



Theme: A Better Life in the Holy Spirit
"Communing the Holy Spirit"

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, August 30-31, 2025, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

²⁹ In those days I will pour out my Spirit

even on servants—men and women alike. — Joel 2:29

VIDEO Sermon Intro

SLIDE "Communing with the Holy Spirit"

Two of my cousins were with me a few weeks ago and we grew up together, often swimming in a pool in their subdivision. One of the things I remember is that we all liked talking and we wondered if we could have a conversation underwater. Have you ever tried to talk to someone underwater? We would take deep breaths and then go under and yell at each other and see if the other person could hear anything. We even wore goggles to see if we could read lips. What we learned is that we only had enough oxygen for a very short phrase and for a very short time to be able to speak underwater and we couldn't understand the other person at all. It also created a problem because we often tried to scream at each other at the same time and all we could see was

a bunch of bubbles going to the surface.

GRAPHIC Father and Daughter Underwater

I love this image I found of a father and daughter having some sort of conversation underwater. That's probably how it feels in our relationships sometimes, like we're yelling at each other and hoping the other person hears us. I want you to keep that idea in your head about trying to hear someone underwater because that is what I want to talk about today.

GRAPHIC Breathing in and Breathing Out

I decided to do a little scientific research this week and discover if we need to breathe to speak. Speaking requires the movement of air over the vocal cords, which are in the larynx, or voice box. This air is supplied by breathing. When we inhale, air enters the lungs and travels through the trachea, or windpipe, to the larynx. As we exhale, the air passes over the vocal cords, causing them to vibrate and produce sound. Therefore, without breathing, there is no air to move over the vocal cords, and speech is impossible.

SLIDE A Dangerous Myth: Does Speaking Imply Breathing?

The American Medical Association published a document recently debunking a myth about speaking and breathing. It is true that if you cannot move ANY air you cannot speak. However, the reverse is not true: You can move enough air to produce sound but not be able to breathe enough to sustain the gas exchange needed to prevent organ damage from hypoxemia.

You may be asking why Pastor Jeff is talking about the biology of breathing and the myth that speaking implies breathing and that's simply because today we are going to talk about communing with the Holy Spirit. What does it mean for us to be in a relationship with God through the power of the Holy Spirit? What difference can that make for our lives? We continue this series of sermons on the Holy Spirit by

wrestling with a question that many people often ask me.

SLIDE How do I know if the Holy Spirit is speaking, or if it's just me and I want my opinion or idea confirmed?

This is a challenging question for any of us who are people of faith because from the very beginning of the Bible we have stories about people who are trying to follow God but end up doing what they want instead. Whether it is Adam and Eve wanting to be in control of everything or the early Biblical mothers and fathers who found themselves caught up in selfish desires that caused brokenness in their families and in the people around them. One of the reasons I believe the scriptures are true is because they tell the stories of the imperfections of people who are human just like the rest of us.

When the people of Israel asked for a king God told them to be careful what they asked for because kings made mistakes and that God was meant to be their king. But they continued to complain and so God gave them king Saul who ended up going mad with jealousy and envy of his successor David. He started out doing the right things but then his lust for power and fame got the best of him. King David follows him and is a man after God's own heart but still becomes someone who uses his power to abuse Bathsheba and then have her husband killed to hide his indiscretions. He returns to God, but the brokenness never gets fixed, and his children end up having all kinds of issues.

King Solomon comes next, and he also has issues of being greedy and having multiple wives and concubines. But when he starts, he recognizes the challenge of listening to God and the spirit as opposed to listening to his own heart and we find one of the keys to discovering whether the Holy Spirit is speaking or if it's just us trying to get God to put a rubber stamp on what we want to do. Here's what we read in 1 Kings 3.

BIBLE

⁷ **“Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my**

father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. ⁸ And here I am in the midst of your own chosen people, a nation so great and numerous they cannot be counted! ⁹ Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

There is this understanding throughout the scriptures that we cannot lead or govern or even keep our own lives on track just by ourselves. We need God and we need each other. Those first disciples had Jesus and then Jesus said he would send a Holy Spirit to give us direction and guidance. That spirit is revealed in several different ways according to Jesus and the scriptures. There are at least these five things that we find revealed by Jesus and in the scriptures which are critical to discerning if it is the Holy Spirit speaking to us or just something we want to do and we want God's approval. There is no doubt there are others, but these five are a good place to start.

SLIDE (have fly in)

- **Humility**
- **Scripture**
- **God's Character of Grace**
- **No fear or disrespect**
- **Sense of Peace**

Followers of Jesus discern the Holy Spirit's voice from their own by have humility so they can sit with others and test the "voice" against the Bible; confirming it aligns with God's character of love and truth; brings a sense of peace; and never leading to actions which produce fear or disrespect. This discernment grows through a close, ongoing relationship with God, characterized by consistent Bible study, prayer, and active listening to God's "still, small voice."

That first idea of humility is one of the keys and a constant theme

throughout the scriptures. His disciples even think that following Jesus will lead to power and fame, but Jesus comes to give his life and give himself away, not demand his way. More than 50 times Jesus talks about the need to be humble, which makes sense considering that much of the proverbs, the Jewish wisdom sayings that he would have memorized as a child, speak about this truth. Jesus sums that up when he says this in Luke's gospel, chapter 14, after talking about not wanting the place of honor at a table but instead being willing to be the servant.

BIBLE

¹¹ “For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

One of the things the Holy Spirit does is humble us when we think we are the most important thing in the room. The apostle Paul talks about this in Galatians 5 when he gives us the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and talks about what it means to be the church.

BIBLE

²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

It takes humility to let the spirit lead in our lives and let go of our own ego and what it is we want to see happen. One of the ways I found helpful in my life to test is something that's from the Holy Spirit is to ask myself this question.

SLIDE Could I be wrong?

I tried to ask this question about many things in life because otherwise I found myself getting selfish and self-centered and thinking that I'm always wanting my way. Let's be honest, part of our human condition, part of being disconnected from God, from ourselves, and from others, is that we sin by everything being about ourselves. We

want our way and it's that way from the time we're born, and we want someone to change us or someone to feed us. I want to be clear there's nothing wrong with taking care of ourselves and there's nothing wrong with seeking to be the best. However, we also must be honest about why we are doing what we are doing or asking for what we are asking for. Is it all about us, or is it about something more?

I have often found that what the Holy Spirit wants of me makes me uncomfortable. I think about when I was a high school student, and someone told me they thought I should be a pastor, and I thought it was the craziest thing I had ever heard of. On several occasions and I tried to run away from having to stand up in front of people and talk about God because every week, if I'm honest, it feels a bit presumptuous and scary to think of the influence I have. People often ask me if I'm nervous about preaching because it doesn't seem like I am, but inside I am always coming to God and asking God to help me speak what God wants me to speak and not just for myself.

SLIDE Scripture

Having a humble heart is being willing to listen to others, and also listening to the scriptures, especially the ones that are difficult. I think about how Jesus begins his public ministry after his baptism and that is by quoting scripture in his hometown of Nazareth where he has come to preach. It must have been uncomfortable because eventually he was run out of town and they wanted to throw him off a Cliff and he was simply quoting the scriptures they all knew and the ones that he grew up with, from the prophet Isaiah.

BIBLE

¹⁶ When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. ¹⁷ The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written:

¹⁸ **“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,
that the blind will see,
that the oppressed will be set free,
¹⁹ and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”**

This was a difficult message for the religious leaders to hear because they were not the poor and they didn’t see themselves as being blind or oppressed, even though they may have been the most blind of anyone who heard the message of Jesus. This message that we find in the scriptures really point to the third thing I think we must pay attention to if we are going to discern if something is from the Holy Spirit, and that is the character of God. Yes, there are some scriptures which are meant to convict and point out our sin but notice that Jesus talks about coming as God in the flesh to meet people in their darkest moments and that is what we see in the scriptures at almost every turn with the life, ministry, suffering, and death of Jesus.

SLIDE God’s Primary Character is Grace

Grace is the unmerited and undeserved love of God and this we find lived out in the life of Jesus but also throughout the scriptures. I have often told you that my understanding is that the Bible is a love letter from God and not meant to be used to beat people up. God's voice is rooted in love and always desires our good and the good of others. Just before Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Spirit in the gospel of John in chapter 14, he washes his disciples’ feet in chapter 13 to show them the character and the nature of God. He also then says these words that we have said often here in this church, but this is really what we must measure those things we believe are from the Holy Spirit against.

BIBLE

³⁴ **So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each**

other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

We must ask a simple question. Is this the loving thing to do? We asked that question because Jesus asks it of us and it is how we know if something is from the Holy Spirit. That brings us to the next filter through which we can look at whether something is from the Holy Spirit or from something inside of us that is a prejudice or an opinion.

SLIDE Absence of Fear and Disrespect

When Paul is writing to his protege Timothy in 1 Timothy 1, he writes these powerful words.

BIBLE

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

The Holy Spirit's leading won't be rooted in fear but rather in love and a desire for truth. Yes, one of the holy spirit's jobs then we will talk more in depth about next week is to convict, but we very easily jump from the idea of the Holy Spirit convicting to, “I am going to do convicting on behalf of the Holy Spirit.” We don't do the conviction of others; it's the Holy Spirit's job to do that in them. We can invite others into a lifesaving relationship with Jesus Christ and then allow them to have that relationship with the Holy Spirit that does that convicting, but too often I see people act like they are the Holy Spirit and it's their job to convict others of their sin.

GRAPHIC DeWalt Leaf Blower

I found myself thinking this week about one of my favorite tools that I have at home, this DeWalt leaf blower. It is battery powered and works wonders on getting rid of pine needles and leaves during the fall. It uses this 20 Volt battery, and it blows up to 450 Cubic Feet per Minute (CFM) meaning it could fill the back of this 10-foot U-Haul in one minute

with air.

GRAPHIC 10-Foot U-Haul

What you can't do is put your broken-down SUV in that 10-Foot U-Haul! I'm so excited because I've always wanted to use this picture in a sermon so there you go. I would suggest to you that this is what happens when we attribute something to the Holy Spirit that God would never want God's name put on. I have reminded you often that the 4th commandment about not taking God's name in vain is not about swearing as much as it's about doing something that we say God would want us to do when God would never want that.

GRAPHIC SUV inside 10-foot U-Haul

I think of slavery and how Christians and churches used the Bible to enslave an entire race. The church used the scriptures in ways that violated the spirit when they burned people at the stake for what they considered witchcraft. Adolf Hitler quoted scripture on a regular basis to send millions of people to the gas chambers. These are things that happen when we listen to our own will instead of being humble and willing to test what we think the Holy Spirit is saying to us against the scriptures, God's character of love and grace, a sense of peace, and whether this thing uses fear and disrespect to intimidate others into us getting our way. Those things happen and the spirit is misused when we forget that it begins with something quiet, like the battery.

GRAPHIC 20v DeWalt Battery

This battery sits quietly in my charger at home, and it needs to be filled up for it to make any of my tools to work. I can use this battery on my chainsaw or my leaf blower or my drill driver, but none of them work unless I remain connected to the source. I want to suggest to you as we close that this is what it means to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us and to listen to the Holy Spirit's voice.

We heard earlier about king Solomon asking for God's heart and

direction through the spirit, and that often came through the prophets. The King's only did well when they had some humility and were willing to listen to the others as part of discerning the Holy Spirit. In 1 Kings 19 we find the prophet Elijah being chased and running for fear of his life because of serving God. I love this story because we can often feel this way, wondering where God is amid painful and difficult moments. When Elijah wonders where God is, God speaks to him.

BIBLE

¹¹ “Go out and stand before me on the mountain,” the Lord told him. And as Elijah stood there, the Lord passed by, and a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. It was such a terrible blast that the rocks were torn loose, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² And after the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was the sound of a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

God's spirit often comes to us in that still small voice, and we can only hear that when we stop and we allow ourselves to listen. Spending time reading, studying, and meditating on the Bible helps us become familiar with God's voice and what God wants. Prayer, especially periods of silence, helps us tune into the Lord's presence and discern God's voice more clearly. Discernment takes practice and mindfulness. The more we seek and listen for God's voice, the more readily you will recognize it.

The Spirit's voice may feel like it comes from outside our own inner monologue or thoughts. The Holy Spirit may gently convict us of unrepentant sin, prompting a humble turning back to God, not condemnation. We may experience a deep sense of peace or an authoritative inner knowing when the Holy Spirit is leading.

SLIDE The Holy Spirit brings Peace

Calm and Peace: The Spirit's voice is often described as calm,

peaceful, or like a gentle, loving whisper. Gentle and Respectful: God's voice is never rude, hurtful, or disrespectful, but rather gentle and honest. Some of the final words of Jesus in John 14, at the Last Supper and before he would be betrayed and arrested and put to death, are these powerful words that I will be reading at funerals I will be doing in the coming weeks.

BIBLE

²⁶ But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

²⁷ “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.

The big idea is that the Holy Spirit brings a peace that comes even in the midst of being asked to do something difficult. I did a wedding yesterday where the couple decided they wanted to do communion as their first act of being married. I find this to be a powerful image because it reminds us that there will be difficult moments in marriage period there will be challenging moments. There will be beautiful moments. There will be holy moments and the Holy Spirit longs to be present in each of those places. The Holy Spirit is the one that speaks to us when we feel like maybe having an affair because we feel distant from our spouse and it tells us to choose to do the loving thing even when it's hard. The Holy Spirit is the one that gives us the strength to forgive when it would be easier to hold on to grudges. The Holy Spirit comes to bring us power to carry us through those challenging moments and it is why we pray the prayer of the Holy Spirit over our time of communion.

This meal celebrates the last night of the life of Jesus when he gave us several instructions about the Holy Spirit that would come. We are going to talk more in depth about that next week when we talk about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but today I want us to remember that as we

come forward to receive the gifts of the bread and the cup, or as we receive them in our homes, the Holy Spirit is the one that meets us here in this place and longs for us to know peace and love and grace. The Holy Spirit wants to fill us, just as this meal fills us. The Holy Spirit wants to speak to us about our brokenness and our sins and offer us forgiveness so we might then offer that to others, even when we feel like we don't have the strength to do so.

My hope and prayer for each of us as we come forward today is that we might remember that the Holy Spirit does long to speak to us and we can test that by first being humble, kneeling or pausing at these rails to bow to acknowledge that we're not the ones in charge. We might listen to others and see how they are experiencing the Holy Spirit as we share what we feel the Holy Spirit has spoken to us. We need to spend time in the scriptures and reading our Bible to see if what God is saying to us is affirmed by God's holy word. We have to hold up what we feel the Holy Spirit is saying to us in light of the character of God's love, grace, and mercy. We must ask if this is a loving thing to do or if it's something that causes pain or fear or disrespect. And we must remember that the Holy Spirit longs to bring peace, a peace the world cannot give.

If we are not coming to God with humility, or checking it with others, or holding it up to the light of the character of God's love and grace, or if it is causing fear or disrespect, it probably is not from the Holy Spirit. It probably comes from some other spirit inside of us which can get a hold of any of us when we are selfish. Are we comforted by the spirit and what the Holy Spirit is speaking to us? If not, then we must ask if this really is from God or if it's just something we want to see happen. This table is the place we bring all of that and we give it to God and ask for God's guidance and direction. I pray you might bring that to this table today.

SLIDE Communion

August 30-31 Order

1. Maddi welcome people.
2. “Battle Belongs”
3. Jeff welcomes people:
 - a. QR Code and Connect Card
 - b. Communion Invitation
 - c. Announce Eun Ah at 11:55
 - d. Invite people to greet each other, however comfortable and be seated.
4. Sermon
5. Communion
6. “A Thousand Hallelujahs”
7. “Holy Forever”
8. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
9. Offering (**The Table and Taco Thursdays**)
10. Med Moments
11. Care Ministers
12. Connect with Us
13. Closing Prayer