

Encountering the Holy Spirit
University Bible Fellowship Conference: The Well
Rand Tucker
December 30, 2011

I committed my life to following Jesus when I was 18 years old, and out of my passion for Him, I set out over the following years to let everyone know about this relationship with God. I did this with all of the passion and ingenuity I could muster. I shared my faith with my classmates. I engaged in spiritual conversations with family members. I reached out through my youth group and college fellowship. I served in leadership of these fellowships. I even had the opportunity to share my faith through mission trips. Eventually, I felt God calling me to serve as a pastor, and I was happy to accept that calling. But four short years into following Jesus with such passion, I found myself dry and worn out, and I was starting to have doubts about my life. These doubts were not about whether God existed. These doubts were more about whether I was living the life that God really had intended me to live.

In this season of burn out, a friend of mine at the time invited me to come to visit the church he was attending. He said that he thought it would be spiritually encouraging for me. I asked him a little bit about the church, and I decided to attend one Sunday. As soon as I arrived at the Sunday service, I thought that I had possibly made a mistake. I had arrived after the singing had started, and the people there were much more emotional than I was used to in the churches that I had been a part of. Some of them were raising their hands, some had tears on their cheeks, and some were swaying to the music. Fortunately, I had learned that as Christians that we were not supposed to judge others and that there are different expressions of our faith, so I decided to find a seat with my friend, sit quietly, and close my eyes.

I, however, was never ready for what was about to happen to me. One of the life questions that had been haunting me over the previous months was whether I had correctly understood my calling to be a pastor. During my previous leadership experience in the church, I had experienced rejection at times for sharing my faith and conflict at times with others within the church, and these things had led me to doubt God's calling for my life. I was wounded, and I was tired, and I had serious doubts about God's plans for my life. Then in a moment in the middle of this church service sitting their quietly with my eyes closed all of those doubts disappeared. I heard the voice of God say, "Rand, I have called you into the ministry, and I have already told you that," and in that moment of encountering the Holy Spirit something changed inside of me, and I walked out of the service that day without a doubt that God had called me into the ministry.

Now I have to admit that though I haven't doubted since that day that God has called me to be a pastor there are times that I have wanted to quit, but in those moments I have had other encounters with God's Spirit that have kept me going. In fact, I have had many different types of encounters with the Holy Spirit. He has come to my aid, spoken to me, worked miraculously, and empowered my life. Though it is not been easy following Jesus, I have seen people delivered from demons, people healed miraculously, and people have their lives transformed by Jesus. I can't imagine this life that God has called me to live without the power of the Holy Spirit in my life.

Now I imagine, as Christians, that we have all had times in our life where we have grown tired or have found ourselves in difficult circumstances. The reality is that we live in a fallen world with sinful people, and even though we have come into a relationship with a perfect savior, we have discovered through hardship and difficulty that God has chosen to leave us here and allow us to struggle alongside of others in this imperfect world. We are his witness to this world.

To make matters even more challenging, you also know how challenging it is to live with yourself. :) Yes, it's true. The world has problems. Other people have problems. But if we are candid with ourselves, we are the source of many of the challenges that we are facing in life. Look to your neighbor and say, "I am a biggest part of my problems." It is not as if we haven't tried to change this in our own strength. Most Christians that we know have tried really hard to change themselves, change their circumstances, and make a difference in this world for Christ. But we all know the experience of ending up disappointed and worn out at times in our lives.

I have been asked to speak to us about encountering the Holy Spirit in our lives, and I have come to discover from Scripture, from church history, and from personal experience that our lives can be different when we encounter the Holy Spirit in our lives. When I talk about encountering the Holy Spirit in our lives, I am not talking about a one-time dramatic experience. I am talking about the ongoing encounter of a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and this ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit changes everything in our lives. We are not only enabled to endure hardships that I have been talking about. We receive his joy and peace. We become recipients of spiritual revelation. We become empowered to carry on the ministry of Jesus.

In preparation and reflection on this important matter, I have become convinced that we really can't receive the life that Jesus promised to us or carry out the mission that he has called us to unless we have the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In this sermon I want to explore this issue of encountering the Holy Spirit with you all of you.

My hope is that our time in the scriptures will increase a hunger in your heart to encounter more of the Holy Spirit in our lives. My prayer is that we all will encounter the Holy Spirit in the areas where we need him more.

Let's look into the Scriptures. Let's study John 14 together. There is no better source to learn about the Holy Spirit than from Jesus himself. In this passage, the apostle John recounts for us the final evening that Jesus spent with his disciples. In John 13, we find Jesus eating the passover dinner and then humbling himself as a servant by washing his disciples' feet. We have come to understand that these things were all foreshadowing his death and the new covenant of forgiveness and life that he would offer us. In chapters 14 – 17, we find the teachings and prayers of Jesus that speak of the kind of life that he imagines for us both now and when he returns for us. And it is in this context that we find Jesus speaking to the disciples about how they will come to encounter the Holy Spirit in their lives. I am going to share three sections of this dialogue with you. In all three, Jesus refers to an Advocate that His Father will be sending his disciples.

Starting in John 14:12, Jesus says, *“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

15 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

Moving to verse 25, *“All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

And finally, chapter 15, verse 26, *26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

I want to revisit each of these passages in a moment, but I want to point out first, that Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit in each of these passages as an *advocate*. This is important for all of us. We all need an advocate in life. I was talking about this earlier. The life that Jesus promised us and the life that he is calling us to live can't be lived without God's presence and power in our lives. The word here in the Greek for advocate is *parakleton*. The word breaks down into two parts: *para* meaning *from* with the sense of being close beside, and *kaleo* meaning “to call.” And the intention of the *advocate* here is to be *called to one's aid*. It was commonly used in New Testament times of a legal advocate. The word *parakleton*, however, can be understood more fully if we recognize that it can be translated as “advocate, counselor, helper.” When you have time you can look at Strong's concordance or other translations of the Bible such as the NASB, KJV, NLT, and ESV. I have quoted the New International Version above.

There are many promises throughout the New Testament that speak of this Advocate and how we will be touched by his ministry. Let me mention some of them:

In Luke 3:16, we find out that we will be baptized with the Spirit: *“John answered and said to them all, ‘As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’” -Luke 3:16*

In Ephesians 1:13, we find that as believers we have been sealed with the Spirit: *“in Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.” -Ephesians 1:13*

In II Corinthians 1:21-22, find out that God anoints us for his purposes when we receive the Spirit: *“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.” -II Corinthians 1:21-22*

In Galatians 5:22-23, we find that the Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” -Galatians 5:22-23*

In I Corinthians 12:7-11, we find that the Holy Spirit manifests in powerful ways through the life of the church: *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. - I Corinthians 12:7-11*

In Ephesians 5:18, we discover that we can be filled again and again by the Spirit: *“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit” -Ephesians 5:18*

In Acts 1:8, we find that Jesus promised power from the Spirit for the ministry he is calling us to: *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” -Acts 1:8*

All of these passages speak of the many different ways that we can expect the Spirit to be at work in our lives. But let me illustrate something about the way that I think that we actually live when it comes down to how we live our lives.

I have a box fan. You are all familiar with it. You can recognize what it is right away. I don't think that there would be any dispute about what this is generally used for, and I imagine that we all could come up with different ideas of when and how to use it. I used to live on the top floor of an apartment building with a group of men in a ministry I was part of. We did not have air conditioning. It was hot in the summer. We would sweat. Fans like this were essential for attempting to keep cool and regulating the smell of our apartment. Ok, let me go back to my illustration here. We know this is a fan, and it is supposed to give off cooling air, but if I were to compare this fan to our lives and the air it produces to how we live our lives, then I believe we often take the fan into our own hands, and we wave it back and forth as hard as we can. We know what the fan is supposed to be for. We have the right intentions for its use, but we just wave it back and forth with all our might. In this process we produce some air from it, but not much, and it is easy to grow tired really quickly. The funny lesson from this, or maybe the not so funny lesson from this, is that we can be kind of dangerous in this mode if we get too close to others or let go abruptly. The other negative part of these attempts is that you can really work up a sweat and smell, and no one really likes to be around people who sweat. If your neighbor is sitting kind of far from you, you may need to ask yourself some questions. Okay, I digress, let's get back to the main point.

Now what is wrong in this situation? You're right. The fan is not plugged in. If we plug it in, then it actually functions how it is supposed to function. This is what happens in our Christian lives. We can try very hard to produce a godly life, a fruitful life, with our own efforts, but we come up short, we grow tired, and we end up disappointed. Our lives are meant to be plugged into the Holy Spirit. This is what the New Testament witness is speaking to us in many different ways, and this is what Jesus is saying in John 14.

Let's look more closely at the first part of John 14. Jesus says that this advocate will empower us to do the things that Jesus did. In verse 12, Jesus says that he believes that his disciples will do even greater things than he did. I have always found that verse hard to believe, and scholars debate its application, but Jesus seems to move on to focus more on the "how" rather than the "what" of the equation. And he calls us into Trinity itself, and he challenges us in whatever we do to "ask in my name" so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. We could spend hours studying the implications of just that verse. But Jesus moves forward and reiterates the challenge to "ask" with the expectation that he will answer whatever we ask. That's amazing. Then in verse 15, he challenges us to keep his commands. This seems to be the avenue through which we stay in ongoing fellowship with Jesus. And then we come to the focus of this study, he then says, "*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.*" What an amazing promise!

This other advocate will help us and remain with us forever. In the context of this passage, Jesus is inviting us to do what he did and to ask for anything in his name, he tells us that we are going to receive help from his Holy Spirit. This is truly amazing. Is Jesus really inviting us into his ministry to reconcile people to the Father, to heal the sick, to cast out demons, and to minister to the poor?

I remember the first time I saw a demon manifest in someone's life. I was at a conference. I was singing, and a few feet away from me, this woman collapsed on the ground. She was speaking in strange voices, and a group of believers gathered around her and delivered her from the demon. That rocked my world. I had read about Jesus doing this stuff in the Book, but all of a sudden, I saw something happen right before my eyes. I admit there was a brief moment of fear in my heart, and then there was a little bit of confusion in my mind about what was happening in the moment. I had been a Christian for a number of years, but I hadn't seen anything like this before. All of these questions, however, were quickly replaced with a desire to live a life that was empowered by the Spirit and see people set free.

I need to pause for a moment to address one barrier that may come up in our hearts, and this has to do with something that I think we may misread into our calling as Christians. I believe that when we hear that we are invited to do what Jesus did and ask for anything in his name that we may actually default to thinking, "Wow, these are big expectations. There is going to be a lot of work. I am not sure that I am up to the task. It is already challenging enough to try to have the character of Jesus, and if I am going to do even greater things than he did, then I am going to have to work really hard, and I am not sure if I have it in me. Or we may think, if I am going to have to ask for things in his name, then that is going to mean a lot of time in prayer, and I have attention deficit disorder or some version of that, and I don't know how I am going to pray enough to make all of this happen? Ugh..." Okay, let me clarify that I am saying that this kind of thinking would be a misreading of the text. In this line of thinking the emphasis would be on what you can do in your own hard work, but Jesus here is talking about the fact that the disciples are going to have an advocate, a helper in their lives, and it is going to be by the power of the Holy Spirit that they are going to be enabled to live this kind of life.

We find the same emphasis in the second section that we read earlier. When Jesus says, **25** "*All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*"

Jesus here speaks of the Holy Spirit's ability to speak into the lives of his disciples after he is gone. He foresees times in their lives that they are going to need an advocate to remind them of what Jesus had taught them. He recognizes that their training is incomplete. They need revelation in their lives. The original disciples needed the Holy Spirit in their lives, and we all need the Holy Spirit in our lives. What's interesting in this context is how Jesus speaks of the "peace" that he leaves his disciples with. Jesus really believes that his followers can live lives that are free of fear. I, however, have

found that as my responsibilities in life grow, I find the temptation within my own flesh to feel anxious. So what does this teaching mean for me?

Well, there are two responses that I believe I could have here. One response is the wrong response and the other is the right response. First, I could feel really bad about myself for not living with peace in my life, but I don't think that this is what Jesus wants for my life as his disciple. The other response is that it could produce in my life a greater desire to encounter more of the Holy Spirit in my life. If Jesus promised me an advocate, a counselor, a helper, then shouldn't the lack of peace I feel at times be an invitation to cry out for more of God's presence and power in my life. He has already promised this peace. Instead of guilt, I believe God would want me to surrender my powerlessness to anxiety to him, and come to experience more of his grace in my life.

The apostle Paul wrote that the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)." Therefore, I should expect that these things can be manifest in my life as I surrender to him. This truth liberates us from the belief that in our own strength we need to somehow become a better person to receive God's blessings in our life; rather, it is in acknowledging that we can't do it on our own that we receive the blessings, and therefore we enter into the better life.

In addition to all of this, John 14:26 tells me that I can expect the Holy Spirit to speak into my life. If I lack wisdom I can ask for it and expect it. See James 1:5. And when the body of Christ gathers, we can expect that the Holy Spirit will impart wisdom and knowledge through both teaching and prophecy. See I Corinthians 12. It is so great to know that we are not alone. Jesus' promise of direction and peace in our lives comes through our encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at John 15, Jesus says, **26** "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. **27** And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. Again Jesus emphasizes that the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, as his disciples, as an advocate. Jesus envisions his disciples not only doing the things he did such as healing the sick, driving out demons, and reaching out to the poor, but he also imagines them carrying on the testimony of the Kingdom. He envisions them spreading the good news that God's reign has manifested in this broken world, and love and forgiveness are now available to all who will repent and believe the good news.

At this point in Jesus' ministry, this probably sounds really good to the disciples. They recently were welcomed into Jerusalem with great fanfare. Sure, the Pharisees and teachers of the law were upset with Jesus, but these fisherman and tax collectors already knew what it was like to be on the outside of the religious community. The more challenging acceptance of this invitation to testify to the truth will come later for the disciples. After Jesus suffers, where will they find the courage to suffer themselves? Jesus tells them here at the last supper, the Holy Spirit will be the one to testify through them about him. Jesus envisions them becoming missionaries in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the world. But he doesn't expect them to do it on their own. He knows that they are going to encounter the Holy Spirit not only at Pentecost but also through their ministries. It will be the Spirit's presence and power in their lives that will help them receive the life Jesus promised and fulfill the Father's calling for their lives.

When I share my faith with others, I can rely on the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can lead me into conversations with others. The Holy Spirit can call to mind the truth of the scriptures. The Holy Spirit can even speak to me a timely word to speak into the lives of another person. This reminds me of a conversation a friend and I had on the street when we were looking for opportunities to invite people to church and share the gospel with people. My friend and I had talked to a number of people, and just before we were about to head in for the day, we came across an older gentleman that didn't really seem open to talking with us. We could tell that we were getting nowhere in the conversation, so we took a risk and asked him if he would let us pray for him. He was hesitant, but we assured him that we just wanted to bless him, so he agreed.

We asked if we could place our hands on him. He agreed. We started to pray. He bowed his head, but we kept our eyes open. We hadn't really asked him what to pray, so we started with some general prayers. We were looking to see what God was doing. While we were praying, my friend got "a word of knowledge" from the Holy Spirit, and she prayed this prophetic word out loud. The Holy Spirit revealed that this man had an estranged son who was in trouble. There were some other details that came along with this. The countenance on the man's face completely changed. His face had previously been hard and removed, and now he was emotionally present and tears were running down his cheeks. We continued to pray for him. When we ended, the man asked my friend, "how did you know all that about my life?" The whole conversation changed. He wanted to hear more about the Lord, and we were glad to share.

Most of what we have covered in this study of John 14 & 15 have been basic Christian doctrines. One, as our advocate the Holy Spirit will help us to do what Jesus did. Two, as our advocate the Holy Spirit will reveal to us what Jesus has taught us. Three, as our advocate the Holy Spirit will empower us to testify about the good news about Jesus. All of these things are fundamental to our faith. I would imagine that we are familiar with most of these truths. I believe that the greater challenge for us has to do with the degree to which we believe these truths apply in our lives. For example, you may agree that Jesus is calling you to do what he did, but you may wonder what things that he did are really available for you to do. Or you may believe that the fruits of the Holy Spirit are available to you today, but you may be wondering how much love and peace and joy you really will get to experience on this side of heaven? Or you may know that it is only by

the power of the Spirit that you will have an effective testimony, but you may wonder if you can really expect the Holy Spirit to speak to you while you are speaking to others.

I actually don't plan to offer you an answer for any of these questions. In fact, in preparing for this talk, I felt more led to ask you a question, **"How much of the Holy Spirit do you want to encounter in your life?"** I think that there are many questions within that question, so let me simply ask it again, **"How much of the Holy Spirit do you want to encounter in your life?"** At first, it may sound like a self-centered question. It may sound like I am asking a question like, "How much ice cream do you want to eat in your life?" There truly are incredible personal blessings that come with the Spirit's presence in our lives. I mentioned some of those earlier. But what motivates me to ask this question in my life is not just what it produces in me; I am more interested in how a greater encounter with the Holy Spirit may glorify God more through my life.

How much do I want to do the things that Jesus did so God can receive glory?

How can I rely on God's peace so that my life can reflect God's glory even when I suffer?

How broadly and boldly do I want to share my testimony in order to bring glory to God?

I acknowledged earlier that I have already tried to live this life in my own strength. I really don't want to go back and attempt that again. I am not recommending that for you. I also acknowledged that as my responsibilities in life increase and multiply that I have had to relearn my reliance on the Lord again and again. I believe we all can relate to these experiences.

So the question of **"How much of the Holy Spirit do you want in your life?"** is not an inquisition. It is an invitation. Because when I hear Jesus saying that we have an advocate, a counselor, a helper, I hear him giving us an endless opportunity to enter into the life that he has promised us and to be empowered to carry out his calling for our lives.

This makes me want more and more of the Holy Spirit in my life. It makes me examine the different areas of my life where God is offering me an advocate and want to ask for more help. I don't know what it is about me that makes me want to do things on my own. There is something independent in me that has to try things my own way. I want that part of me to die, and I want to live a surrendered life, a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit. And I believe that is what you want, too. I believe the Holy Spirit is speaking to you right now. I believe that he is lifting the burden off of your shoulders of trying to do things in your own strength. I believe that new hope is starting to break into your heart.

Earlier I used a fan as an illustration of how we try to do the right things but we forget that we are meant to do them by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is a life that is meant to be plugged into the presence and power of God. Well, as most of you know, on the back of these box fans, there are three settings: low, medium, and high. I am at a point in life, where I don't want to settle for low or even medium.

There is more good news. This message about encountering the Holy Spirit is not a message that we simply have to figure out how to apply on our own. Jesus sent his disciples out two by two. Jesus commissioned the twelve. The Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost when the 120 prayed. God has created the body of Christ in order that we can pray with and for one another.

When Jesus rose from the grave, he spent 40 days with his disciples teaching them from the scriptures about the Kingdom of God. Wow, can you imagine one on one or small group Bible study with Jesus. That would be awesome. (As I side note, I believe we still have the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn the scriptures from him). But that is not where the story ends. At that point, they would have just had a lot of knowledge. What's ironic is that we discover from Acts 1 that they still didn't understand all that Jesus had taught them. But Jesus promised something more than Bible study. He promised them a new life, and he told them to "wait" in Jerusalem until the power of the Holy Spirit descended on them, and we find as recorded in the book of Acts that they gathered together and they prayed, and they waited, and they prayed, and then God poured out his Spirit upon the church. You know the story from there. They spoke in tongues. Peter preached the gospel. Thousands gave their lives to Jesus. And we find the first description of the early church. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. They saw miraculous signs and wonders. They broke bread in each others' homes. They shared with each other as they had need. They praised God. And the Lord added to their number daily.

This is the perfect picture of what the Holy Spirit can do in and through our lives together. Of course, you may say, "Well didn't the early church have a lot of problems" or you may say, "Look at how many problems the church has in it today. How can we really do all that God is calling us to do?" Well, this comes back to the issue of whether we are plugged into the Holy Spirit. And this comes back to the question I have for us, **"How much of the Holy Spirit do we really want in our lives?"** Do we want to open up our individual lives to encounter more of the Holy Spirit? Do we want to open up the life of the church to encounter more of the Holy Spirit? I believe that the burning answer in our hearts is "yes." This is what we want. We want more of his presence and power in our lives and in the life of the church. I believe that the struggle within us is less a matter of "want" and it is more a matter of "will." Fear can paralyze our hearts and lives. We want more of the Spirit, but our will is paralyzed by fear of all of the "what ifs."

I believe that God wants to set us free from fear. And the good news, is that you don't have to overcome this fear on your own. We have an advocate. We have a counselor. We have a helper. At this moment, your deliverance from yourself and your own issues is not a matter of how you can work this issues out in your own heart. That's not how we receive the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We encounter more of the Holy Spirit when we surrender our will to the

Father. We do this by confessing what we want from God in and through our lives. This happens when we humble ourselves together and cry out for something more in the life of the church.

Let me assure you of this. Our Father wants to empower us to do the things that Jesus did. He wants to release peace into our hearts. He wants to boldly empower us to testify for Jesus. If it was not true, Jesus would not have said it. If it were not true, He would not have sent his Spirit into our lives.

Let's pray together. Let's pray for one another.

Building a Bonfire

While I was praying for the conference and preparing this talk the image that continued to come to mind was a very large pile of wood that is ready to be set on fire. It was like the Lord was preparing for a large bonfire. Each one of the people at the conference is one of the pieces of wood, and each one wants to be set ablaze. The sense that I got is that each one of these people have been prepared to burn. They have been cut and dried out. This represents the Lord's preparation in their lives. This represents their hard work and devotion. Some are dry from the challenges they have faced, and others dried out because they are exhausted from the hard work.

The Lord is pleased with your faithfulness. He sees the ways that you have poured out your lives. He wants to set you on fire. He has great plans for you.

Encountering the Holy Spirit:

If we want more of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we need to surrender to God and his will, and then we simply need to ask:

9 “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **10** For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

11 “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? **13** If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him!” - **Luke 11:9-13**

7 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

9 “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? **11** If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven **give good gifts** to those who ask him! - Matthew 7:7-10

19 “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. - Matthew 18:19

22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” - Matthew 21:22

24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. - Mark 11:24

13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. - John 14:13

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. - John 15:7

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. - John 15:16

23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. - John 16:23

5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. - James 1:5

Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God **22** and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. **23** And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. - I John 3:21-23

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. - I John 5:14