

“GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT”

Ephesians 4:30-5:7

This sermon was preached at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Cherry Log, Georgia on Sunday, February 12, 2012 by Pastor Paul Mims

Last Sunday, the largest audience in television history viewed the Super Bowl. The premium tickets went for \$3800. The seats in the end zones went for almost \$1,000. It was a great American sports celebration. Here is a funny story of devotion to the big game.

A man receives a free ticket to the Super Bowl from his company. Unfortunately, when he arrives at the stadium he realizes the seat is in the last row in the corner of the stadium.

About halfway through the first quarter he notices an empty seat, 10 rows off the field right on the 50 yard line. He decides to take a chance and makes his way through the stadium and around the security guards to the empty seat. As he sits down, he asks the gentleman sitting next to him,

"Excuse me, is anyone sitting here?"

The man replies negatively. Now, very excited to be in such a great seat for the game, he again inquires of the man next to him,

"This is incredible! Who in their right mind would have a seat like this at the Super Bowl and not use it?"

The man replies, "Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away. This is the first Super Bowl we haven't been together at since we got married in 1967."

"Well, that's terribly sad. But still, couldn't you find someone to take the seat? A relative or close friend?"

"No," the man replied, "they're all at the funeral." Of course, that is an absurd story, but it does point out how we can get life out of focus depending on what we are willing to commit ourselves to. It is in this context that we grieve the Holy Spirit.

She was in the seventh grade. One afternoon she came home from school and said to Janice, "Mom, the girls at school were talking about smoking and they asked me, 'Would your mother be mad with you if you smoked?'" And Janice said, "Well, what did you tell them?" Jenny said, "I told them that you would be hurt if I smoked and I could not do that to you." Janice knew then that Jenny's character was formed in ways that she would guard her conduct so as not to hurt the one who loved her so much.

The Bible teaches that we can grieve the Holy Spirit when we know to live right and do not. This is called grieving the Holy Spirit within us. At the time of salvation God gives us a salvation love gift which is the indwelling of his Holy Spirit within us. Look at the tremendous benefits to us as believers when we cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Rom 8:15-16 *'... but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out 'Abba! Father! The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.'*

This means that the Holy Spirit gives us assurance of our relationship to God. We have been received into the family of God and his Spirit says to my spirit, "You belong to me. I have saved you by grace and you are redeemed."

John 14:26 *'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 the things that I have said.'*

The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Teacher. Jesus told us that he would bring his teachings to our minds as we face various situations. When we are confronted with evil that would like to destroy us, the teachings of Jesus will be brought to our minds.

Gal 5:16 *'But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.'*

When temptations seem overpowering and it is our desire to walk in the Spirit, he will empower us to face the tempter with victory.

Gal 5:22 *'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.'*

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ being formed in us by the Holy Spirit. That is how we can have these great spiritual attributes.

1 John 2:26-27 *'I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you.'*

The Holy Spirit indwelling us is how we know the difference between truth and error. There are so many life issues that we need guidance about and so many voices telling us what the Bible says that God has enabled us to distinguish truth from error.

John 14:16 *'I will ask the Father and he will give you the Comforter, that he may be with you forever.'*

The Holy Spirit is our comforter. Life is hard. Life can be vicious. Our hearts get broken. Our dreams get smashed. Our relationships get torn asunder. And through it all we are comforted by the indwelling Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12 *'For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God... Now we have received the... Spirit who is from God so that we know the things freely given to us by God.'*

The Holy Spirit takes us deeper into the treasures of our faith. As we grow, we learn things that make life abundant and meaningful.

Matt 10:20 *'For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you,'*

There are times when we do not know what to say. When we are trying to minister to someone whose need is great, the Holy Spirit directs our thoughts so as to bless them with what they need at the moment. When evil challenges us we are able to stand firm in Christ.

Rom 8:26-28 *'In the same way the Spirit helps us in our weakness for we do not know what to pray for as we should...he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.'*

The Holy Spirit also directs our prayer life. He will bring different causes of the Kingdom and individuals to mind that we should lift to the Lord in Prayer.

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

(Ephesians 4:30) We can see from these verses that when we do grieve the Holy Spirit there are effects that result in our lives: we don't feel close to God anymore, we wonder if we are saved or not, worship is tedious, the Bible seems dull, peace is a memory, we have a lack of discernment in spiritual matters, and a general malaise settles over our spiritual lives. When we grieve the Holy Spirit, we do damage to ourselves by quenching his activity in our lives. The seal speaks of both ownership and security. When we sin this means that the Holy Spirit has to turn from his sanctifying ministry in us to one of restoration. He is grieved because our growth in Christ is stopped by our sin. He must then bring about our repentance and renewal of fellowship.

The Apostle Paul gives four main thoughts about grieving the Holy Spirit.

THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT GRIEVE (V. 31) “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.” Not only do these issues grieve other people in our lives, they also grieve the Holy Spirit within us.

If we allow bitterness which is a smoldering resentment toward another person to dominate our thoughts it colors everything else in life.

Dave Branon said, "When I begin to grade the papers from the students in my college freshman writing class, I'm rather lenient about correcting their mistakes, hoping I won't see the same errors again.

But when the next paper contains the identical mistakes, I begin to get a little irritated. I expect the students to learn from their errors and avoid them the next time. Usually, though, it doesn't quite work that way.

Sounds like our Christian life. The Lord patiently reminds us through the Holy Spirit's presence, for example, that we shouldn't say negative things about others. He tells us to be kind and compassionate instead of fault-finding and vindictive. But we sometimes slip back into our old habit of letting both "fresh" and "bitter" words come from our lips in our conversations about others.

With my students, I go back to the basics to erase old habits. We train. We review. We practice. We eliminate the errors.

The Lord patiently continues to work with us about the way we speak of other people. As we listen to His training, learn from our mistakes, and depend on His power, we'll grow and change."

THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT BLESS (V.32) "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as Christ in God forgave you."

The University of Wisconsin in its Extension Outreach catalog announced a new course on "Interpersonal Forgiveness." The catalog explained that students would be exploring "the latest approaches to forgiveness."

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,
I've been born again in Jesus' name;
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to.—Owens

The old approach in Christ is the best one to use in forgiveness. If you have been forgiven – forgive.

THE ACTIONS THAT GRIEVE (5:3-5) "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place...For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure, or greedy person...has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

The story is told that a friend of Augustine named Alypius was often urged by his neighbors to watch the gladiators in combat. He refused to do so because he abhorred the brutality of those barbaric contests. One day, however, he was forced into the amphitheater against his will. Determined not to witness the gory spectacle, Alypius kept his eyes tightly closed. But a piercing cry aroused his curiosity so much that he peeked just as one of the fighters received a fatal wound.

J. N. Norton says of the incident, "No sooner had Alypius discovered the bloody stream issuing from the victim's side, than his finer sensibilities were blunted, and he joined in the shouts and exclamations of the noisy mob about him. From that moment he was a changed man—changed for the worse; not only attending such sports himself, but urging others to do likewise." Even though Alypius had entered the arena against his will, his exposure to evil and eventual addiction suggests what can happen to the best of people when they get one small taste of lustful pleasures. Their appetite is whetted. They develop a liking for what they once abhorred. And without realizing it they become enslaved."

“She dressed in rags, lived in a tenement house amid mounds of garbage, and spent much of her time rummaging through trash cans. The local newspaper picked up her story after the woman who was known in her neighborhood as “Garbage Mary” had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital. Astonishingly, in her filthy apartment police found stock certificates and bankbooks indicating she was worth at least a million dollars.

This woman’s condition was heartbreaking. But from God’s point of view there are even more tragic examples of “wealthy” people who subsist on “garbage.” If Christians are controlled by lust, hate, envy, pride, impatience, or bitterness, they’re actually choosing to live off the refuse of the world.

This might be understandable if they had no resources to draw from. You’d expect that kind of behavior from people without faith in Christ. But that’s not the case for believers. We have the Word of truth and the help of the Holy Spirit. We have no excuse for groveling in the dirt of sin when the power of God is at our disposal.” Mart DeHaan

THE DECEPTIONS THAT CORRUPT (5:6-7) “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them.”

Christians should not be deceived by the doubletalk of our culture in regards to immorality. It is true that the mores have changed, but God’s standard has not. The world is continually trying to press us into its mold. Every young person gets that tap on the shoulder from Satan who says, “Follow me and I will show you the joys of life.” He only can lead into enslavement and away from God. That is his goal. He is in a cosmic battle with God and he is viciously at work among God’s people to get them to believe him just like he deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

So, the conclusion of the matter is – “There is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.” Could it be that the reason that you are not really happy in Jesus is that you have grieved the Holy Spirit in you and you have not been restored by conviction, repentance, and confession of your sin? Don’t you want to know that blessed spiritual aliveness to God that comes when you are right with him? You can have it right now.

Praise Be to His Name!