

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas
May 8, 2016

The Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:29-32

4:29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1. The Role of the Holy Spirit

According to the church calendar, today is the day to celebrate the Ascension of the Lord called “Sunday of the Ascension of the Lord.” Lord Jesus showed his disciples that he had been alive for forty days and went back to the heaven. The ascension of the Lord Jesus is absolutely necessary for the salvation of the world; however, it was discouraging for the disciples to lose the Lord Jesus. They could not see and talk to Lord Jesus anymore. Therefore, Lord Jesus promised to give us another savior, the Holy Spirit instead of him. The Holy Spirit came down to the disciples fifty days after the Easter, the Pentecost.

God’s Son, Jesus Christ came from heaven and showed us the existence of God, heavenly Father. After the Lord Jesus’ ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit shows us Jesus Christ. According to John

14:6, 9 Lord Jesus said “No one comes to the Father except through me.... Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.” God is called “Father” because God is the Father of Jesus and he becomes the Father of believers who believe in God’s Son Jesus. When we get to know God’s Son Jesus and believe in him, we finally get to know Father God. And, we need the Holy Spirit to know Jesus Christ properly. In 1 Corinthians 12:3, “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit.” In short, we can say, “We can come to Father God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.”

True happiness of our life will come from the right relationship with God. We can not know the purpose of our life without relationship to God who created us. If we know the purpose without knowing him, we can not keep the power to accomplish it. Until we return to the Father of our spirit, our spirit never be satisfied in peace. We have more understanding of the darkness and emptiness before believing in God when we experience the blessings come from the right relationship with God. We can not wait to appreciate Jesus Christ who led us to this relationship with God. Jesus Christ leads us to the relationship with God, and the Holy Spirit leads us to the relationship with Jesus Christ. Therefore, we need to know how we maintain the close relationship with the Holy Spirit as well as right relationship with Father God and trusting relationship with Jesus Christ. Today, as for the relationship with the Holy Spirit, we are going to learn “Things don’t do” with the Holy Spirit.

2. Sins Against the Holy Spirit

The Bible speaks about four sins against the Holy Spirit to teach us

“don’t do” with the Holy Spirit. Although everyone seems to understand the sin against God and the sin against people, quite a few people don’t know the sin against the Holy Spirit. That’s why we may commit a sin against the Holy Spirit without knowing it. The sin against the Holy Spirit is not in any way lighter and therefore the Bible teaches us to be cautious and avoid this sin.

The first of four sins against the Holy Spirit is the sin to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit. The Jewish leaders who opposed Lord Jesus completely denied Lord Jesus’ miracles through the Holy Spirit by saying that they were performed by Satan. “Blaspheme the Holy Spirit” means to deny the clear works of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ said to these people, “Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.” (Mark 3:28-29)

Why the sins against the Holy Spirit are heavier than the sins against Father God or Lord Jesus? We used to say “we don’t need God, we don’t need faith” and we kept a rebellious attitude to God before we became Christians. This was because we did not have enough knowledge on the faith, but once the Holy Spirit showed us the truth, we repented our attitude and we were forgiven. The Holy Spirit leads us repentance. But if we reject it, there will be no means to receive forgiveness. Because Lord Jesus intercedes with Heavenly Father for our sins, and the Holy Spirit intercedes with Jesus Christ for our sins, but no one can intercede with the Holy Spirit for our sins against the Holy Spirit. This is very strict, but Lord Jesus, who is the Son of God and the Master of all the livings, told us by saying,

“Amen, Amen, I tell you the truth!” Therefore, we would like to sit us straight toward the word of our Lord.

The second sin against the Holy Spirit is to resist the Spirit. Stephen was persecuted and subjected to questioning by the Jewish leaders, but he would not flinch, instead he said, “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.” (Acts 7:51) and blamed the sins of Jewish people. Now, to resist the Spirit means to resist the Holy Spirit repeatedly and repeatedly with knowing the truth. This is the sin committed by those who are called “God’s people”. If you receive the God’s word but keep resisting it, then it means you are resisting the Holy Spirit, who delivers the God’s word.

The third sin against the Holy Spirit is to quench the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 says, “Do not quench the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is referred to “light” or “flame” in the Bible. Light refers to the wisdom with which we identify the things. The wisdom to determine which pleases God and which does not comes from the Holy Spirit. The Bible also tells us in Roman 12:11, “Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord” and in 2 Timothy 1:6, “ I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God.” The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit gives us zeal and patience and keeps our heart on fire. Therefore, to quench the Spirit means we lose the passion to seek for the truth or we stop wishing to be enthusiastic and faithful to God. We want to ask the Holy Spirit to keep working in our heart.

3. The Sorrow of the Holy Spirit

The fourth sin is “to grieve the Holy Spirit.” In Ephesians 4:30, it

says, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.”

This term, “to grieve the Holy Spirit,” expresses that Holy Spirit is not just the power or influence, but has personality. Unless Holy Spirit is alive with personality, He would not feel sorrow. Holy Spirit is a person and the living God, equal to the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. The sorrow of Holy Spirit teaches that fact. Moreover, we could understand that our relationship with the Holy Spirit is not functional but of personal which is in between a person and another person.

The thing grieves Father God is sin, especially, sin without repentance. Lord Jesus said, “There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” in Luke 15:7. If God rejoices only one sinner’s repentance more than anything, how much sadness God would be feeling for the sinners not repenting, in other words? In Genesis 6:6, it says, “And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart” at the time of Noah’s ark and the Deluge. When people use the word “sorry,” it means they failed in something and regret. God, however, would never fail and regret; His word “sorry” means it grieved God that people keep committing further sins, as the following verse explains. “Sorry” shows God’s sorrow in depth.

This kind of sorrow of God could be seen when Jesus wept at Jerusalem and cried; He said in Luke 13:34, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” When Jesus

told this, the tears would be in his eyes.

Father God feels sorrow and so does Jesus Christ, and people's heart and behavior without repentance would grieve the Holy Spirit, too. There's no expression such as "Mother God" in the Bible, but uncountable verses signify that God cares for us likewise mothers do. The verse that I have just cited said, "As a hen gathers her brood under her wings." God has not only paternity but also richly maternal love, and the Holy Spirit is also very maternal. When your child did something bad, father would be angry and shout over the child, but mother would feel sad and be grieved to it. How many times would we grieve our mothers like this? Also, if you are already mothers, you may have encountered such occasions and would understand how it feels. So, you all now see how Holy Spirit is grieved.

Then, in order to avoid blaspheming, resisting, quenching, and grieving over the Holy Spirit, how do we build up the relationship with the Holy Spirit? Ephesians 5:18 teaches, "Be filled with the Spirit." What does it mean by? Today we have no time to talk about this, and next Sunday of Pentecost would I speak. For concluding today's preaching, I introduce one testimony.

At the church I used to serve, they had a few doctors who worked in the hospital. One of them talked a testimony to me. He had one patient who stayed at the hospital. One day, the doctor finished his all-day-long work and went to the parking and about to go home. Then, he felt the Holy Spirit talking to his mind. "Come to the patient you have just examined once again." He thought, "Lord, why? I finished today's work. I am very tired and dearly wishing to go home and rest as soon as possible." He, however, followed the voice of the Holy

Spirit and went up to the patient's room. The patient was very worried because the doctor came back, but the doctor said, "I came here not as a doctor but as a Christian. I would love to pray for you, may I?" He prayed for the patient. You see the patient was worried so much more than he should be for the sickness, and the patient truly needed a prayer. After the doctor prayed, the patient was fulfilled with peace and the doctor had a great experience much more valuable than only comforting his tiredness.

What if the doctor quenched the voice of Holy Spirit? They would not experience what filled with them. The Holy Spirit works for those who follow the voice and those who are encouraged to live for loving God and people. Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and follow his voice, to keep the right relationship with the Holy Spirit. What the Holy Spirit is talking to you now? To repent and to come back to God? To believe in Jesus Christ and to be baptized? Or, to take more time to talk with God? To reconcile with others? Listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. Then, take one step for it. The Holy Spirit will lead you to the truth and fulfill your soul with power and joy.

(Prayer)

Dear Father, you sent the Holy Spirit instead of Jesus Christ who went back to heaven. We appreciate the Holy Spirit, who talks us through the Scripture and helps us through our prayers. Let us not quench or grieve the Holy Spirit, and fast to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and accept His works. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.