clarify once and for all about this area.

When you believe, the moment that you believe, the moment you put your faith in Christ, you, at that very instant, receive the presence of the Spirit of God within you. You don't wait for it. You don't get it. You don't do 49 spiritual pushups and you earn it. It is given to you at the moment you believe. That is absolutely clear in Scripture, and I'll begin by Ezekiel 36 to show you how clear it really is.

Ezekiel 36:26, listen. Here is the promise of God, Ezekiel 36:26, that far back. "A new heart also will I give you." Now, that's salvation. The man needs a new heart, because the old one is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, so he needs a new heart. That's salvation. "And a new Spirit will I put within you." Notice, salvation and the Spirit are connected at the same moment. "I'll take away the stony heart of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh." Listen, "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep Mine ordinances and do them."

Lemme tell you something, friends. If you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you couldn't obey God. You would not have the capacity to obey God. For God to say to you, "Now you're a Christian. Do this, and I'll give you the Spirit," would be ridiculous. You wouldn't have the power to do what you needed

to do to get the Spirit...You must have the Spirit in order to have the power to do anything.

In John chapter 14, "Not by mun..." before I say John 47, while you're turning there, remember what the Old Testament said. "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' saith the Lord." The only possible energy or power for anything that pleases God. And now John 14:17. I get so excited, I get ahead of myself...verse 17. "Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive," Jesus says, "I'm gonna send the Spirit. The world can't receive Him, because it sees Him not, doesn't know Him...watch...But you know Him...now listen to this one...for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Period, no qualification. Doesn't say, "If you do 49 spiritual pushups, He shall be in you."

The promise of God is the giving of the Spirit to be within us. Now, I want you to look at John chapter 7, and I wanna show you something very important. John chapter 7 introduces us to the Spirit of God in a very unique way; and I'm gonna take this as kind of a kickoff point; and then show you how important it is for us to have the Holy Spirit and why I believe, unequivocally with no contradiction, that we absolutely, at the moment of salvation, receive the Spirit.

John 7:37, feast of tabernacles is going on. The...the pouring of the water, symbolizing, of course, God's sustenance of Israel in the wilderness. People have been saying Isaiah's words about drinking at the wells of salvation. And, at that moment, when everybody's looking at water, Jesus stands up in verse 37 and says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." In other words, Jesus takes the whole illustration, the whole deal, and turns it to Himself and takes advantage of this. You know what He's saying? He's saying that if you're thirsty, you can drink. You know that salvation could come at that day to those people if they would turn to Jesus Christ? They could've received the water. Remember the water that He gave the woman at the well? He said, "If you believe in Me, I'll give you water, and you'll never thirst again."

And so there was the promise that they could have spiritual water, spiritual refreshment, a spring of pure cleansing water of life inside of them; but He goes a second step, 38, powerful statement. "He that believeth on Me." Notice, what is the qualification? He that does what? Believeth on Me, no other qualification. "As the Scripture hath said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

Now you have a twofold promise. Hang on here. No. 1, you're gonna receive the water. No. 2, it's gonna gush out of you. Not a trickle, but a what? Rivers, gushing rivers of water. Two promises. Spiritual refreshment for Me, and a flowing of the water of life that comes out of Me to the world. That's evangelism, beloved. That's what He's talking about. "That the life that is in me by Christ flows out of me to reach others." That's the promise; but watch verse 39. Here's the key.

"But this spoke He of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive." Future tense, it's coming. "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Now watch here, your thought here for a moment. This is saying this...Jesus says, "People, you can now believe, and

you can drink the water of life. Someday, you will gush with the water of life to the world; but that can't happen until the Spirit comes in." You see? Look at it again. "This spoke He of the Spirit, whom they that believe should receive; but He was not yet given." The principle is this. All who believe will receive the Spirit.

Look at it backwards. Who receives the Spirit? They who believe. That's the only qualification. You say, "Well, why didn't they receive the Spirit yet?" Because the Spirit hadn't come yet. But once the Spirit had come, Acts chapter 1, the promise was, "You shall receive power after the Spirit comes, and then you shall be witnesses unto Me."

Now, what's He saying? Watch this. He's saying, "Men, women, all you who hear, come to me, and you can have spiritual nourishment, the water of life; and someday, when the Spirit gets here, you'll become a gushing river of that water to the world." Did you ever hear Jesus in the Gospel say, "Men, I wanna let you know you're not doing the job. Get on out there and evangelize." He didn't tell 'em that. In Acts 1, He said, "I've told you everything that there is to know. I've spent time with you post-resurrection. I've informed you. I've talked to you about the Kingdom. Now," He says, "men...don't do anything." That's exactly what He says. "Stay in Jerusalem until you be imbued with power from the Spirit of God. Don't do anything."

What am I saying? I'm saying this. They wouldn't have the power to open their mouth about Jesus Christ apart from the energy of whom? The Holy Spirit. So He says, "Do nothing till He gets here." And that's what they did. They sat around, and they just waited, and He came, and then in Acts 2, the water started to gush; and it flows all through the Book of Acts. Those believe...they drowned Jerusalem in a matter of weeks...and they said, "Oh, you filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Those people were all in over their heads. Within a matter of weeks, the water was gushing so rapidly from their hearts.

Now what's He saying? He's saying, "You shall receive power after the Spirit is come upon you and be witnesses." Watch, people, if a Christian didn't receive the Holy Spirit when he was saved, he could not...he would not have any capacity to communicate his faith...Now that would mean that you're saved without the energy to reproduce. I don't believe for a minute that the Lord Christ saves a man, sends him into the world, and doesn't give him the energy to communicate his salvation. Do you believe that? Of course not. That's contrary to everything we know about the commission that God has given to us.

You say, "Well, maybe you can do it on your own strength." You better believe it, and you know just what happens when you do. Nothing...The Gospel record shows us that before the cross of Christ, before His resurrection and before His ascension and before He sent the Spirit, the disciples couldn't do anything. Mostly, they sat around trying to figure out what they were all about...They could never rush the living water to the rest of the world. They had no energy. The power behind the rushing of

living water is the power of the Spirit of God. In John 16 verse 7, I wanna read you a statement. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth." He always told us the truth. "It is expedient for you that I go away." He says, "You all are lingering around saying, 'Don't go. Don't go.' I gotta go." Why? "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you...but if I go away, I'll send Him to you." You see any condition there? He says, "All I've gotta do is go, and I'll send Him." And He went, and He sent Him. There aren't any qualifications. There aren't any qualifications at all except believing.

"You that believe, you'll receive Him when I get back, and I can send Him." And where is Christ right now? He's right there where He can be to send the Spirit, and every moment in the man...in the life of a man, that very moment that he believes, wherever that man is in the world, the Spirit of God is dispensed to that man's heart. If it is not so, then we have no power to witness, nor, as we just read in Ezekiel, do we have any power to obey; and if we can't obey, then we can't do the things we need to do. You say, "Well, you have to do certain things to get the Spirit." You can't do 'em without Him.

I remember reading this last week in a particular book on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit where Pentecostal writers had been sort of grouped together. Those are folks who do not believe that you receive the Spirit at salvation; and they took the writer; and they put all of the list of things that they felt are required to receive the Spirit under each guy's name. It was a little composite graph on it; and you had a guy's name; and he thought these ten things. You did those, you got the Spirit. These four or these six, these twelve, these fourteen. See, you know; and I read over that list. You know something? You couldn't do one of 'em if you didn't have the Spirit to begin with. That's the point. You didn't have any energy. You're gonna do in the flesh all those things, and then gain the Spirit. Oooh, that's works. That's law. That's legalism...

You say, "Well, maybe you get a little bit of the Spirit." "He giveth not the Spirit by...measure." The Spirit doesn't come in sections. The Spirit is a person. Well, anyway, we come to Acts chapter 2, and they receive the Holy Spirit and, boy, the water flowed. And you notice in John 7:39, just lemme give you this last shot, "This spoke He of the Spirit, whom they that believe on Him should receive." That's the only qualification. You believe, you receive the Spirit. I don't know why some people get confused about that.

Romans 8...I wanna show you what it says in verse 9. It says this. "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit." You know, that's the definition of a saved person? You're in the Spirit. "If so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you...listen...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you don't even belong to Christ. People say to me, "Well, I'm saved, but I don't have the Spirit." I say one of two things. Either, "You don't know you have the Spirit," or "You're not saved." You are saved, you got the Spirit. If you don't have the Spirit, you're not saved.

You know, in first...I...I looked over those lists of all those things those fellows required to get the Spirit. Then I thought about the Corinthian church. You know, the cruddy Corinthians who never did

anything right. You know, and I thought through, I don't think the Corinthians qualified on any of 'em. I went down the list in my mind. They didn't do any of those things. They messed up everything.

Now, if anybody never lived up to the requirements that those people set for getting the Spirit, the Corinthians were never lived. They were disqualified from the beginning. You name a problem, they had it. Not only they had it, they enjoyed it. First Corinthians chapter 6 bangs home on this. He says to the crummy Corinthians who fit none of the qualifications, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?"...Say, "You mean the Holy Spirit was in them?" What it says.

You know, if you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you couldn't even say, "Jesus is Lord." You know that? Listen to 1 Corinthians 12:3. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of Christ calleth Jesus accursed, and no man can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." You wouldn't even know who your Savior was if it weren't for the Spirit of God within you...

For a person to say, "Well, I'm saved, but I don't have the Spirit," you wouldn't even know your identity. You wouldn't even know...know your relationship to the Lordship of Christ. You wouldn't have the capacity to obey, and you couldn't even open your mouth about the Gospel, 'cause you'd be doing it in the flesh. You have no spiritual energy. To say that you're saved without the Holy Spirit is to put you in a vacuum. You know what you used to be, but you haven't got any idea what you are. That's absolutely contrary to Paul's repeated statements in the Book of Ephesians to know your position, to know your position, to know your position. That's part of salvation.

In 2 Corinthians 6:16, the Apostle Paul again repeats this statement. "For you are the temple of the living God." Listen to this. "As God said: 'I will dwell in them.'...Paul even says, "You're filled with all the fullness of God." There's the kind of a book that gets neglected a lot, and that's Jude, but it shouldn't; and in the end of Jude in the 19th verse, just one little short chapter...it says this; and it's talking about unbelievers walking after their own lusts, mouths speaking lies. Oh, it just really lays out the unbelievers that are gonna get judgment executed on 'em, and it says, "These are they who separate themselves, sensual...listen to a definition of an unbeliever...having not the Spirit."

Who doesn't have the Spirit? Unbelievers. Those under the judgment of God, not Christians, my friend. Ephesians 2 says that, "Christians are built together as an habitation for the Spirit." And...and the Spirit is a gift. In Acts 11:17, Peter said that, "The Gentiles received the same gift." Can you earn a gift? If you earned it, it isn't a gift. It's a wage. If you earned the Holy Spirit, it is not the gift of Christ. You earned it by your works. Could you earn the Holy Spirit by your works? Oh, help, never could happen. Save us from that.

Listen, lemme tell you. I'll take it a step further. You need the Holy Spirit. If you don't have the Holy Spirit, and I don't have the Holy Spirit, we were totally incapacitated. Lemme give you some reasons.

No. 1, the Spirit is given to you for power for witness, right? We've just gone through that. You couldn't even do anything in terms of communicating the Gospel without the Spirit. Jesus couldn't say, "Now you go all into the world and preach the Gospel; and, if you're good, I'll give you My Spirit." No. You couldn't do anything.

The second thing, and this is not in any order _____ just random. Second reason you need the Spirit is for prayer. Do you know that, "You know not what to pray for as you ought...Romans 8:26...but the Spirit helps your infirmity." How? "Within you, He makes intercession for you with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He always asks according to the will of God. Therefore, all things work together...for good." I want the Spirit in my life, because He's praying for me. He's my advocate on earth, as Christ is my advocate in Heaven. You can't do without the Spirit. You've got no advocate on earth beseeching God for you and straightening out your messed up prayer life.

Third reason you need the Spirit is for security; and this goes without saying that people who believe that the Spirit comes later also have trouble with eternal security, because they go together. If you haven't got the Spirit, you're right. You don't have any security. You don't even know who you are. If you don't know who you are, you're not so sure you can hold onto who you are. Ephesians 1:13, listen to this. This is great. He says, talking about Christ, "In whom ye also are." Some verses read trusted, but that's added. Ye who...it's talking about Christ, "In whom ye are." We're in Christ. "After you heard the Word of truth." Now listen, "In Whom also after you believed." At the moment of faith, you believed, immediately after, you were sealed not by the Holy Spirit, with the Holy Spirit. He is the seal.

Now you must then have the Holy Spirit to be sealed. You say, "Well, maybe I'm not sealed." It says you're sealed, right there. After you believe, you're sealed. Sealed with the Holy Spirit. Say, "What does the seal mean?" Well, you go back to Daniel, for example. Daniel chapter 6, and don't turn to it. I'll just refer to it, verse 16 and 17. Remember Daniel...I think...this is a...the king's cohorts decided to really feed the king's ego and get rid of Daniel at the same time, so they said, "Anybody doesn't bow down to you, king, worships any other God, we'll get 'em. We'll throw 'em in the lions' den." So old Daniel went about his daily routine of praying like always. So Daniel didn't make any bones about the rule, and so they just figured they'd make some bones outta Daniel. Scooped him up and threw him in the lions' den...Well, you know what happened? The old king sealed that thing. Humph. And what he put on it was the seal, and the seal meant this: it meant security. This is secure. No one will let him out. The only thing that could break that seal was a higher authority, and there was no higher authority than the king.

When Jesus was buried, remember what they did to His tomb? What'd they do with it? Sealed it, which was saying, "Bang, Rome secures this grave." Only a higher authority than Rome could open it; and, believe me, He did...The seal meant security. This is secure. It cannot be broken.

Now, listen, when you were saved, God said, "Secure." And He gave you a seal. Who is it? The Holy Spirit. The only one who could ever violate that security would be a higher power than God, and none exists. Friend, the Spirit is the seal that guarantees I belong to God, and I'm secure. No wonder people who don't believe that you receive the Spirit at salvation also don't believe in security. The Spirit is the seal; but if they followed their theology consistently, as soon as they got their so-called baptism, they'd also get their security; but they don't believe that either. But the point is this. I need the Spirit for power for witness. I need the Spirit for prayer, and I need the Spirit for security. Read it. It's also in 1 Corinthians chapter 1...I have the Holy Spirit, and that's God's way of saying, "Sorry, Satan, he's Mine. You'll never violate him."

There's a...a fourth reason. The Spirit has been given to me Spirit has been given to me as a seal for authenticity. In 1 Kings chapter 21, remember J...Jezebel and Ahab? Ahab came to... one day he says, "Jezebel...I like Naboth's vineyard, and I want it." Jezebel said, "Honey, whatever you want." So she wrote a letter, and she sealed it with the king's seal. What did it mean? That's an authentic letter, right? And it wasn't a forgery. It was an authentic letter, bang, sealed with the king's seal. Wanna hear something? You know how you can tell an authentic Christian? One that's really saved, he's got the king's seal. What's the king's seal? Holy Spirit. If you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you don't even have gen...you're not even genuinely saved. No wonder people who don't think they have the Holy Spirit don't know whether they're saved or lost all the time. He's the guarantee. He's the seal.

Romans 8:14 says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are...what?...the sons of God." If you're not led by the Spirit, no wonder you don't know who you are. How do you know you're saved? Because the Spirit gives witness with my spirit that I'm a child of God. If you didn't have the Spirit to give witness with your spirit, you wouldn't know you were saved. You think God wants to save you and say, "Now, I know you don't know, but I wanna keep this secret."...Doesn't make any sense. You must have the seal, Spirit of God.

Now, there's another reason that you have the Spirit of God. In Ephesians 1:14, He's the earnest of your inheritance. You know, says, "God's promised you all this inheritance." You say, "How do you know you're gonna get it?" Well, the Spirit is the earnest. That's the word arabon in the Greek. Means two things, down payment. Do you know that God has given you the Holy Spirit as a down payment on the full inheritance of Heaven? The second meaning of arabon is engagement ring.

Girls, when a guy comes along and says, "I love you." You say, "Hum, good." A guy says, "I love you. Here's a \$400.00 rock." Ummmmm, see, that means something. Now you're talking. All of a sudden, the content is a little different, see? The point is this: when God says to you, "Hey, I promise to marry you. The marriage supper of the Lamb's coming off." You say, "God, how do I know?" He says, "I've given you My engagement ring." Arabon, the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee of the full inheritance; and you know something? One thing God wants us to really know is what He's given us. You know, in Ephesians 1, He says, "Oh, I want you to know this...verse 18...I'm praying for you...Paul says...just praying that the...verse 17...that the Lord, the God of the Lord Jesus Christ may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope and what is the riches of your inheritance." God doesn't want you in the dark about it. He wants you to know that. That's why He's giving you His Spirit as a guarantee.

And then the other thing is this. If you didn't have the Holy Spirit, you couldn't learn anything. Who's gonna guide you into all truth? The Holy Spirit. Say, "Well, I can find some on my own." No, we can't. "He shall guide you into all truth, bring all things to your remembrance, and ye shall speak of Christ."...John chapter 16 verse 13, even in 1 John 2:27, he says, "We don't need to be taught by me. We have anointing from God that teaches us, who is the Holy Spirit."

So to say a Christian doesn't have the Holy Spirit is in total contradiction to everything about his identity. It violates everything from top to bottom of what the Christian life is; and it comes right back to Roman 8:9, "If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are not His." You must have the Holy Spirit. Absolutely necessary.

In John...14:16, let's see, I'll just read you a couple of verses here. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." I like that. I don't now how you could untangle that. "Even the Spirit of Truth in the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. But you know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Now listen to this powerful shot. "I will not leave you comfortless." Who is the Comforter? That He'll never leave you without the Holy Spirit. There is no such thing as a Christian without the Spirit, cannot be, impossible; and here lies the great error in the minds of so many people today. No wonder they have problems. They don't even understand the basic thing that happens when you're saved...

Meanwhile, back at Acts 10...now you have something to apply and to bring to the text. Verse 44, "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the Word." Now you know why, right? Because they believed. They were saved. You say, "Well, John, you have failed to consider Acts 8." No, I haven't. Already been there. Acts 8:15 to 17 where you...where the Samaritans hadn't received the Holy Spirit when they were saved. You're right. They...they were saved, and they received the Spirit later. You say, "Why? Doesn't that prove you get the Spirit later?" of course not. It simply proves a very important point. God wanted the Jews to know that Samaritans were equal in Christ. Therefore, God withheld the coming of the Spirit from the Samaritans only in that initial case. He withheld the Spirit's coming to the Samaritans until Jews arrived, until Peter and John arrived, so they could see the Spirit come and report back that the Samaritans got the same thing we got.

That is unnecessary. The delay is unnecessary in Cornelius' case. Why? The Jews are already there. Remember, Peter brought six of 'em with him. Peter is already there. The Spirit then comes in the normal way, instantly on the point of faith, and the Jews see it, and the next verse says, "They were astonished." And that's the point, that the Gentiles got what we got. The only reason there was ever a delay in the Samaritans' case was to confirm in the minds of the Jews the absolute equality of Jew, Samaritan in the church of Jesus Christ. If God had given the Samaritans the Spirit independently of the presence of Jews, there would have been two churches, and you would never have brought Samaritans and Jews together, because they hated each other so much.

So God, in beautiful plan, melted the two together. You see, the whole point of Acts chapter 1 through 15 is to show Jew, Samaritan, and Gentile equally one in Christ. The whole point is to show that they are one, not that they are segmented; and to show that, there must be some accommodation in the transition period of the early church in the coming of the Spirit to prove that point...The only variations were not to prove they don't get the Spirit, but to prove they do get the Spirit when they believe.

You know, it would've been easy for the Jews to say, "Well, you know, the Gentiles may have believed, but they never got the Spirit like we got," so God made sure there were plenty of Jews there to see 'em get it. Same thing with the Samaritans, so there weren't second-class Christians. And then, people, this becomes the normal pattern. For anybody who believes, immediately receives the Spirit of God...and He begins to lead and witness with us and pray in us, and He secures us, and He promises us in the future and secures that promise for us, and He teaches us and all of His work begins, and He empowers us to obey and so forth.

Now, the only hint about their salvation is indicated at the end of verse 44. "The Spirit fell on all them who heard the Word." Now, there's hearing and then there's hearing. Right? There are many folks who come to church. Some hear, and then some hear. Say, "What do you mean?" well, the first kind of hearing in Hebrews 4:2, and I'll ju...I'm just gonna pinpoint this, and...says, "For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them." Uh-huh, there are two groups of people who are listening. "But the Word preached did not profit them." Why? "Not being mixed with faith in them that heard." Two kinds of hearing. You can hear without faith. You can hear with faith.

Cornelius heard the Word, and all of his gang, and they heard it with what? With faith, and when they heard it with faith, and they believed, God immediately dispensed to them the Holy Spirit. Christian, the Spirit lives within you when you hear by faith. It's just like those, remember, in Acts 2:41, "They that gladly heard the Word." That's hearing with glad ears.

Over in chapter 13, you have it again. Chapter 13 verse 48, "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad." That's the glad hearing of faith. In each case, they were usually glad or mad. Well, the Spirit came on these Gentiles, and verse 45, listen, "And they of the Circumcision." That was their party.

That was the fence group. Keep the Gentiles out. They must be circumcised. They'll enter into Christianity through Judaism. "They of the Circumcision, as many as were with Peter, were shocked. They were astonished. They were flabbergasted." Why? "Because on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." They knew it was a gift, not something you earn. They couldn't believe the Gentiles got what we got. See? Shock. You see what God was doing? He was destroying Tom Sawyer's gang. Nobody stays out of this. This is for all who come; and believe me, people, they... You say, "How did they know it?" Well, they knew it, because it says in verse 46, "When they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." They heard 'em speak in languages.

You say, "Why did it...is this the norm for when you get saved?" No. "Why did they speak in languages?" How else would they have known anything happened? When you were saved, the Spirit came on you. Did anybody know anything? Did you have any supernatural phenomenon? Did the Spirit descend and call the tongues of fire on your head? Not on mine. Not on yours. Did you speak in languages? No. Even Pentecostals say that people don't speak in tongues when they get saved. No.

You say, "Well, why did they do it here?" Just take a wild guess. For the sake of those Jews, because those Jews said, "They got the same thing we got." Now, the reason they spoke in languages on the Day of Pentecost was because all those people were there who spoke different languages, and they began to speak in their own languages, and they gathered the crowd that way for the preaching of the Gospel. There wasn't any foreigners in this group, in that sense. There wasn't any gathering to be done. They were already sitting there, and they were already believing.

The only thing to do was to show 'em they got the same gift. That's the whole point...So they said, "It's obvious they got the same gift, and we knew it, because they did the same thing we did." See? Now, this only occurred at the moment this group was introduced in the church. I'm gonna say this. I'm gonna say it once, so listen. I say it advisedly, but listen. Nowhere...I'll say it again, because that's the key word...nowhere in the New Testament is tongues-speaking ever recorded as occurring in a single seeking individual, as in most modern Pentecostal experiences.

In the Book of Acts, on the three occasions where tongues are mentioned, they come to an entire group at once. They are a corporate, church-founding group conversion phenomenon in Acts, and they never occur subsequently in the Book of Acts in the experience of any one individual...Therefore, they had a place as assigned to the Jews of the equality of other groups in the unity of the church.

All right, there's the first result, and it happens at salvation. Believe me, you receive the Spirit in salvation. One more verse comes to my mind. Can't resist. Galatians 3:2, don't worry, the rest of the sermon is short, very short, getting shorter all the time. Galatians 3:2 says this, "This only would I learn of you: Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law? Can you earn the Holy Spirit? Or by the hearing of faith?"

How did Cornelius hear? With the hearing of faith. What did he get? The Holy Spirit. So does everybody who hears the Gospel with faith. First thing, spiritual power. First result of salvation. Second result, symbolic confession. God gave him the...the inward baptism. Could Peter deny him the outward one? Look at verse 40...say this is so good, verse 46. "Then answered Peter, "All right, men...says to his group...Can anybody forbid water?"....That the, that the implication here is that they would like to have. I mean, okay, they're in the inside thing. Let's not get 'em in the outside group. That's gonna be a tough one. Let's not identify 'em with us. You know, we'll say, "Well, that's okay, they're in, but we don't wanna make a big deal."

"Now, what are we gonna do, guys? Can anybody forbid water, that they who...that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit?...here comes the shocker...as well as we?" See? "What are we gonna do, people? We gotta baptize 'em." Notice how important baptism is? If you have been saved but not been baptized, you're disobedient. Don't be disobedient. Wednesday's baptism. That's important, people.

In the early church, there never was a separation. One Lord, one faith, what? One baptism. That's your public confession. Symbolic confession. It symbolizes the death and burial and resurrection of Christ as you're identified with Him. It's so important. Peter says, "Hey, if they believe, they've gotta be baptized. I'm sorry, guys, it tough, but we gotta do it. Grit your teeth." And I love this in verse 48, "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Lord Jesus." You know what he did? He didn't do it. He let them do it. Can you imagine those six Jews baptizing all the Gentiles? Ohhhhh, Peter was smart.

Can you imagine what would've happened if Peter'd done all the baptizing, gone back to Jerusalem, and said, "The Gentiles believed, and they were saved, and I baptized them." And then they would've said to other, "Well, you guys were with him. You six, what happened?" They'd say, "Well, I don't know. Man, they were there, and they did it. Peter did it. I...I don't know. It was all Peter. He...He," you know, see. Yeah, well, then Peter had blown it enough times in his history so that they could've thrown that in his face, and you know, just kinda discredit his testimony. So Peter had all six of 'em do it.

You know, when people get involved in something, they usually will defend it...We had a little test this week. We've been...in past weeks, we've been doing some study with our staff. Fred Marsh has been working with us, and he gave us this little deal of eleven things we had to put in order. Eleven doctrinal things in...in a way that we would teach 'em to a new Christian, in sequence; and so everybody worked out their individual order; and nobody agreed. Fifteen of us had different orders. Then he divided into two groups, and our group worked, and we worked through our order, and we came to what we believed. At...at the beginning, everybody disagreed. "No, I don't want that order. No, no, no, no, no." So finally we hammered and hammered. We got down to an order, and some of

'em still said, "Well, I'll go along with it, but I don't...I don't necessarily agree." Then we got...then their group and our group got together. Do you know what happened? All these people in our group who didn't necessarily agree at one time started defending our position, because it was our group. See?

Peter is not stupid. He goes back, and he says, "Our group baptized them. That's right, we did. You know, these guys were right in there on it, you see." But he wanted to have some corroboration to the testimony, so he has them do the baptizing. Well, I think that's a sign of salvation when somebody's willing to be baptized and confess Christ. That's part of it.

So spiritual power, symbolic confession, baptism. The third thing, and I love this...the end of verse 48, "Then asked they him to tarry certain days." Do you know what the third sign of true salvation? Sweet fellowship. You know, even...I can almost always tell when somebody's really saved, because they desire Christian fellowship. Have you ever known a baby that didn't want to eat? You ever known? We had three babies at our house. If you could translate what they say for all those few...first few months, it would be, "I want food." Or "I want love. Hold me." See? That's exactly what a new baby in Christ calls for. Feed me, love me, hold me, and here Peter had a whole buncha new converts. He wasn't gonna walk out the door. They asked him to tarry certain days. "Peter, feed us, love us, teach us."

You know, I really believe that a person who comes to Jesus Christ honestly desires the fellowship of other Christians. Don't you believe that? And I think he desires to know the Word of God, to be fed; and that's another reason I think they were saved. They wanted fellowship, blessed days as Peter shared with 'em. Oh, what a joy that must have been. You know, over in the 16th chapter, there's a...there's a parallel that's kind of good. Verse 14, "A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened. She attended to things which were spoken by Paul... listen...And when she was baptized and her household...she was kinda like Cornelius, you know...she besought us, saying 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.'" That would've been enough, but then it says this. "And she constrained us." No, no, she argued about the fact that we had to stay. They said in Cornelius case, "Peter, teach us. Love us a little. Fellowship with us. Minister to us."...

So we see the full salvation coming to the group of Gentiles. What a glorious chapter. Lemme zero in on the one lesson you can see this morning. There are many, but just this one. God is no respecter of persons. The door was thrown wide open. I hope that's how you are. I hope you don't have any prejudice. I hope you're free to share the Gospel with anybody and everybody.

Henry George was running for the mayor of New York, the office of mayor, and he was called to a mass meeting at the Cooper Institute to speak to the working men. The chairman of the meeting gave him a flowery introduction with a typical kind of political rhetoric; and he concluded by saying, "The friend of the working man." As soon as Mr. George rose to his feet, he said, slowly and emphatically,

"I would like to announce that I am not the friend of the working man." Stunned silence ensued. A strange kind of bewilderment, and then he went on. "Nor am I the friend of capital. I am for men simply as men, regardless of any accidental or superfluous distinctions of race, creed, color, class, function, or employment. I am for men."

And that, in a sense, is what Jesus always said. He was not and is not the Jews' friend nor the Gentiles' friend, nor the friend of the rich, nor the friend of the poor, nor the friend of the higher up or the friend of the prostitute. He is the friend of sinners, and that includes all of us. I hope you're the friend of sinners, and that includes all of 'em. Let's pray...

Father, we thank You that there's nobody kept outta Your gang 'cause of culture, race, tradition, creeds, intelligence, wealth...status...or that the Gospel is free to...to all men. Father, we thank You for what You've taught us this morning about the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. We thank You for what You've reminded us of about sharing the Gospel with all men everywhere...Father, we thank You that You've shown us some of the principles that are obvious in the life of a Christian. That he desires fellowship, teaching, confesses Christ openly in baptism, that he possesses the Spirit. Father, what a rich legacy You've given us. Father, help us to pass it on without prejudice...in the same freedom and spirit that Peter did and that Jesus did. As we close this hour this morning, seal to our hearts the things that are needful to be learned. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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