



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

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, September 13-14, 2025, at Summit Church, Durango

Weekly Memory Verse:

¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. –Romans 8:11

VIDEO **Sermon Intro**

SLIDE **"Life in the Spirit"**

Over the past four weeks we have talked about this idea of the Holy Spirit together and I have used several different images to help us understand it. We have talked about the Holy Spirit in terms of baptism and use the image of water in which we immerse ourselves. The Holy Spirit longs to surround us that help us know we belong to something bigger than ourselves.

GRAPHIC **River Baptism**

GRAPHIC **Motorcycle Carburetor Up close**

I used this image of the carburetor on my motorcycle growing up which mixed gasoline with air. You need just the right amount of air for

that bike to work, and we need oxygen and air from the Holy Spirit to experience a better life of faith. The Greek word is *pneuma* and the Hebrew word is *rûah*, both meaning breath of life.

GRAPHIC DeWalt Leaf Blower

I then used this leaf blower I have at home as a reminder of the power that can come but how it needs to be plugged in and recharged for the Holy Spirit to fill us. We must have a sense of humility and allow ourselves to be given a gift by God that we can't take on our own.

GRAPHIC Crutch

That's why last week I used this image of a crutch and how we need to be OK with being dependent and getting support because the **Holy Spirit will do in us what we can't do for ourselves**. After my sermon last week, I saw one of our church members who recently had surgery on his ankle, had one of these cool braces which is even better than a crutch. We have one of these in the garage in our loaning love section I found out and I thought if I was still a youth director that I would have our kids do races with these!

Today I have brought with me something essential for those of you who come from sea level and are not used to the altitude, especially if you go to the very top of our ski resort, which is aptly named purgatory. Some of you need the 12 pack and I'm not talking about Coors Light.

GRAPHIC Boost Oxygen

GRAPHIC Boost Oxygen 12 pack

GRAPHIC Engineer Mountain

For some of us, this may seem like overkill, but I was visiting recently with someone who was hiking up engineer mountain and they were having a hard time breathing and luckily someone brought them one of these and it saved their life. They wanted to continue with the hike, but their friends who live here were much wiser and convinced

them to head back down the mountain and go to the ER to get some tests to run. This may seem like an extreme situation, but I want to suggest to you that we are meant to experience life in the spirit in a way that can **carry us and shape us** and change us, because that is what was necessary for those who were in the early church.

One of the places we find the most teaching about the Holy Spirit is from the **apostle Paul** in our New Testament. The letters of Paul that you find are the earliest Christian documents we have, being written between **50 and 65 AD**. The gospel of Mark was probably written around **70 and then Matthew, Luke, and John are written in 80 or 90**. This means that the earliest churches were trying to understand this idea of the Holy Spirit that we are looking at some 2000 years later. The apostle Paul is writing to them as a pastor, helping them to understand what it is to have the **Holy Spirit at work inside**, and how that **brings life** even to people who are experiencing trials and persecutions and death for their faith.

Let's remember that as followers of Jesus we understand **God as three in one**. There is one God and one substance, but we experienced that at three different and distinct persons. We call this the **Trinity** where we think of God as the Father almighty, **Maker of heaven** and earth. God is the creator and the source of all things. Jesus is God in the flesh, walking among us, and putting a face to what God looks and acts like. When we read about **Jesus** and we see what he says and what he does, and ultimately his death on the cross, and resurrection from the grave, we are seeing God in a profound way. We are meant to relate as human beings, understanding that we are the only faith tradition where we believe God came in the flesh to experience the world the way we experience it, with all its beauty and bitterness. We see in Jesus God the Son who is the Redeemer of all creation.

The Holy Spirit is maybe best described by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, chapter 8. This is our memory verse for the week and so I'm going to invite you to say it with me out loud if you are

willing.

BIBLE

¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you. – Romans 8:11

This is a profound idea, that the Holy Spirit that we've been talking about these past four weeks is **God's presence and power living inside of you**, actively at work in our lives and in the world around us. We see this on Easter evening when Jesus meets with his disciples after his resurrection in John 20. Remember again that the word spirit means breath and so these words are powerful.

BIBLE

²¹ Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ²² Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

As the church begins to gather in the book of acts we read about the coming of the Holy Spirit on what we call Pentecost. **The spirit was given to those who follow Jesus** to bring them life and strength and gifts. For helping the world become more like the Kingdom of God. The central theme of the Holy Spirit is meant to remind us that the spirit brings life and lives within us when we say we follow Jesus. We are meant to recognize that the Holy Spirit is at work and really our task is to open ourselves up to that spirit.

Each week in worship I say to you as we gather that I pray you might experience the Holy Spirit in our time together, knowing that you're not alone and that there is something that longs to give you life, even in the midst of whatever you brought with you into worship that might be painful or difficult. This is the same spirit that hovered over the waters in the book of Genesis in the story of creation. This is the

same spirit that parted the **Red Sea for Moses** and the Israelites. It is the same spirit who came to **Sampson** as one of the judges that was leading Israel when he faced a lion and many other dangers. This is the same spirit that came to a shepherd boy named **David** when he had no clue how to lead or how to even survive when he was being tracked down by the current king who was trying to kill him. This is the same spirit that came upon the **prophets in the Hebrew Bible** to speak truth to power and tell people that the road they were heading down was going to lead to destruction so they should turn back to God.

This is the same spirit that came to **Mary the mother of Jesus** when she conceived a child and needed comfort and encouragement when she could have easily been overwhelmed by fear. This is the same spirit that came upon **Jesus and his baptism** and then went with him **into the wilderness**, reminding us that God is with us in both the joyful moments and the challenging moments of life. This is the same spirit that **Jesus said would be like living water** inside of our souls. This is the same spirit that Jesus said would be our advocate, counselor, comforter, and friend. This is the same spirit that would be our **defender and that came upon the disciples** after the death of Jesus in the flesh. This is the same spirit that came upon the early followers of Jesus in the church and gave them the ability to **speak in different languages and understand** one another.

God's Holy Spirit is what lives inside of you and me. Paul tells us this is the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead and will be with us, reminding us that the worst thing is never the last thing. This Holy Spirit comes to **give our mortal bodies life and immortality**. We need the Holy Spirit, and **we were made for the Holy Spirit**. God has given us the gift of this Holy Spirit and my hope in this series of sermons is that we might say **daily the simple words** each morning.

SLIDE Come, Holy Spirit, Come

Fill me, guide me, mold me, and use me. There is this invitation

for us to invite that Holy Spirit to come and live inside of us. **The Holy Spirit will not force us to do anything.** We have this bottle of oxygen, and we can either take it and make use of it, or not. Maybe this bottle of oxygen isn't the most helpful thing to think about. Let me give you another image.

GRAPHIC Escalator and Stairs

Have you ever been to an airport with large luggage and you have the option of either taking the escalator or the stairs? I like to take the stairs for exercise at times, but if I have a very large piece of luggage then the escalator is preferable. Some of you would rather take the elevator even, which makes sense if you have several people and several pieces of luggage. The steps and the escalator will take me to the same place but if I'm tired or I have a lot of things to take up with me then the escalator will get me to the top much quicker and with much more energy. It's not my power but another power that will help me get up to the top level where I need to be.

VIDEO Woman takes the stairs with suitcase

I remember using a subway once and having a large suitcase and trying to get up the stairs with lots of people around me on top of it and it was exhausting. We can feel the burden and the weight.

VIDEO Jesus on escalator

It's much easier to use the escalator. We don't get hurt and we can enjoy the scenery by looking around, but we still must pay attention. It's another energy that carries us to that top level and we can get more done. That's a great picture of what it means to live without the holy spirit's power or to tap into that power which can change everything and lead us to life. **The Holy Spirit often comes as a gentle nudge or a breeze** and it's up to us to listen and pay attention to how it is the Holy Spirit is moving.

The apostle Paul often makes a distinction between living life

according to the **Holy Spirit or living life according to the flesh**. He also calls it living by our selfish desires or living by the holy spirit's desire for our lives. Here's what he writes in Romans 8.

BIBLE

⁶ So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

Sometimes I will have people who are not people of faith be concerned about words like our **“sinful nature” or our “human condition” or the “desires of the flesh.”** I don't think there's much room for debate that the **events of this past week** have made it clear that Paul was on to something when he talked about the need for the Holy Spirit to guide us instead of our human condition and propensity towards selfish desires and violent resolutions to conflict.

One of my colleagues leads the **church in Evergreen** where their student ministry was deeply impacted by the school shooting in their high school. I have several colleagues who **serve in Utah** and communities that neighbor Orem where the shooting of Charlie Kirk happened on a college campus. Our **daughter is from Ukraine** and is 24 years old and works at a vet clinic and was deeply impacted by the young Ukrainian refugee who had dreams of working for a vet and was randomly stabbed on a subway ride home in North Carolina. We **remembered 911** and some in this community went up the **Sky Steps** to remember our first responders. All these events remind me of the **need for the Holy Spirit in our lives** so that we might allow it to then impact on our community and bring a **message of grace and peace** and mercy in a world that desperately needs it.

I really appreciate the way the Common English Bible (CEB) translates Romans 8:6.

BIBLE

⁶ The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but

**the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace.
(CEB)**

SLIDE attitude = *phronemae* = “innermost being and visceral thoughts”

That attitude that is deep inside of us and is a visceral part of ourselves can be **shaped by either the Holy Spirit or by our own selfish attitudes, biases and desires**. We must decide if we will invite the Holy Spirit to shape us and form us into beings who can love our enemies and our neighbors because we sometimes can't do it on our own. I have seen **leaders of Christian communities this past week vilifying** those on the other side of the political aisle and it breaks my heart because I don't think that's being led by the Holy Spirit but instead simply letting our own selfishness add to the layers of evil and hurt and pain we already are experiencing.

Yes, **there are extremists in every religious or political group**, but that **does not define most Americans** I don't believe, unless we allow it to become the thing that defines us. It's interesting that Paul was writing these words to people in the Christian community that were **being persecuted** because we sometimes have an overinflated idea of what persecution is in our world today.

I was listening this last week to a black pastor in Los Angeles who I have listened to on several occasions talk about how an issue that's **becoming bigger than racism is “thought-ism”** where we are teaching people **even in our churches to hate others who think differently** than we do, and our churches are now not only **segregated by race but by thoughts** and how that is one of the most destructive things we can see happen in our world and in the church. He talked about **Martin Luther King's last sermon** where he dreamed of a world where, on the red hills of Georgia, the **children of former slaves and the children of former slave owners** would be in worship together. Dr. King said the only way that was going to happen was by the coming of the Holy Spirit. He

ended that sermon with these powerful words, ***“My eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”***

This only happens if we decide whether we want to be **shaped by the spirit or by our own selfish attitudes**. We must decide if we are willing to let the Holy Spirit shape us like a Potter shapes clay. As humans, **we struggle with sin, brokenness between us and God, us and others, and us and ourselves**. We need Jesus and we need the Holy Spirit to receive salvation and then be filled with grace that enables us to live as Jesus Christ to the world. Paul picks up this idea in Galatians 5 with these powerful words in the Common English Bible.

BIBLE

¹⁶ I say be guided by the Spirit and you won't carry out your selfish desires. ¹⁷ A person's selfish desires are set against the Spirit, and the Spirit is set against one's selfish desires. They are opposed to each other, so you shouldn't do whatever you want to do. (CEB)

We all have selfish desires and attitudes of the heart which are not quite right. **Sometimes we even convince ourselves they are from the Bible or the Holy Spirit**, when they really are just what we want to see happen in the world. We must be honest and ask if we are really willing to allow ourselves to be open to the Holy Spirit so that our **attitudes and visceral thoughts might be guided in a direction that leads away from name calling and violence** and turning other people into objects, and towards grace and peace and truth.

Paul goes on a few verses later to give us a list which should make every one of us nervous because he pretty much sums up every human in some way or another. We all have one of these things that we struggle with in verses 19-21, if we're honest.

BIBLE

¹⁹ The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious,

since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good,²⁰ idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry,²¹ jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that. I warn you as I have already warned you, that those who do these kinds of things won't inherit God's kingdom.

Do you ever struggle with any of these things? **Do you find we are struggling with some of these things this past week** as we seek to cast blame on others in our culture and in our world? While Paul is writing this in the 1st century Roman Empire, he could **easily be writing this about 2025 in America**. Everything on that list sounds like things we wrestle with today.

Notice that Paul inserts this final phrase about **not inheriting or experiencing the Kingdom of God** if we allow ourselves to be consumed by our selfish desires. He not only reminds us to allow the Holy Spirit to shape us and guide us so that we don't have to do all the heavy lifting ourselves but **warns us about going in the opposite direction**. Not dissimilar to this woman who decides to go the wrong way on this escalator. I have no idea why she started to do this, but it paints a good picture of what happens when we start walking against the direction the Holy Spirit wants to lead us in our lives. It becomes more challenging, and we sometimes **slip and fall and cause damage** to ourselves and maybe others around us. As we push against the wind or the grain of the Holy Spirit, we miss out and the gift God longs to bring us.

VIDEO Wrong Way Woman

Paul encourages those of us who follow Jesus to be guided by the Holy Spirit and **define life in that spirit** and then he gives us a counter lift to the one that he just gave us, so we know what it looks like. It's a passage you may have heard before and I remember memorizing when

we learned to sing it at a Bible camp here at church my first year in Durango. We call these the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5.

BIBLE

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 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.

This is a great prayer to pray as we're walking and just reflect on what it means to be filled with the spirit. I found myself walking in one of the rainstorms this last week and picturing the Holy Spirit washing away that first list of things and instead instilling love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The challenge with praying that God fills us with these gifts of the Holy Spirit is that we then will get a chance to practice them, like many of us did this past week. **Are we willing to be countercultural?** Instead of allowing the pain and trauma and violence of the past week to divide us, are we **allowing ourselves to be filled with these fruits** of the spirit instead?

Prayer is surrendering to God's will and then fixing our hearts on something beyond ourselves. When I pray for God to produce these fruits within me, **the more my heart wants it, the more I'm open to the spirit working**, and the more it happens.

One of the authors I enjoy reading and listening to is *David Brooks* and last year he wrote an article entitled, **"How America Got Mean: In a culture devoid of moral education, generations are growing up in a morally inarticulate, self-referential world,"** in the Atlantic. Here is

what he noted.

“Why have Americans become so mean? I was recently talking with a restaurant owner who said that he has to eject a customer from his restaurant for rude or cruel behavior once a week—something that never used to happen. A head nurse at a hospital told me that many on her staff are leaving the profession because patients have become so abusive. At the far extreme of meanness, hate crimes rose in 2020 to their highest level in 12 years. Murder rates have been surging, at least until recently. Same with gun sales. Social trust is plummeting. In 2000, two-thirds of American households gave to charity; in 2018, fewer than half did. The words that define our age reek of menace: *conspiracy, polarization, mass shootings, trauma, safe spaces.*”

What a wonderful world it would be if **even those of us who say we follow Jesus had attitudes which were shaped by the Holy Spirit** and produced the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? **When we only give in to our natural selves, we and the world around us become mean.** How we need to be led by the Holy Spirit. It's what begins to create a world where people are not mean or sad or angry or rude, but it begins with an invitation, and it can't be forced.

SLIDE Called by the Spirit into ministry

If we follow Jesus, we not only are shaped by the Holy Spirit, but we are called to ministry by that same spirit. **I am not your minister, but I am your pastor.** Each of us is a minister, and to be a minister is to be a **servant**. Our task as followers of Jesus is to daily be in ministry and look around and see who it is that God has put in our path to serve. Who needs help, encouragement, kindness, or compassion? **Who needs me to be evidence of the fruit of the spirit for them?** Paul writes about how the Holy Spirit equips us with gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 so we

can serve each other and the world.

BIBLE

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this.

BIBLE

⁴ There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. ⁵ There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. ⁶ God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. ⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

We are called by Jesus so we might serve others with the gifts given to us. When we serve others with our gifts we find more joy, which is why Jesus said these powerful words in Matthew's gospel, chapter 16.

BIBLE

²⁵ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.

We find life when we are living into what God created us for, which is to be a blessing that is filled with the Holy Spirit and then gives gifts to the world that are bestowed upon us. **We have gifts that are given to us when we say yes to following Jesus** and some of them, we have had since we were born and others we have developed throughout our lives, but when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we then use those gifts for something bigger than ourselves. Paul lists these gifts in several places and one of them is in Romans 12.

BIBLE

⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy,

speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Notice that gifts are given so that we can **love each other well and hold tight to what is good**. Paul has lists of spiritual gifts and several other places like 1 Corinthians 12. Some of the gifts in this list are misunderstood and sometimes people think of them as a bit **spooky or otherworldly**.

BIBLE

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.

The gifts of wisdom and knowledge are simply those times when you have spoken into someone else's life, or someone has spoken into yours at just the right time. Those moments where someone has come into your life at just the right time with some faith or **encouragement** is oftentimes the work of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes you are there for others when their faith might be waning or weak because of some loss or difficulty. We might inadvertently call these moments coincidental, but I believe it is the Holy Spirit working in those moments to bring just

the right person into just the right place at just the right time. The real question is whether we are paying attention and listening to the Holy Spirit and how that spirit wants us to use our gifts.

I believe any of you in the **medical communities** have the gifts of healing in today's world. I have often seen people on our prayer list experience something out of the ordinary that we can't name anything but miraculous and we don't understand. Does that always happen? No, it doesn't always happen, because God often works through ordinary means of people becoming the answer to people's prayers. I know some of the physicians and nurses and other medical professionals in our church pray for their patients before they see them. Would you want your doctor to pray for you before they see you? Those doctors often bring a sense of peace with them into the operating room or examinations.

When it comes to speaking in tongues or in unknown languages, that would take an entire sermon to unpack in terms of the history and how that is often seen in today's world. I do know that there are moments where we experience faith in a way that there are no words to express what we are feeling and that is OK. **What you will not hear me do is tell you that God told me to tell you something.** Sometimes this gift can be **abused and misused**, just like any gift, which is why Paul often ends his list of gifts with words like this right after that text in Romans 12 we just read a few minutes ago.

BIBLE

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other.

Paul often talks about not being arrogant or conceited and being humble about the gifts that we have received, recognizing that **every gift is valuable**. What I know is that everyone of us, including myself as a pastor, can be **spiritually hard of hearing** and it's important for me

not to act like I know exactly what God wants to say to you or to me. I do my best to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to me, but I often remind you that if you disagree with something I say, that's OK. **I might be wrong and I'm just one beggar** trying to help another beggar find bread. This is why I did an entire sermon on this idea of how we know if it's the **Holy Spirit or not and it really begins with humility** so that we don't misuse or abuse the Holy Spirit. We talked about testing what we hear against **Scripture**, the **character of God**, remembering that the spirit doesn't want to cause **harm or rejection**, and doing all of it with **humility**.

This is why the apostle Paul, at the end of his chapter in 1 Corinthians 12, finishes with these words directed at a church that was not acting with humility about their gifts of the Spirit. This will lead directly into the next chapter that we read often at weddings and are some of the most beautiful words about love in the scriptures or in any literature for that matter.

BIBLE

³¹ So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

BIBLE

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. ³ If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

Paul then reminds us of the love that Jesus embodies which is Patient and kind, not arrogant or boastful or rude. **It's a love that does not insist on its own way** but rather is willing to give itself away. It is a

love that **works for justice and peace and the truth**, while never giving up and **being hopeful in all circumstances**.

The Holy Spirit longs to produce in us that **first fruit which is love**. It is about **receiving God's love** through the Holy Spirit and then reciprocating that to God and to one another. We are **called to love our neighbors AND our enemies**, by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are called to love people **on the other side of the political aisle** and not call them names or **turn them into objects**, but to see them as people who are **made by God to be loved by God**, just like us. **People who think differently than you are not your enemy.** The **enemy is the desires of the flesh, our selfishness**, which leads us to **arrogance** and sometimes violence if we are not led by the Holy Spirit.

If we think that we have the gift of prophecy or telling the truth or speaking in tongues, but we do not love others, we have misunderstood what the Holy Spirit is trying to do in our lives. **Which of us doesn't need to be more loving in today's world?** I believe the **local church is the hope of the world** and it only happens when we are being recreated into the **people God intends for us to be**. The spirit's work is to **sanctify us and restore us** and make us more like Jesus. We are made in God's image, and John tells us that **God is love**. The work of the **Holy Spirit is meant to make us more loving** and then to exercise that love towards others.

SLIDE The Mission of the Holy Spirit

What I've come to experience in my own life and what I've seen happening for others is that we **often lose sight of the mission** of the Holy Spirit. We get so wrapped up in our politics or our social issues and we **forget that the mission** is to head into each day being empowered and **led by the Holy Spirit**, and not the **latest social media campaign** or **TikTok video** which often contains **misinformation** and sometimes outright **lies**. We have **mistaken news commentators and politicians for the Holy Spirit**, and it costs us dearly.

I want to be on a mission every day in my **house first towards my wife and my daughter and my dogs**, and then my neighbors. I pray that God might use me each day and **help me to pay attention to how the Holy Spirit is longing to guide me** and lead me. I want to pay attention to the places where the Holy Spirit is leading me and **who the Holy Spirit has put in my path each day**. Is there someone who needs me to serve them or needs a word of encouragement or simply needs a smile because everyone around them **has been mean that day**?

SLIDE The Holy Spirit wants to make me better and not bitter.

Our last sermon series was about becoming better and not bitter and one of the plays that happens for us is by **allowing the Holy Spirit to be the one that guides us and shapes us**, instead of our selfish and sinful desires which lead to brokenness and hurt. When I go throughout my day in the community I am looking for **someone who looks discouraged or who needs a smile or a hug**. Who looks like they are all alone? I try to find them and encourage them every weekend, and then throughout the week. You may notice that **I'm walking out as I give the final words** so I can beat you to the front door. I realize there are people leaving quickly out of church because they don't want to see anybody because of something going on in their life. Maybe they've been crying because there is something broken in their lives. Maybe they were here for the very first time. **I pray about which one of you I should be going after in the parking lot! Don't take it personally, it really is just the work of the Holy Spirit!**

My goal is simply to **say thank you for coming to worship** and see if there's anything we can do for you. Some people are shocked and sometimes **tears well up** in their eyes because someone came to find them and they begin pouring things out right there in front of the church door. They tell me **what happened this week** that caused them to go to church for the first time in years. I will often **try to help connect them to one of our caring ministers** or in some way allow us to follow up with him.

I find almost every week **there are encounters which are led by the Holy Spirit** and are **prompted in my heart by that spirit**. We have opportunities to **be instruments of God's love** and grace every day, if we are open and paying attention. The key is for us to invite the Holy Spirit to work in us and bring life, then to pay attention, then to be willing to chase after those who need that Holy Spirit present in their lives and just need someone to offer the invitation. **I pray that we will be filled with the Holy Spirit and experience that life** which we then offer to the world.

I'm going to invite you to close with the song that I learned as a kid in my little United Methodist Church in Lafayette CA. We would sing it every week just before we read the scriptures, or sometimes at the end of the service. If you're willing, I invite you to put your hands out on your lap and close your eyes as you hear this beautiful song and allow it to be your prayer. You might even sing along as we're going to sing through it twice together.

SLIDE *Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

SLIDE *Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

SLIDE *Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

SLIDE *Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.*

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

SLIDE Prayer

September 6-7 Order

1. Jenny welcome people.
2. "A Thousand Hallelujahs"
3. "Oceans"
4. Jeff welcomes people:
 - a. QR Code and Connect Card
 - b. Invite people to greet each other, however comfortable and be seated.
5. Sermon
6. Prayer
7. Offering (**Suicide Prevention**)
8. Med Moments
9. "New Wine"
10. Prayer and Lord's Prayer
11. Care Ministers
12. Connect with Us
13. Closing Prayer