

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Jesus Christ is present with us and inside of us through the Holy Spirit. When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, we do so because it is the Holy Spirit that draws us to Christ. When we come to worship our Lord together in the church it is the Holy Spirit who draws us, who gathers us into this place. Martin Luther writes, *"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church, He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day, He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.*

My parents came to faith in Jesus Christ in their early 30's, when I was only 5 years old. What brought them to faith in Jesus Christ was the Bethel Bible series that many of you studied in the 1960's and maybe the early 1970's. I say this because something inside of them changed big time. They both became outspoken Christians shortly after coming to faith in Jesus Christ. Someone moved into their lives and began changing them from the inside. Guess who moved in and took up permanent residence, the Holy Spirit. Both of my parents are with the Lord right now. My parents had their faults until their dying day but I can say to all of you looking at you square in the eye that I saw the Holy Spirit working in and through them from the time I was five until they went home to be with Jesus. Both of them led people to faith in Jesus Christ. They were never ashamed of the Gospel but were motivated by the Holy Spirit to teach God's Word and present the Gospel of Jesus Christ as opportunities arose. They both taught Sunday school for decades and Mother was a Bible Study

Fellowship teaching leader which is no small thing. I am saying this because all of it was a work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The Holy Spirit wants to do a great work in all our lives. The sad thing is we remain spiritual infants, babes in Christ until we surrender more and more of our lives to the Holy Spirit who grows us in the Christian faith. Twice while I was in high school, I had what I call a charismatic experience. Both times the experience was the same. My hands started to tingle like they had gone to sleep but the tingling did not hurt; it felt absolutely wonderful. That tingling went up my arms to my shoulders, up into my head, and eventually all the way down to my toes. I was immersed in the love of God. The feeling got so strong that I had to tell the Lord to shut it off or I would burst. Some Christians call this being baptized in the Holy Spirit. There were Christians all over the place having the same experience. I don't care what it is called but for the rest of my life I have never doubted the existence of God nor the power of the Holy Spirit. It is dynamite power, life changing, life altering and life giving. Having that experience does not make me better than any Christian who has not had that experience for the Holy Spirit works in different ways in all our lives, not just one way. But what I learned from those two experiences is how dependent on the Holy Spirit we truly are our entire Christian life.

Let me be blunt. I have attended churches that feels like to me that they booted the Holy Spirit out decades ago. There is no life there, just deadness. Every church has the possibility of dying out and I say due to the neglect of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. When we resist the Holy Spirit, we are resisting the new life, renewed life, the special life God has for us as believers in Jesus Christ. When we resist the Holy Spirit, we follow the spirit of this age and the spirit of this age is Satan and the entire demonic realm. Either we are listening to or following God's Holy Spirit or the spirit of this age which opposes God at every level. Friends, I do not like the spirit of this age. It is like kryptonite to us

believers. The constant news cycle brings out the spirit of this age which drains us because we sense something incredibly evil going on and it is. Why do you think churches are declining numerically all across the nation? The spirit of this age has infiltrated far too many lives, and does it ever show.

When we resist the Holy Spirit, we resist the work of God. When we resist the Holy Spirit God's Word is meaningless to us. When we resist the Holy Spirit, we stay away from the church or when we come, we get very little out of it except maybe coffee and a doughnut. My dream is for all of us to be Holy Spirit filled and led Christians, totally on fire for Jesus, wanting to see souls saved for eternity, and growing in the holiness of Jesus. It takes the Holy Spirit working full time in us day and night for this to occur and yes, we can resist the Holy Spirit and backslide, falling further and further away from Jesus and the entire Christian faith. May the Lord God forgive all of us especially where we are resisting the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:9(ESV) ⁹But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—. Paul is quoting from the book of Isaiah. The Holy Spirit working in our lives renews us, fills us to overflowing, rejuvenates us, breathes new life into old bones. The Holy Spirit can make you feel brand new on the inside even when you are riddled with arthritis or live with terrible back pain. The Holy Spirit gives to us God's overwhelming love, peace, and joy, and much, much more. We actually feel the Presence of God inside of us. God's Presence is always there whether we feel it or not but there are times when His closeness to us is so good that we never want it to end. We live by faith in Jesus, not by how we feel, but our faith in Jesus involves feelings, emotions, and more that the Holy Spirit stirs up inside of us. I see this in so many of you when you participate in the Lord's supper. I see this inside of you when you sing the hymns and songs with your entire heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Verse 10, "These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit." The Bible tells us that God transforms us by the renewing of our minds. Friends, when you are studying the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is speaking directly to you, changing the way you think, renewing your mind and renewing your life, so you can shine ever brighter with the Light of Jesus Christ. Reading solid Christian books also opens the door for the Spirit of God to teach you and give to you God's wisdom, God's light that will change you forever. We are never to hide our light under a bushel or a basket but let it shine brighter than ever and it is the work of the Holy Spirit that makes us shine. When we quit resisting the Holy Spirit and open up our lives completely to the Holy Spirit, do we ever shine. May the Lord help all of us to be fully open to God's Holy Spirit.

There is an area in my life that God is changing drastically. I cannot tell you what it is because it is too personal and there are personal confidences involved. I am presently reading 3 Christian books that I just happened to stumble upon, I am listening to the book of Mark for my devotions, and I am meeting with specific Christian friends whom I call my counselors. Everything we discuss is exactly where the Holy Spirit is changing me. It is not easy to be changed. Sometimes we stay the same old way, the same old pooppy way because it is comfortable, easy, and familiar. We get used to our own smell when it is time for a diaper change, but the Holy Spirit never wants us to stay the same old way. He wants us to bear the fragrant aroma of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit wants us growing all the time, with the help of the Holy Spirit of course, into brand new people, to love Jesus more than ever, to be on fire for Christ, to be bold about the Christian faith but not arrogant, and to stop being silent about that which is most important living every day for Jesus and not the spirit of this age. The work that God wishes to do in us and through us is by far greater than we have ever imagined.

"1 Corinthians 2:12(ESV) ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God." Yes, it is

the Holy Spirit that explains to us so we can understand what God has freely given to us by His grace. The Bible tells us we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies (Eph.1). Nothing of God makes sense to us unless it is the Holy Spirit revealing it to us. It is called having the mind of Christ. We understand things of God and we can speak God's truth fluently as the Holy Spirit instructs us day in and day out. Please be in the Scriptures. Please be reading great Christian books and if you want some suggestions, please ask me. A great one I finished last week was recommended by a person in this church who told me how good it is. "The Anxious Christian by Rhett Smith. The subtitle is "God can use your anxiety for good." Another book I am reading, "The Red Sea Rules" by Robert Morgan gives to us marvelous insights of what we are to do when we have the Red Sea in front of us and the Army of Egypt behind us and there is nowhere to go. How do you deal with the impossibilities in your life? What is God doing in our lives by putting us into situations that are unbearable. This book answers that question. God has gifted specific authors with wisdom from the Holy Spirit to help us grow in the faith and when we are open to the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit can make the changes in our lives that make us healthier and well-rounded believers in Jesus Christ.

Life is worth living because every day is another day to experience the Holy Spirit renewing us in every way. The spirit of this age pushes us down into a pit of unbelief. The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and raises us every day to follow Jesus closely, to love Jesus and to love those around us and fills us with God's wisdom, giving to us the mind of Christ. He blesses us so we can be a blessing. He calls us to be bold about the faith but not arrogant; I like that line.

We can only understand God's wisdom, God's truth, and spiritual things with the aid of the Holy Spirit. Nothing of God makes sense to us without the help of the Holy Spirit. To resist the Holy Spirit, I think, is one of the great sins of our age but to surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit is to experience life at its best, life at its fullest, life lived knowing you are always in the

Presence of God and God's Presence namely the Holy Spirit is inside of you to help you live for Christ every day. Without the Holy Spirit we are spiritually dead. With the Holy Spirit there is so much life, new life inside of us that we will never even die. We are inheritors of eternal life and all this a work of the Holy Spirit who draws us to Jesus and gathers us together to worship. The Holy Spirit is building up the church. Thank you for being here. Amen and Amen.