

Alright. Hey everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. Happy Mother's Day to you. Come on, whatever campus you're at, let's give it up for all the amazing mothers in our lives. We love you. We are so thankful for you and we are so glad you are here with us today because we are in the middle of a series called Holy Spirit: We Invite You In. And we're just taking a couple weeks to talk about who is the Holy Spirit. What is he like? What's his character? What's his nature? What does he do? And what does it look like to have a relationship with Him? And what we've been doing as a church is every day and every time we're together we're praying this simple little prayer. Holy Spirit, we invite you in. Because we want Him to not only be the most important person in the room, we want Him to be the most honored person in the room.

And as we've been inviting Him in, He's been moving. He's been speaking, He's been healing, He's been showing up in our lives, in our church, in your family, in the city, all because the Holy Spirit goes where He is wanted and welcomed. You see, we have always wanted to be a spirit-filled church. Right from the beginning that's always been our heart. That's why we say where Jesus-focused, spirit-filled, life-giving church. Jesus-focused, we're more focused on what Jesus has done for us than what we have to do for him. Spirit-filled, we want to walk in the character and the power of Jesus. And life-giving, we're on mission to receive and release the life of Jesus wherever we go. That's who we are as a church. And that middle one, spirit-filled, we want to walk in the character and the power of Jesus. You see, I don't know about you but when I grew up I didn't hear anything about the Holy Spirit.

I didn't know who He was. I didn't know what He did. I didn't know what He was like. I had no context for Him. And so in my twenties, when I got saved and really started seeking the Lord, I was around a group of people that lived a spirit-filled life and they loved the Holy Spirit. And everything they shared with me and everything they talked about was all about the power of the Spirit. Signs and wonders, miracles, healing, gifts, abilities, prophecy, tongues, the supernatural things of God. And while those things are so important and they're things we're supposed to seek through the Holy Spirit, they were missing the character part. And what I've learned over the years is that the gifts of the Spirit function best within the fruits of the Spirit. In fact, that's why He's called the Holy Spirit. Holy character, Spirit power. So if we're going to be spirit-filled, we want to walk in the character and the power of Jesus.

In fact, I love what Jesus says when he says, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I've been doing." When we read this verse, we almost always gravitate to the power side. That we're going to do the things that Jesus was doing like heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cast out demons and preach the kingdom, like we get to do those things. And while that is absolutely true, this is also referring to the character of Jesus. That we will be able to love our enemy, and turn the other cheek, and go the extra mile, and have humility, and have integrity, and serve and do the right thing. And so if we're going to be people that invite the Holy Spirit in and walk in the Holy Spirit it's both the character and the power. And when we look around, we might say, yeah, the church is missing the power of God. Where's the

signs? Where's the wonders? Where's the healing, all of that? And that's true. I wouldn't disagree with you there, but you know, it really is seen as the character.

The character of Jesus to go the extra mile, and love your neighbor, and have some humility and do the right thing regardless of what it costs you. If we look at this generation, what the generation needs is the character of Jesus. And that's what the Holy Spirit gives us. In fact, I love what Paul says to the Galatians. He says, "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" I love this. He says, hey, did you get saved by faith or by works? Did you get saved because you believed or because you behaved? You got saved because you believe that Jesus is who he says he is and did what he said he did and so the Spirit of God moved into your life and raised you from the dead and made you a new creation.

But are you now so foolish after beginning with the Spirit for salvation, are you trying to do the rest of your life through your own effort? He says, hey, this doesn't work out. And this doesn't make any sense. And yet if we're honest, this is how a whole lot of us live our lives. We trust the Spirit for salvation, but then we do our life in our own strength, our own effort through our own performance. And this is why so many of us never actually change. In fact, can I ask you a really honest question? Are you more mature today than you were a year ago? Are you freer today than you were a year ago? Are you more like Jesus today than you were a year ago? And if the answer is no, then you're doing life in your own strength under your own power.

Because if we're walking in the Spirit, He is transforming us from the inside out and releasing the character of Jesus in our lives. Come on, this is why he goes on to say, "So I say live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature or the flesh. For the sinful nature, the flesh, desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other." He says you can do one of two things, you can walk in the Spirit or you can walk in the flesh, but you can't do both. And if you walk in the Spirit, you will not sin. But if you're sinning, it's because you're not walking in the Spirit. You can't sin and say I'm walking in the Spirit and if you're walking in the Spirit you won't sin. Why? Because it's the Spirit who releases the character of Jesus in our lives. That's how you know you're walking in the Spirit. The character of Jesus is being released.

This is why, I love it, he goes on to say – it's a great passage in Galatians, "The works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like." That's a verse right there. Okay. Here's what I want you to see. Works of the flesh, in other words, this is the best of what you can do on your own. In your own strength, in your own effort through your own performance and striving, this is the extent of what you can produce. And I've never seen anybody at looks at this list and say, yeah, you know what, I'd

like a little bit of debauchery, I'll take a little bit of witchcraft, and you know what, yeah, put some fits of rage in there for me as well. Like that sounds great.

Come on, there ain't nothing on this list that you want in your life, is there? And yet this is the best of what we can do on our own. And if this is the best of what we can do on our own, then we shouldn't be surprised that this is how the world lives. This is the best of what the world can do on their own. So when you get angry at the world for how they're living and what they're doing and how they're thinking, maybe this verse will give you some compassion because this is the extent of what they can produce on their own. This is the works of the flesh. And I know some of you, you're looking at this list, you're like, I don't do any of that stuff. I don't walk in the Spirit, but I'm a good person. I'm a good person, man. I love my family. I go to work or school. Come on, I'm in church right now. I'm a good person. Well, let's let the Bible define good for us. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith.

Sometimes just let the Bible define the Bible. You want to know what the Bible says a good man or woman is? It's someone who is full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Full of faith that Jesus is who he says he is and did what he said he did, and then submitted and surrendered to the Spirit of the Living God. It's God's goodness that makes us good. Not your effort, not your strength, not your performance. You can't be good without the Holy Spirit and Jesus. Are you with me on this? This is why it goes on to say, "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Now that's a verse. There ain't nothing on that list that you don't want in your life. I love that it says, the fruit of the Spirit. This is what the Spirit can produce in our life when we walk with Him.

And look, it says fruit singular, not fruits plural. So these aren't all you get a little bit of love and maybe some kindness, and if you get it just right maybe some faithfulness. No, no, no, if you walk in the Spirit, the fruit, this is like a cluster, they all begin to show and manifest in your life. Why? Because this is the character of Jesus. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Jesus, and if I walk in the Spirit all of these start to show up in my life. And I love that it's called the fruit of the Spirit, which means you can't produce it. Just like you cannot create an apple in your hand no matter how hard you try. You can think, you can meditate, you can will yourself, but there ain't never going to be an apple that just goes poof in your hands. You can no more create an apple than you can create love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness in your own life. You see, what I love about the Spirit is no matter what we've got going in our life, no matter the sin, the temptation, the brokenness, the addiction, the pain, the darkness, the bondage, He can set us free.

When we submit and surrender and receive from and rest on the Spirit of the Living God, this is what He starts producing in our life. And if you will submit to the Spirit in one area of your life, He brings freedom to every area of your life. See, we need to learn to just trust the Spirit in the here and now. When He says, don't watch that and he says, oh, let's not talk like that. And when he says, let's not stay here, let's go somewhere else. You know what, let's apologize for

what we just said. Let's go pick that thing up. In those moments, if we would just learn to submit and surrender to His little prompts, His little leadings, in those areas, He will bring freedom in every area of our life.

This is what we struggle with. It's simple obedience that bring significant breakthrough. And I know some of you, you might be sitting here, you might have a big struggle in your life and you might be like, I've got so much anxiety in my life and you're telling me that if the Holy Spirit is telling me to forgive that person, it's going to free me from my anxiety? Yes. Why? Because if you'll submit to the Spirit in one area of your life, He'll bring freedom in every area of your life. And you might be sitting here and saying, I got so much lust in my life, I can't break free, I can't get out of it. And you're telling me if the Holy Spirit is telling me to start serving people, that's going to free me from that? Yes. Why? Because submitting to the Spirit in one area of your life will bring freedom in every area of your life. Come on, dude, I got so much anger in my life and God's telling me to give? What in the world does anger and giving had to do with each other?

Nothing and everything. Because submitting to the Spirit in one area of your life will bring freedom in every area of your life. And the reason we never experience freedom in the every area of our life is because we're not willing to submit to the Spirit in the here and the now in the very little, don't watch this, let's say that, let's go here, let's leave here. We say, those are unrelated. But they couldn't be any more related because it is about lordship and trust and submitting our lives to the Spirit's leading. Because in that moment when He tells you to do that little thing and you say no, what are you doing? You're walking in the flesh. So the works of the flesh add to this flesh struggle over here. But when I submit to this little thing He's asked me to do, I've just submitted and surrendered and the fruit of the Spirit start showing up in any and every area of my life.

Are you with me on this? If you want to experience freedom in the every area of your life, submit to Him in the little areas of your life. This is why Jesus himself says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit because apart from me you can do nothing." If we submit, surrender, walk and receive from the Spirit of the Living God, he will bear the fruits of the Spirit, the character of Jesus will naturally and effortlessly begin to show up in our lives and set us free from the things that are holding us down. In fact, this is why it says, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is --"

Freedom.

So if I submit to the Spirit in one area of my life, He brings freedom in every area of my life because wherever He is, that's where freedom is. So when you don't listen to Him in the little, you've just chosen bondage.

If where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, and He asks you to do a little thing and you decide not to do it, you've just chosen bondage when he offers you freedom. "But we all with unveiled faces, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." In other words, it's the Spirit who turns our attention to God and transforms us from glory to glory, victory to victory, breakthrough to breakthrough as we simply turn the attention and the affection and the focus of our heart towards Him. And this is why Jesus was so excited to give us the Holy Spirit because he knew the Spirit in our lives would naturally create the character of the kingdom. Come on, just think with me for a second the different ways that the Bible likens the Holy Spirit. There's all these different ways that the Bible likens the Holy Spirit too to help us understand.

One is a dove, right? It doesn't say the Holy Spirit is a dove. It says the Holy Spirit is like a dove. And if you go all the way back with me to Noah and the ark, in those days the world was sinful and it grieved God how sinful the world was. And so He decided he was going to send a flood to cleanse the earth. And He had Noah, a man who found grace, favor, in the eyes of the Lord. And He had Noah build this big ark and get his whole family in this wooden ark. And when the flood came --flood was a picture of judgment of sin, but also of baptism, a new beginning and a new life. And because Noah and his family went into the wooden ark, they were saved against the destruction. What is that? It is a prophetic picture of the wooden cross of Jesus, that when we grab a hold of the wooden cross of Jesus, Jesus was judged for our sins, that we could be set free, we have new beginning, a baptism in him, a new life.

And after the flood waters receded and the wooden ark was sitting there -- I love this little part of the story, it says, through a hole or a window in the side of the wooden ark, Noah let out a dove. And it says the dove flew around but it couldn't find anywhere to land because there were still waters, so it came back. A few days later, Noah sent the dove out again and this time it flew around and it came back with an olive branch in its mouth, representing peace. And the third time he sent it out and it did not come back. That is a prophetic picture that when Jesus was hanging on the wooden cross, a spear was put into his side, the window that the Holy Spirit would be released into your life and mine, that the dove of God could now come and bring peace into our lives in Jesus' name. Oh come on, I don't think you heard what I said. You're like, it's Mother's Day, where's the Mother's Day stuff?

The greatest gift I can give your mommas for Mother's Day is the spirit of the Living God in your life and in the lives of your family. If you're a mom right now, you should be like, preach it, brother, preach it, help my family have the character of Jesus. Not where's my coronation? Wrong thinking. And if a dove landed on you, it would change how you live your life. It would bring peace. The Bible likens the Holy Spirit to wine. What happens when you drink too much wine? It changes how you think, how you act, how you talk, how you feel. What happens when the Holy Spirit comes in our life? It changes how we act, how we think, how we talk, how we feel. The Bible likens the Holy Spirit to oil. When oil was placed on people, it was a sign of anointing, authority, empowerment. Oil came from crushing the olives. Jesus was crushed on

the cross so your life wouldn't have friction but could flow through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible likens the Spirit to fire.

When fire burns things, it burns off all of the impurities so that only the things that are left is what good, is what is true, is what is noble, is what is life. The Holy Spirit purifies us from the inside out. The Bible likens the Holy Spirit to wind, a fresh wind that can blow in your life and move out that old stagnant atmosphere and bring in the atmosphere of heaven. It likens the Holy Spirit to the breath of God, that God literally can breathe a fresh breath into your lungs when you no longer can breathe. It likens Him to a spring of living water, a river that flows out of you that cleanses you from the inside out. It is the Holy Spirit who changes us and gives us the character of Jesus when we walk in him. Come on, this is why it says, we have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God. If the Spirit who is from God lives inside of us, then our character should be dramatically different than the people around us.

Because we don't live by the works of the flesh like the world does, we now live by the fruit of the Spirit, the character of Jesus. And we've been using this verse in this series, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own?" The Holy Spirit doesn't come to visit you, He comes to move in for good. And because He comes to move in for good, He is no longer a guest, He's actually the owner of the house. Now, I want you to think about this silly illustration with me for a second. I'm telling you it's silly up front, but just go with me on it. Let's say that your Aunt Ida was sick and because you loved her you decided you were going to go move in with her to help her. So you pack up all your stuff, you go to Aunt Ida's house, you knock on the door and when she opens the door, a smell that is so pungent comes from out of that house that it almost knocks you down.

And you look at Aunt Ida, and you say, Aunt Ida, what's going on in here? And she says, I don't know what you're talking about. But I'm so glad you're here. Come on in. And you walk in and it smells so bad you can barely breathe. You walk into the kitchen, there's garbage everywhere. There are 47 cats who have peed on everything. There is junk piled from the floor to the ceiling and like every room there's toxic mold growing in the bathrooms. And you're like, Aunt Ida, what has been going on here? She says, I don't even know what you're talking about. You're like, you don't know -- you can't smell that? You don't see this? And she doesn't because she's so used to live in it and it's become normal. Now, if you are just visiting, you would be okay, you'd have your little cup of tea and leave and walk out the house and be like, whoo, okay, let's get on with life here. But you're moving in, and you're like, Aunt Ida, now that I'm living here, we're going to have to do some things differently.

Like we're going to have to get rid of all of this garbage. And the cats, I know you love them, but they got to go. All of them. Not like 46 of them, all 47 of them got to go, okay? And we're going to clean the garbage and we're going to get rid of that toxic mold, we're going to put some locks on the door so that people can't just come in here whenever they want. Okay,

that's what happens when the Holy Spirit moves into our life. He doesn't come to visit, He comes to stay. And because He comes to move in, there are all kinds of smells and things and brokenness in your life that you're completely unaware of, you're completely oblivious to. It's like so normal to you until the Holy Spirit moves in and says, hey, we've got to deal with this garbage and we got to get rid of the cats and we got to get rid of the mold because it's going to hurt you. The Holy Spirit moves in and says there are some attitudes and some behaviors and some thoughts and some actions and some things you do and some places you go that are not good for you, so I have come to set you free.

This is now my home and I'm going to make it holy with you. And when He moves in, we love having Him. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Get rid of all the cats, bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander along with every form of malice. You ever been around cats? You're like, yep, right there. Here's the deal, when the Holy Spirit moves in and I want to have a relationship with Him, what grieves Him now grieves me. What smells bad to Him now smells bad to me. What bothers Him now bothers me. I don't want Him to be grieved in my life. I want Him to be honored, so I'm eager to do that which He enjoys.

This is the Holy Spirit transforming us from the inside out because the truth is most of the toxic stuff in your life, you're so used to it you don't even realize it's toxic until you say Holy Spirit I invite you in. Show me what I don't see and set me free from the things that I'm unaware of. You see, we said last week that the Holy Spirit is just like Jesus. So if we want to know what Jesus is like just look at the Holy Spirit. And when we think about Jesus, we think about his gentleness and his kindness and his compassion and that's why we often picture the Holy Spirit as a dove. But again, it doesn't say he's a dove, it says He is like a dove and yes Jesus was incredibly gentle, but Jesus was also a fierce warrior. Here's a passage that many of us forget, "Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who are buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. It is written he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers.'"

We don't ever think about Jesus in this context. Another one of the gospels tells us he made a cord of whips. He's flipping over tables and he is snapping a whip to get the den of robbers out of his house. What is the temple? What is his house? You. And if the Holy Spirit is just like Jesus, then when the Holy Spirit comes in and He finds a den of robbers trying to steal, kill and destroy you, He is not gentle, He is a fierce warrior and He will flip over the tables in your own soul to drive out the darkness that wants to steal, kill and destroy.

[Audience Applause]

Come on, the anger of God is directed at anything that interferes with His love for you.

He is aggressive and anything that keeps you in bondage. And if you invite Him in, He's going to flip over some tables because He wants to drive the robber out of your house that you might be free. Yes, He is gentle as a dove but it was also the Spirit who empowered Moses to defeat Egypt, Gideon to defeat the Midianites, and David to defeat Goliath. He is a fierce warrior on your behalf and you want Him to be. He is the ultimate security system if you will to keep the robbers out because His house is a house of prayer, of intimacy, relationship and communion. Come on. Holy Spirit turn some tables over in our lives. You see, one of the most famous passages that Jesus gives us when he talks about the Holy Spirit is in John 16 when he says, "When he comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."

In regard to sin because men do not believe in me, in regard to righteousness because I'm going to the Father where you can see me no longer, and in regard to judgment because the prince of this world now stands condemned. See if you can catch this because this is really important. The Holy Spirit comes to convict us. The word convict means to convince. He comes to show you, to convict you, to convince you of something that is true. And so just break it down with me. He has come to convict the world of sin. The Holy Spirit comes to the world and convicts them of sin. And notice it doesn't say sins plural, it says sin, the sin of unbelief. It's the Holy Spirit who's moving in the world, not showing them, oh, you messed up. Oh, you were wrong. Oh, you did this. Oh, that was bad. Nope, He comes to them to convince them that they are sinners in need of a savior, that they are lost, lonely and broken, that Jesus came and died for them. In fact, when you got saved it wasn't because you just had an idea light bulb, like I need a savior, it was the Holy Spirit who convinced you that you are lost, lonely and broken and Jesus died for you.

That is a great thing in Jesus' name. And we should be incredibly grateful that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of the sin of unbelief and points them to Jesus. Now, jump with me to the last one in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. The Holy Spirit comes to convict or convince us that Satan has already been defeated on the cross of Jesus. That greater is He that is in us than he that is in this world. If all authority in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus, then Satan no longer has any. He comes to convince us of that. Now, in regard to righteousness which means right standing with God, not right behavior, right standing with God, because I am going to the Father -- Jesus finished his work on the cross, went to the Father and sat down because it is finished and we are forever made right with God, where you can see me no longer.

He's talking to the disciples. So what he is saying in this moment is that the Holy Spirit comes into the life of believers to convict or convince them of their righteousness with God. This is so important. The Holy Spirit is not a nag. He is not an overbearing authority figure. He's not a controlling parent. He doesn't show up in your life and say, don't do this, I can't believe you did that, you should be ashamed of yourself, oh, that, that, oh, that, that. If that's what you



think the Holy Spirit does, no wonder we keep our distance from Him. Can I tell you who does that? Satan. He's the ultimate counterfeit, the ultimate impostor. In fact, his name is the accuser. That's literally what it means, all he wants to do is accuse you and he wants to deceive you in a way that makes you think that's the Holy Spirit, that that's what conviction is. And it's like I want nothing to do with that. But the Holy Spirit's name is Helper, Counselor, Comforter, Guide. And He comes into your life to convince you that you have been made right with God through Jesus.

So even in your moments when you are actively sinning, it's the Holy Spirit who was there trying to convince you to say, you know, even right now, you are God's beloved son or daughter in whom He's well pleased. Do you know that Jesus literally became that sin so that you could become his righteousness? Do you know he has fully forgiven you and has completely removed your sins from you as far as the east is from the west? That's what the Holy Spirit is doing. He's literally the Spirit of Truth and He is guiding you into truth. Remember, to sin means to miss the mark. And the Holy Spirit, when we miss the mark, is showing us, hey, Jesus has already nailed the bull's eye. Don't forget who you are and what he has done and what that now means for your life. He is always guiding us away from sin, towards the righteousness that we already have and that's what empowers us to live righteously. In fact, this is why it says, "Awake to righteousness and sin not."

If we will awake to who we are in God, we don't want to sin anymore. We become empowered to live free of it. And this is what the Holy Spirit is trying to do, to awaken you to who you now are in Jesus and that empowers you to live the character of Jesus. Does that make sense to you? You see, one of the criticisms that I've gotten a lot throughout the years is that I don't spend enough time preaching against sin. It's an interesting criticism. I understand where it's coming from. The person that usually gives it, they are against sin and so am I. And so is God. The difference is how we get to righteous living. In their mind, it's the more we preach against sin the less people will sin. The problem with that is when you hear more about what you're not supposed to do, it actually makes you want to do it more.

And if you actually read the Bible, the Bible is very clear on how we're not supposed to live on what is sin and what is not sin. And most people, when they come in and gather, especially on a day like Mother's Day, let's be honest, most people as they come in, they already come in with a sense of condemnation, guilt and shame. Like I would bet if you're checked out in this message, you already feel pretty bad about yourself. You already feel pretty bad about your life. And so if I get 30 minutes with most of you, maybe one, two, three times a month on average, I don't want to spend my time telling you what not to do, I want to spend my time telling you who you now are in Jesus because --because think about this, the moment that you get saved, you have a new nature. You're a new creation. You have a new identity. The Spirit of the Living God now dwells in your core which means you now actually long to please God.

If you're saved, it means you actually want to do the right thing, that you actually want to walk with God and move in his life. And so why would we spend our time preaching against your old nature that's now gone? It's like a caterpillar that becomes a butterfly and that butterfly still crawls around in the mud. I wouldn't spend all my time telling the butterfly, stop crawling in the mud, stop crawling in the mud, get out of the mud, stop crawling in the mud. No, I would say, hey, do you know you can fly? Do you know you have wings? That if you would spread them they would catch the breeze and you would be able to go places and do things and experience things unlike anything you have ever seen before? Come on, this is why the Bible says, "Count yourselves dead to sin and alive to Christ." If I'm going to be counted dead to sin, why do I want to spend all my time talking about not sinning? I want to spend my time talking about being alive to Christ.

I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives within me. Sin is no longer your master because you're not under the law, you're now under grace, right? Like it changes what we're talking about and how we do faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. So whatever I'm hearing, my faith in that thing grows. We all need our faith to grow in the righteousness of God. So I want to partner with what the Holy Spirit is already doing in your life and speaking to you and calling that to the surface because it gets buried down by the flesh and the things of this world. This is why when Paul writes to the Ephesians, he doesn't say to the sinners at Ephesus. Some of us are like, yeah, that's what he should. To the sinners of Valley Creek. No, to the saints of Ephesus, knowing that they have active struggles in their lives, but they've got a Guide, a Counselor, a Comforter, a Holy Spirit dwelling within them, changing them from the inside out, getting those cats out of there.

Just saying. Just saying. Hey dads, happy Father's Day to you for giving you this cat thing to go home with. Here's the problem for us, most of us prefer remorse over repentance. Remorse is unrepented guilt. It's just like, I would rather feel bad about myself, I would rather just kind of be like, yeah, I'm sorry I got caught. I'm sorry that there's consequences. That's called worldly sorrow. And most of us would rather live in that, like the shame, fear, control cycle. I did something wrong, I feel ashamed about it, so now I'm afraid, so I'm going to control you and everything around me. But then I got more shame, and it just kind of lives in the cycle. I'd rather just live in that, tell me how bad I am because I already know, I'd rather -- as opposed to conviction, repentance and freedom.

Conviction from the Spirit of the Living God, who I am. Repenting, changing my mind and my direction and now living in freedom and then actually wanting more conviction and repentance and freedom because the Holy Spirit does not come to shame you, He has come to free you in Jesus' name. Come on. In fact, this is why this verse is mind blowing. This is God, He says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit in you." You got a new nature, a new identity. You're a new creation. You're a butterfly even if you like hanging out in the mud. "I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh and -- ready -- I will put my Spirit in you and I will move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." In

other words, God puts His Spirit in us and that Spirit empowers us and gives us a desire to move towards the things of God.

That's who you are, that's what the Spirit is and that's what we're calling to the surface in Jesus' name. This is what it looks like to be convicted of righteousness, that I don't have to live down to that anymore. It's already been paid for in Jesus' name. I don't have to live in bondage. I don't have to live like the world. I've been set free to have the character of Jesus. And I need the Spirit to be my guide to show me how to actually walk it out. Come on. If the Holy Spirit is just like Jesus, then look at how Jesus dealt with sinners in the gospel, "When the woman who was caught in adultery was thrown at the feet of Jesus and they all picked up stones to stone her, Jesus says, 'Let him who is without sin throw the first stone.' And as they all walk away, Jesus the only one who could have thrown a stone, is the only one who doesn't even pick one up. And he looks at the woman, he says, 'Is there no one to condemn you?' He says, 'Then neither do I condemn you; now go and sin no more.'"

When we are about to stone ourselves from the failures in our own lives, the Holy Spirit stops us and looks and says, neither do I condemn you; now go and sin no more. Or how about the man who's paralyzed for 38 years and Jesus just walks up to him, "Do you want to get well? Then pick up your mat and walk." The Holy Spirit comes into your life and mine and that struggling, says, do you want to get well? And he gives us one simple next step. And if we will submit to Him in that area, He will bring freedom in every area. Or how about when Peter denies Jesus three times to a servant girl when Jesus needed him the most. Jesus is dead, crucified, buried, resurrected and he comes to Peter and he gives him a net full of fish, has a meal with Peter and declares Peter's destiny back over his life. That's what the Holy Spirit does, He overwhelms us with kindness and that kindness leads us to repentance.

It's the Spirit of the Living God inside of us that creates the character of Jesus naturally and effortlessly when we choose to submit to Him in any area, so we can experience His freedom in every area. I would bet there are some places of bondage in your life today, and I would also bet that the Holy Spirit has been whispering, prompting, guiding, leading you on some really small, seemingly disconnected things. But if you will submit to Him in the little, He will set you free in what you perceive as the much because that's what walking in the Spirit looks like, as the fruit, the character of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control begin to emerge in our life.

So will you close your eyes with me? Come on, what does the Holy Spirit want to say to you today? If you've never put your faith in Jesus, today is the day. Jesus, I invite you in. I believe that you died for me that I might be free. Holy Spirit, we invite you to move into our house. Maybe just even ask Him, will you overturn the tables in my own soul? Will you show me where there are things that are broken and toxic that I've become so used to, that it becomes so normative in my life?

Lord, will you show me those things, Holy Spirit? Will you help me remove them in Jesus' name? We all like to talk about the power of the Holy Spirit and we're going to talk about that next week, but it starts with the character of the Holy Spirit, the character of Jesus. So Holy Spirit, would you come and convict us of sin, righteousness and judgment? Would you come for those of us that don't believe in Jesus and convict us of the sin of unbelief that we need a savior? Would you come to those of us that are followers of Jesus and convict us of the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus that we already have?

Would you show us that we have wings, that we can fly and we weren't made to crawl around in the dirt and we don't have to anymore? And would you come and convict all of us that Satan and darkness has already been defeated and all authority on heaven and earth belongs to Jesus? So Holy Spirit, we invite you in. Change us from the inside out in Jesus' name we pray, amen.