

Following Jesus Requires the Spirit

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[0 : 0 0] So, whenever I read the Bible, I try my best to immerse myself in the story, whatever I happen to be reading. Our natural tendency is to read the Bible and think, what can I get out of this?

What's the application for me? But I believe it's better to try and get inside the minds of the authors and the original audience to put ourselves in their shoes.

Why? Well, first of all, we'll understand the text better that way. And second, we may not know how to accurately apply the text to ourselves until we understand the original context.

While everything in the Bible has implications for us, not necessarily everything has direct application to us. But we can't really know until we have understood the historical and cultural and even biblical or literary context of each passage.

So, when we read the Bible, it's good to immerse ourselves in it. And there's a particular part of the Bible that I find particularly easy to get lost in.

[1 : 1 4] And that's the night before the Lord's crucifixion. All four Gospels tell us something about that night. Jesus gathers with his disciples to share their last Passover meal together.

Of course, this was meant to be a time of celebration. They were celebrating God's deliverance of Israel out of their slavery in Egypt. So, in my mind, as they're gathering together in that upper room, I pictured the disciples smiling and laughing as they gather around the table.

They found a place to meet. The food's been prepared. It's been a challenging week in Jerusalem. Jesus upset the Jewish leaders by driving out the money changers and merchants from the temple.

There were many confrontations that week between Jesus and those leaders. But Christ and his disciples are finally away from all of that. They're in a quiet place.

It's just Jesus and his closest friends. So, I imagine them enjoying a little respite as they come together to celebrate the Passover. But that reprieve doesn't last very long.

[2 : 2 8] Soon enough, Jesus says, with fervent desire, I have desire to eat this Passover with you. But then he adds, before I suffer.

You can imagine their faces falling, right? I mean, they knew something was coming. Jesus predicted his suffering and his death several times.

They no doubt felt the animosity coming from Jewish leaders rising to a near boiling point. Not long before this trip to Jerusalem, they knew their lives were in potential danger if they ever went anywhere near Jerusalem again.

They knew something was coming. But I don't think they anticipated exactly what or exactly when. And I suspect a part of them thought to themselves, no, Lord, not tonight.

Can't we just enjoy the evening? But it was not to be. As they're sitting at the table, Jesus announces that one of them will betray him.

[3 : 39] And immediately they all begin thinking, is it me? Could it be me? Who could it be? They start whispering to John, John, ask him, who will it be? And that's when Jesus turns to Judas and says, go, what you do, do quickly.

And of course, everybody's sitting around the table not realizing why he said that, thinking that Judas must need to go out and buy something. And then what happens?

Well, at this point, you would think that the disciples would have fallen into this solemn, prayerful silence. But no. They begin arguing about who among them is the greatest.

Now, I could be wrong. The gospel accounts are very difficult to piece together in a chronological order at this point. But I've always pictured Jesus moving right here at this point in the evening to wash the disciples' feet.

It would certainly be appropriate if that's the order things came in. Regardless, the evening continues. And I'm so thankful for John's gospel because his account contains more than four chapters of Jesus speaking to his disciples.

[4 : 55] And if it didn't, my mind would be consumed with curiosity. What did Jesus say on the final night of his life? What did he tell his disciples would happen?

So what did they know when he died? And when he was buried? What did they know? What did he tell them? Well, thankfully, we don't have to wonder because God moved John to record it.

At least much of it. But let me back up for just a moment. As we immerse ourselves in that evening, I don't know that we can underestimate the anticipation that his disciples must have felt.

I mean, this was an anticipation that must have grown stronger by the day. As you read the gospels, it becomes clear that the disciples, first of all, knew something monumental was coming.

How did they know? Well, the Messiah was here. The prophecies would be fulfilled. The prophecies were being fulfilled right before their eyes. And this was all growing, they knew, toward a climax in redemptive history.

[6 : 05] Now, they didn't necessarily understand what was coming exactly or when it was coming, but they knew something was coming. And second, they knew that whatever was coming would be a great and glorious thing.

I mean, the messianic prophecies in the Old Testament do not conclude with doom and gloom, do they? They point to salvation. They point to restoration of the whole world.

They tell of a day when Christ takes his throne and he utterly destroys sin and sadness and sickness and death. They point to a day when God will once again dwell with his people and he with them.

So just think what it must have been like for Peter and Andrew and John and James and the others. God's covenant people have waited a long time for this.

And Jesus' disciples in particular have watched his ministry with their own eyes. They've seen his power. They've seen his miracles.

[7 : 12] They've heard his words. As John said, we have beheld his glory. We have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father. Full of grace and truth. We saw him.

We were there. I often think about the time that Jesus fed the 5,000. You may remember the crowd was so impressed by him that they wanted to take him by force and make him their king.

And if I were one of those first disciples, I would have thought, this is it. This is the moment we've been waiting for. Israel is clearly ready to embrace their king, the king of kings.

Surely now is the time. Jesus will take his throne, the throne that belongs to him. Now is the time when he will make all things new. But he doesn't.

Instead, John tells us that Jesus withdrew himself to a mountain to be by himself. He practically ran away from the people. And I suspect the disciples were a little disappointed.

[8 : 18] I'm sure they were confused. I mean, what happened? This was the moment. But of course it wasn't. Because before Jesus would take his throne and long before he would make all things new, he needed to suffer.

And he needed to die. And the Old Testament prophets, they spoke of that too, but it was often missed. Or at least conflated with the other prophecies concerning his ultimate triumph at the end of time.

So there had to be a tremendous amount of anticipation among the disciples. They're inching ever closer to something truly wonderful.

But Jesus, on this last night, he kind of deflates their expectations a bit. He tells them again about his suffering. He accuses one of them of betraying him.

Despite Peter's protest, he tells Peter about his forthcoming denial. Jesus essentially rebukes them all for their pride. And did I mention that he also makes it very clear to them that he is leaving.

[9 : 31] And worse yet, he tells them, where I am going now, you cannot follow. So they have all of this anticipation. And Jesus seems to tell them, I'm sorry, but everything you thought was wrong.

Now that's not entirely true, of course. But that's probably how the disciples felt in that moment. I don't understand. I thought he was building a kingdom. I thought he would defeat our enemies.

I thought he would reign over this kingdom. I thought we would reign with him. But he's going to suffer and die? He's going to leave us?

And we can't even follow? None of this makes sense. If you pay attention to the questions the disciples ask throughout John 13 through at least 16, you get a glimpse of some of their fears.

In John 14, when Jesus says, if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.

[10 : 39] And how does Thomas respond? He says, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way? And I could be wrong about this, but I get a sense of desperation in Thomas.

He's grasping for as much information as he can. It kind of reminds me of my children. We recently put a bunk bed in Nora's room. And they were really excited to climb the ladder, but they didn't want to do it by themselves at first.

And so if they didn't feel our hands on them or know that we were right there, they would get kind of momentarily frantic. Hold on to me. Don't let go. And I get a sense of that in Thomas and the other disciples.

I sense that kind of fear in them as they question Jesus. They're grasping for anything they can get because they're confused. And they're scared.

They've gone from anticipating the greatest things imaginable to possibly the worst things imaginable. And at the heart of all of the bad news they received this night, is the news that they are going to be alone.

[11 : 53] Jesus is leaving them. Now it was probably challenging enough to try and follow Jesus in the flesh, but how could they possibly follow Him when He's not even there? Do you remember when Jesus appeared to Thomas after His resurrection?

He allowed Thomas to touch the wounds in His hands and in His side. Immediately, Thomas believed it was Him. He shouted, My Lord and my God.

And then Jesus said, Have you believed because you have seen? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. following His death, and especially after His ascension into heaven, the disciples had to learn how to follow Christ even when Christ was not with them in the flesh.

And isn't that true for us? He's not with us in the flesh. We have to learn how to follow Him, though we can't physically follow Him. Over the last few weeks, we've talked about what it means to follow Christ, and the question that lingers is, How do we follow someone we can't even see?

Now you may answer, Well, we follow Him by faith. After all, faith is the conviction of things not seen. And you would be right. In fact, Jesus tells His disciples at the start of John 14, Believe in God.

[13 : 19] Believe also in Me. Trust in us. Don't rely altogether on what you can see. Believe in what you cannot see. So faith is a correct answer.

But it's not the complete answer. And let me show you what I mean. We could look at several passages within John chapters 14 through 17, but let's turn over to John chapter 16.

Go with me, if you will, to John chapter 16. As Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure, this is what He tells them.

Starting at verse 1, John 16. I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. They will put you out of the synagogues.

Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father nor Me.

[14 : 24] But I have said these things to you that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told them to you. Now obviously, the disciples are likely growing more fearful by the moment.

Not only will Jesus suffer, not only will He leave them, but now Jesus says they too will suffer. He continues. I did not say these things to you from the beginning because I was with you.

But now I am going to Him who sent me, and none of you asks me, where are you going? But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth.

It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper, or the Comforter, or the Counselor, will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.

And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, concerning sin because they do not believe in Me, concerning righteousness because I go to the Father and you will see Me no longer, concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged.

[15 : 34] I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak.

And He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is Mine, therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.

How could the disciples continue on without Jesus in the flesh? How could they endure all that awaited them? How could they remain faithful in following Him?

How do we follow Him having never seen Him? Well, Jesus says, it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Now, I can't say how the disciples felt in this moment, but hearing that promise, I don't think the flesh interprets this as good news. Yet that's how Jesus presents it.

[16 : 49] It is to your advantage that I go away. Why? It's not because the disciples were better off without Jesus. The truth is, they would never be without Him.

It may have felt that way when He died on the cross. It may have felt that way after He ascended into heaven, but Christ has never altogether left or forsaken His people. It was to their advantage that He was leaving them in the physical sense because, number one, He had to procure and secure their salvation.

And, number two, He would equip and He would empower them by His Spirit, the Helper, the Counselor, to continue on, to persevere, to carry out the mission of the church.

How are we able to follow Christ? We do so by faith, yes, but we can't even do that apart from the Spirit. Unless one is born again, he cannot even see the kingdom of God.

What does it mean to be born again? How are we born again? As Jesus says in John 3, to be born again is to be born of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2.17, Paul says, the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are folly to him and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

[18 : 22] We can't begin to follow Christ in faith apart from the Spirit. Without the Spirit, we don't understand. Without the Spirit, we have no inclination to follow Christ.

Naturally, no one understands, Romans 3. No one seeks for God. According to Ephesians 2, faith itself is a gift of God. Paul writes, for by grace are you saved through faith and this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God. Sadly, the Spirit is an often forgotten member of the Trinity, at least a neglected one.

You see, no one questions the significance of God the Father. And as Christians, we don't question the significance of Jesus Christ. But notice here in John 16 how Jesus elevates the Spirit in the lives of His disciples.

The Spirit is not just a bonus for believers. It's not a cherry on top. Jesus is telling His disciples that the Spirit's role is necessary in the grand scheme of redemption.

[19 : 31] When He comes, Jesus says, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. He will guide you into all the truth. He will glorify me for He will take what is mine and declare it to you.

As I've already said, we don't come to repentance, we don't come to faith apart from the Spirit. And in a moment, we'll talk more about the role of the Spirit. But let me back up and just say a few things about the Trinity because this is foundational for us as Christians.

We don't have a Christian faith without the Trinity. We don't have salvation without the Trinity. So it's important that we understand it, at least on a basic level.

The crucial thing to know about the Trinity is that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God, yet three distinct persons.

Here's another way to put it in three simple statements. Number one, the Father, Son, and Spirit are three distinct persons. Number two, each person is fully God.

[20 : 50] And number three, there is only one God. So let's take these one at a time and I'll try to be brief. First, the Father, Son, and Spirit are three distinct persons.

Now, the Bible claims all three are God. In various places, all three persons of the Trinity are referred to as God. Does that mean they all represent a different way of looking at God?

Does it mean He reveals Himself in different ways? No, it means each member of the Trinity is God, but the Bible is also clear that they are distinct persons.

For example, John 3, 16 says, the Father sent the Son into the world. Later, the Son returned to the Father.

Both the Father and the Son sent the Spirit into the world. So you see from these brief clips, if you will, in Scripture that they're all distinct.

[21 : 57] They may all be God, but they can't all be the same person. Perhaps the best example of this is found during the baptism of Jesus, right? Jesus is there in the flesh.

The Spirit is descending from heaven in the form of a dove, and God the Father is speaking from heaven. How can this be? Well, they are three persons.

They are distinct from one another. Now, we can go much deeper into this. The concept itself raises a lot of questions. Theologians have been debating this for many, many, many years, but we'll continue.

Second, I said each person is fully God. If God is three persons, does that mean each person represents, say, one-third of God?

No. Not at all, because the Bible shows us that each member of the Trinity is fully, fully God. Philippians 1-2 says the Father is God.

[23 : 05] Titus 2-13 says Jesus is God. In Acts 5, Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit.

And then, in the very next verse, he says, Ananias lied to God. How can he say such a thing? Because both the Spirit, God the Father, Christ the Son, they're all fully God.

They are God. And lastly, I said there is only one God. Once we understand that each member of the Trinity is God, we may be tempted to think that maybe there's three gods.

But no. And this has been a stumbling block for those who obviously deny the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Isaiah 45 says, and this is God speaking in verses 21-22, there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior.

There is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. So as paradoxical, even contradictory as some of these things might seem in our minds, we must accept them as truth because that's what Scripture teaches on all three points.

[24 : 29] And we find a lot of other statements throughout Scripture we could examine. The Trinity, that is, the Father, Son, and Spirit are one God, yet three distinct persons.

And as you would expect, each member of the Trinity plays a vital role in our lives, in our salvation, in fact, let's break this down and we're going to talk about what the Spirit in particular does in three specific areas of life.

First, let's consider the role of the Spirit in history. Without the Spirit, we wouldn't have history. Consider the creation story in Genesis.

In Genesis chapter 1, we read, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. So right there, at the very beginning of history, we see the Spirit at work.

[25 : 38] Now, it's not abundantly clear what the Spirit is doing. The word is hovering. fluttering. That's a word that can also mean trembling or fluttering.

It's used again in Deuteronomy 32, where it says, like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters. That's the word, that flutters over its young. So if nothing else, there's a sense of anticipation created in that detail in Genesis.

The Spirit is moving. The Spirit is fluttering. It's hovering. He's hovering over the waters as things are forming and God is creating. Now, it's kind of interesting to think back to that detail in the creation story when we move over to the New Testament and we read about the conception of Jesus.

When the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she will have this child, she asks, how can this be? Because I'm a virgin. And Gabriel explains it to her this way.

He says, the Holy Spirit will come upon you. And the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Now, that's not the same word used back in Genesis, but it's a very similar idea.

[26 : 57] In the creation of the world, the Spirit is hovering over the unformed earth as God is bringing everything into existence. Then, in the conception of Christ, the Spirit is overshadowing Mary as she conceives.

So, right there, we see the Spirit at work in two of the greatest events in all of history. First, we have the beginning of history, the creation of the world.

And second, we have the conception of the Savior Himself who will save the world. And the Spirit's right there in the middle of it.

And then we have a lot of space in between the two, right? And we see the Spirit at work. God's prophets spoke by the Spirit.

The Bible was written by the Spirit. 2 Peter 1.21, For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

[28 : 01] The Spirit carried them. He bore them like someone carrying a weight. without the Spirit, there would be no prophecies. Without the Spirit, there would be no scripture.

At times in the Old Testament, we see the Spirit actually descend upon the earth or descend upon people. In 1 Samuel chapter 16, for example, God takes the throne away from King Saul and He gives it to David.

So the prophet Samuel, he comes along and he anoints David. And the text says, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.

The Spirit rushed upon David. He came forcefully. That language conjures a mental image of the Spirit pushing David like a strong wind in the direction that he needs to go.

And it says the Spirit rushed upon David from that day forward. So the Spirit did not leave him. He continued to push David from that day forward.

[29 : 16] And later David acknowledges his need for the Spirit. In Psalm 51, a psalm familiar to most of us, David cries out for mercy after his sin with Bathsheba.

And he says, cast me not away from your presence, speaking to God, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation.

You see, David knew how vital the Spirit was for him. In a sense, he knew that to receive God's mercy and salvation was to receive the Spirit. And he begged God not to take him away.

And let's not forget about the Spirit's role in the life and ministry of Christ. I've already mentioned his conception, but the Spirit continues working throughout Jesus' life. Granted, he's usually in the background.

While Christ is in the forefront, he's in plain view. But, you know, that's typical. The Spirit is usually working out of sight. He's not much of a showboat in most cases.

[30 : 18] He's working. His work is vital, but with relatively few exceptions, the Spirit is always at work in the background. So that's the first thing. That's the role of the Spirit throughout history.

Second, let's consider the role of the Spirit in the church. As we see in John 16, Jesus promised to send His Spirit, the Helper.

And we see the beginning of that fulfillment in Acts chapter 2. As the early church is there together in the city of Jerusalem, Jesus has already ascended into heaven.

Suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as a fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So the Spirit was active throughout all of history, but this is a special, this is a monumental event. This is people being filled with the Spirit as never before.

[31 : 30] In fact, it's kind of an interesting study. In the Old Testament, you often see the Spirit descending on people, dwelling over people or with people, but this being filled with the Spirit seems to be something else altogether.

And what does the coming of the Spirit accomplish in this case? Well, the primary thing we see it doing is bringing everyone together. Now, 120 disciples were already there, but the commotion causes thousands more to flood into that place, to come and see what the commotion is all about.

And then, everyone begins speaking to one another, and understanding one another, even though prior to this, they all spoke different languages.

Christians. They shouldn't have been able to understand one another. So, in at least one sense, this marks the beginning of the church, and the way in which the Spirit brings about this beginning is by unifying a formerly divided people.

And that's what the Spirit does. He builds up the church by unifying us. Now, we don't have time to go into everything the Spirit does for the church, but let me mention one more.

[32 : 51] Actually, let me read from 1 Corinthians 12, starting at verse 4. Paul writes, Now, there are varieties of gifts, that is, in the body of Christ, in the church, and there are, but the same Spirit, and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord, and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit.

To another, faith by the same Spirit. To another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, the ability to distinguish between spirits.

To another, various kinds of tongues. To another, the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills.

The Spirit builds the church, bringing us together, supplies us with all of the various gifts that we need to function and to serve as a church.

[34 : 17] Now by the way, if you happen to be one of those people who struggles with this idea of the Spirit giving gifts because you can't quite identify which gifts maybe the Spirit has given you, well I'll just say chances are you have many gifts, and chances are those gifts may come and go as they're needed.

The best thing I think we can do is just serve. Serve in every way we know how and I believe whatever gifts we may have will actually reveal themselves over time.

If not to you, then to others. And often they reveal themselves to others before they are known to you. So the Spirit's been at work throughout history.

He's been at work in the church and third and final, He's at work in you. He's at work in each of God's people. Jumping back to John 14, Jesus says in verses 16 and 17, I will ask the Father and He will give you another helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him.

You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. Now notice that the Spirit dwells in the believer, but not in the hard-hearted, unbelieving world.

[35 : 47] As I mentioned earlier, one of the things the Spirit does is convict and convert us. He supplies us with faith. He gives us a new life, a second spiritual birth.

He opens up our understanding of truth. After all, He is the Spirit of truth. So if you want to make a list, the Spirit convicts and converts.

That's one thing. Second, He teaches and trains. Verse 26, But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Again, the Bible itself was written by the Spirit. But more than that, the Bible comes a lot of alive to us because of the Spirit. Hebrews 4.12, For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, at least when it's in the hand of the Spirit, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

How can a book be living and active? How can it come alive? Well, it doesn't for everyone. For some, it's still just a book.

[37 : 07] But in the hand of the Spirit who dwells in disciples of Christ, it's sharper than any two-edged sword. Piercing to the deepest parts of us, the Spirit takes what is a seemingly ordinary book, an ancient book, to some a boring book, a lifeless book, and actually brings it to life.

Through it, the Spirit teaches us. And third, the Spirit equips and empowers us. That's why Jesus calls him the helper.

He's one who comes alongside us. He walks with us. He endures with us. He gives us the help we need as we continue on. Paul mentions the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. These are ways in which the Spirit is equipping us for the Christian life.

These are the ways the Spirit is equipping us for following Jesus. Now, we've only scratched the surface today, but when we put all of this together, what is the primary role of the Spirit?

[38 : 27] Spirit? I'm afraid we sometimes think that the Spirit just, he just comes along to fill in the gaps, you know? He's just a little bit extra.

Whatever the Father or the Son isn't doing, well, I guess the Spirit just sort of comes in and picks up the slack or something. I believe the Spirit's foremost passion and purpose is to glorify Christ the Son.

Isn't that what Jesus said at the end of John 16? And he does this primarily by bringing us into worship, into love, and into obedience to him.

As Andrew Randall says, he likens them to a spotlight. When a light, you know, shines on something, it's not the light we notice, is it? It's the thing upon which the light is shining.

And I believe that's what the Spirit is to Christ. A light shining on Christ, illuminating him to us. That's his passion. That's his purpose.

[39 : 36] And frankly, we can't follow Christ without him. So I'm going to leave you with just a couple of practical words from the Apostle Paul.

In Ephesians 5, he says, do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

In other words, submit to the Spirit. Come under the influence of the Spirit, not something else. Seek the Spirit, if you will. And in 1 Thessalonians 5, he says, do not quench the Spirit.

How does one go about quenching the Spirit? How does that happen? Well, Paul clarifies to some degree in the next verse. He says, do not despise prophecies.

Don't despise the teachings of God, the words of God, but test everything. Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

[40 : 39] We need the Spirit to follow Christ. God bless you. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that in your wise and benevolent plan you saw fit to not abandon us to ourselves.

But even those first disciples were sent your Holy Spirit to fill them as never before, to guide them, to comfort them, to give them peace, to give them strength, and to teach them the things that we need to know.

And your Spirit continues to be at work. It was at work at the beginning of history, at the most important times in history, and he continues to be at work in your people. And we thank you for him.

We thank you for all he does for us. And we ask your forgiveness for the many times that we have quenched your Spirit. the many times that we have been filled with anything but your Spirit.

Lord, and we pray that you would not only forgive us, but help us to rely on your Spirit every moment of our lives. And we want to do this all because it does shine a light on your Son.

[41 : 54] It gives glory to him, and that's our utmost endeavor. We thank you, Lord, in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.