

A photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, there is a sandy beach with several footprints. The ocean waves are breaking onto the shore, creating white foam. In the background, there is a large, dark landmass or island under a blue sky with some clouds.

“Walking With Pneuma”

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A Word From Pastor Mark ...

What a delight it is for me to offer this little series of message to you. I believe that it perhaps the most important series that I have ever preached.

These messages have greatly affected my own life as I have come to a greater than ever understanding and appreciation of '*Pneuma's Role in my life.*'

'*Pneuma*' (The Holy Spirit) is a personal '*gift*' from our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Jesus. He is our moment by moment companion and His task is profound as you will see as you read (and pray) your way through this little book.

May God richly bless you as you '*Walk With Pneuma*' through the days of your earthly sojourn!

With awe and wonder at the Greatness of God's Plan, I invite you to join the '*Pneumatic Movement*' with me as you discover the fuller scope of the '*Ministry of The Holy Spirit*' in your life.

At the end of this booklet you will find a complete list of the '*Pneuma Confessions*' with which each message ends.

I trust that you will '*confess them*' regularly!

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – Our Earthly Companion"

(Introductory Message)

(John 16:7; John 14:16-17; John 14:26; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18)

Intro ... Today we launch what I believe will be the most important series of messages that I will ever preach.

For the past three months we have taken the Biblical Admonition '*Fix Your Eyes on Jesus*' absolutely to heart and we have cast our gaze into the Heavenly Realms where our Risen Exalted Savior is actively ministering on our behalf.

We have discovered and rejoiced in ***Twelve Key Current Day Ministries of Jesus Christ*** – key ministries that we should ever keep at the front of our minds – key ministries that can literally transform our understanding of this Christian Life we are living.

One impression that the previous series of messages has powerfully made upon me is that *the Jesus who ministers on our behalf in heaven is not the same being who walked upon this earth ...*

He is no longer limited to human, earthly conditions;
His Glory is no longer hidden by his earthly human flesh;
He is no longer in a willingly condescended, humble-servant state.

God the Father has in fact '*Exalted Him*' to the Highest State possible.

He is seen by all the heavenly hosts and by any human being who is granted such a glimpse of His current Glory as the '*King of Kings and Lord of Lords.*'

John, His beloved Disciple, fell on his face in wonder and worship when in a vision one Sunday on the Isle of Patmos he '*saw Him as he currently is.*'

Jesus Christ is no longer '*that guy who walked upon the earth*' – the meek and mild Savior and Servant of mankind ... the days of His Earthly Sojourn are over – the days of His Glorious, Divine Heavenly Ministry are now here.

We, who trust in Him as our Lord and Savior ...

We, who have been spiritually born-again through faith in His Name ...

We, who walk through a world that is sin-filled and Devil-dominated ...

We desperately need those Heavenly Ministries that He is currently carrying out on our behalf, for those ministries provide all that is needed on heaven's side of the equation for us to live triumphant and productive Christian Lives.

However, there is something else that we desperately need if we would live those triumphant, productive Christian Lives here in this fallen, sin-filled, devil-dominated world.

We need **Someone** – someone spiritually **Powerful** – Someone incredibly **Personal** – Someone continually **Present** – Someone completely **Persuaded** of the Rightness of Christ's Call upon our lives – Someone absolutely **Passionate** about the things of God ... Who will walk through life with us.

We need a true Life-Companion who will be all and even more to us than Jesus was to his own disciples while He walked the earth.

That, my friends, is what this new Series of Messages is all about and as we enter this new Series together I want to draw your attention to one of the most **important** and perhaps **least understood** things Jesus ever said ...

It's our number one **Series Key Scripture** (of which there will be five) ...

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE ONE ... John 16:7

*"I tell you the truth: It is for your **GOOD** that I am going away. **UNLESS** I go away, the **COMPANION** ('paraklete' – one who walks beside) will not **COME** to you; but if I go, I will **SEND** him to you."*

It is truly amazing how many English words have been suggested by translators of the New Testament for that Greek Word '**paraklete**' ...

Here's the selection I found in the **Amplified Version**: Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Stand-By ...

That Greek word is made up of two other words: '*para*' which means '*with*' and '*klete*' which is a form of the word '*walk*.'

In its simplest form, it means one who '*walks with us*' just like Jesus '*walked with his Disciples*' during the days of His Earthly Ministry.

I've chosen to designate this one Jesus has sent as ...

"OUR EARTHLY COMPANION."

And in what some might consider a somewhat radical move, I have chosen to give this '*Earthly Companion*' a name – a name that, in the past few days, has wonderfully '*personalized Him*' in my heart and mind.

For you see it's imperative that we see this One Jesus has sent as a **Person** with whom we relate not just as a **Power** upon which we rely.

And as we shall see in the next Key Scripture, this person, this Earthly Companion of ours, is none other than The Holy Spirit Himself – The Third Person of the Divine Family.

Now the Greek word for spirit is '*Pneuma*' and that's what I have chosen to Call Him – '*Pneuma, my Earthly Companion*.'

Say it a few times ...'*Pneuma – Pneuma – Pneuma*' ...

Allow it to become not a Greek Word but a personal identification.

That decision has filled an important void for me, for the Third Member of the Trinity has always been the one without a real name.

We have the One known to all His Born-Again Sons and Daughters as '*Father*' ... We have the One who came to earth and took upon himself the name '*Jesus*' and then we have always had the One who merely had a title or formal designation: '*Holy Spirit*' or '*Spirit of God*' ...

It's been easy to think in terms of the Spirit as a powerful thing rather than as an incredible person. I hope that this series of messages changes that for us forever.

Now, based upon the **One Key Scripture** that we have read so far and the '**Naming Process**' that I have just explained, here is ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT ONE:

While Jesus **MINISTERS** on our Behalf in **HEAVEN**,
'Pneuma' (His Holy Spirit) **MINISTERS** on His Behalf here on **EARTH**.

That's why Jesus said that it was a '**Good Thing**' that He Himself was '**Going Away**' ...

There were things in heaven that needed to be done for us that only He could do: Twelve of them at least – but there were many things that still needed to be done here on earth if His Church was to become the Glorious Body of Believers that He desires it to be.

And so, as it were – the baton has been passed to the '*anchor runner*' – the one who will bring the race to a glorious conclusion ...
'Pneuma' himself.

'Pneuma' has capabilities that the '*Earthly Jesus*' did not possess.
'Pneuma' has been waiting for this final leg of the race – the '*bell lap*' – since before the beginning of time.

Consider now with me ...

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE TWO ... John 14:16-17

*"And I will ask the **FATHER** and He will give you another **COMPANION** ('paraklete' – one who walks beside) to be **WITH** you forever – the Spirit ('pneuma') of truth."*

Here we see both Greek words in the same sentence ... '*paraklete*' - the designation (companion) and '*pneuma*' – the name of that companion.

Now there is much more that we can say about all of these verses, but we have a limited amount of time this morning and we have an extended series in front of us.

Suffice it to say that Jesus was promising a Companion who would in many ways be just like Him ('*Another*' Companion) and yet different – better even.

Some of that difference is identified in ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT TWO:

Though Jesus' earthly ministry was limited both **PHYSICALLY** and **TEMPORALLY**, '*Pneuma's*' earthly ministry is limited in **NEITHER WAY**.

Jesus, due to His willingness to take upon Himself human flesh, took upon Himself as well many limitations because of that flesh – notably that He could only be in one place at one time. He could only minister to those who were where he was.

If he were still on earth today, he would have to decide on this Lord's Day which of the thousands upon thousands of churches holding services He would attend.

Also, the very process of Salvation and the subsequent Heavenly ministry that would be required of Him, restricted his time on earth to a mere 33 years.

However, '*Pneuma*' our Earthly Companion, being a '*Spirit Being*' and being actually assigned to '*minister exclusively in an earthly way*,' faces neither of those limitations.

'*Pneuma*' is **omnipresent** – with all of us all of the time no matter where we are - and '*Pneuma*' is **permanent** - will be here until the task is done - in each of us individually and in the Church of Christ collectively.

Is it any wonder that Jesus said,

"It is for your good that I am going away"?

Basically ... '*Pneuma will take this ministry to an entirely different level!*' We need to '*get on board*' with that kind of thinking!

Let's move on now to ...

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE THREE ... John 14:26

*"But the **COMPANION** (paraklete – one who walks beside), the Holy Spirit ('pneuma'), whom the **FATHER** will **SEND** in my name, will teach you all things and will **REMIND** you of everything I have said to you."*

The '**Companion**' will come '*In Jesus' Name*' – joining and continuing '*Jesus' Cause*' ... Walking with and ministering to '*Jesus' People*.' He is in every sense of the word '*Jesus-Focused*.'

It's as though Jesus was saying ...

'It will be just like I never left – only better.'

And based upon **Series Key Scripture Three**, we formulate ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT THREE:

'Pneuma' is a true **EXTENSION** of the **PERSON** of Jesus Christ. He comes to keep the **TEACHINGS** of **CHRIST** alive in our Hearts.

The Holy Spirit of God, '*Pneuma*' Himself, has been send into the world to make sure that the Church of Jesus Christ '**Stays Christian**' ...

Stays true to the '**Teachings of Jesus Christ**' – stays focused upon the '**Person and Purposes of Christ**' – Keeps responding to the '**Call of Christ**' – Keeps proclaiming '**Salvation in the Name of Christ**' – Keeps growing into the very '**Image of Christ**' – Keeps relying upon the Present Day '**Ministries of Christ**.'

There is no question that those who are '*companioned*' by '*Pneuma*' become more and more '*Christ-Focused*' if not even '*Christ-Obsessed*.' '*Pneuma*' is committed to Jesus and is, in a real sense, '**ALL ABOUT JESUS**.'

Now hearing these things right from the mouth of Jesus Himself and knowing how committed to the Cause of Christ this earthly companion of the believer really is, is it any wonder that such a Servant of Christ as the Apostle Paul would counsel us as he does in these final two **Series Key Scriptures** ...

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE FOUR ... Galatians 5:16

*"Let us **KEEP** in **STEP** with 'Pneuma'"*

Let's jump right to the **Series Key Concept** that arises almost automatically from that 'Apostolic Admonition' ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT FOUR:

*'Pneuma' desires to set the **DIRECTION** and the **PACE** of our **JOURNEY** through **EARTHLY LIFE**.*

*We are to **FOLLOW** His **LEAD** and **MATCH** His **STRIDE**.*

That's what Jesus did during the three and a half years of His Earthly Ministry.

He set the **direction** and the **pace** for His Disciples ...

"Come, Follow Me" was His initial invitation.

'Pneuma' speaks those same words into the hearts and minds of those who consciously 'Walk with Him' ...

He speaks to us through the **Word** and through the **World** around us and through our **Fellow Believers** and through the **Thoughts and Impressions** that run through our minds and that stir our hearts.

This series will focus upon the many ways He ministers his directions to us and the various things that we must do to keep our ears open to His Voice.

It's powerful and productive to start each day by saying ...

*"Pneuma, what do you have in store for me today?
I desire this day to follow your lead and match your stride.
Grant me the vision to see and the grace to step out boldly."*

And, knowing that such '**vision**' and '**grace**' are indeed the necessary elements of a productive, pleasing Christian Life and knowing that those necessary elements are '*Pneuma's*' stock in trade, the Apostle Paul instructs us to ...

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE FIVE ... Ephesians 5:18

"Be FILLED (to the brim) with 'Pneuma'"

"Filled to the Brim" ...

No room for anything ungodly ...

No room for anything unworthy ...

No room for anything that would grieve 'Pneuma' or silence His Voice ...

No room for anything that would hinder His Work within us.

And why be so 'filled' – so 'focused' upon this 'Earthly Companion' of ours?

Because ...

SERIES KEY CONCEPT FIVE:

'Pneuma' possess all the POWER of the Almighty –
'Pneuma' can and will produce AWESOME things
in our lives when he is fully EMBRACED.

Final Thot ...

Faithfully WALKING WITH and fully EMBRACING 'Pneuma',
our Divine Earthly COMPANION, is the only way we can
EXPERIENCE the full and abundant Life Jesus
died to PROVIDE and now lives to PROTECT.

LET'S RESOLVE TO DO JUST THAT!

“WALKING WITH ‘PNEUMA’ – The Divine Implementer”

(Zechariah 4:6; Genesis 1:2; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:10-11; Acts 2:17 & 13:2; Romans 8:9)

Intro ... Last Sunday we began a brand-new series of messages that I've titled:

“WALKING WITH PNEUMA.”

It's actually a continuation and a logical follow-up to the just completed Series that we titled:

“LOOKING UNTO JESUS.”

The key verse of that previous series was Hebrews 12:2 ...

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God.”

We have spent the last three months identifying and discussing twelve joy-producing ministries (The “Looking Unto Jesus” preaching series) that Jesus Christ is continuously carrying out on our behalf.

As we ‘Fix our Eyes on Him’ we see Him hard at work!

But He can't do everything that we need done from the Courts of Heaven. We need someone here with us to walk us through the ups and downs of this life – someone like Him who will accompany us right to the end of life. This ‘Someone’ Jesus has provided for us.

Last Sunday I shared **five key scriptures** that underlie this series.

Here is the first of the five (John 16:7):

*“I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the **Companion** (Greek word is ‘paraklete’ which literally means one who walks beside) will not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you.**”*

This was the second (John 14:16-17):

*“And I will ask the Father and He will give you another **Companion** (There's that ‘paraklete’ word again) **to be with you forever** (and here's the identity of that ‘companion’ – Jesus says that it's ...) **the Spirit** (Greek Word ‘pneuma’ which means air or wind or spirit) **of truth.**”*

Now it's interesting to note that Jesus said these things in the **Aramaic** language – a form of Hebrew - but when the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of Truth - inspired the writing of the New Testament, He chose the **Greek** Language as the most appropriate vehicle for its truths.

And in the process, He Himself chose the Greek word '*pneuma*' as the word by which He would be identified.

So, before Jesus ascended into heaven to take up His Heavenly Ministries on our Behalf, he promised his disciples that he would replace himself in their daily lives with another like himself who would 'companion' them for the rest of their lives – the Spirit of Truth ... '*Pneuma*' Himself.

Using the Greek Word '*pneuma*' as the name of the Holy Spirit has wonderfully '*personalized*' Him for me as I trust it has for many of you as well.

That's a good and a helpful thing for as I said last week:

"It's imperative that we see this One Jesus has sent as a Person with whom we relate not just a Power upon which we rely."

"Pneuma – Pneuma – Pneuma" ... the Spirit of God sent into our hearts at our spiritual birth to 'companion us' forever – How good and awesome is that?

And so, I have called this series '*Walking with Pneuma*' – using the very name that the Spirit of God Himself chose.

Now once we know that '*Pneuma*' has come – that He has been sent into our lives - to '*Companion*' us the question naturally arises ...

"Has He come for any other purpose than to 'Keep us company' through the ever-changing circumstances of life or are there specific 'Roles' that He fulfills in our lives here on earth that are comparable to the specific 'Ministries' that Jesus is carrying out on our behalf in heaven?"

The answer to that Question is a resounding 'YES' ... there are at least **nine** of them hidden away in the Scriptures – some more hidden, less well-known, than others.

The title of today's message reveals the first of those nine roles that '*Pneuma*' – our '*Paraklete*' – Our Companion – fulfills in our lives ...

He fulfills the role of '*Divine Implementer*.'

"*Divine Implementer*" - what does that mean?

Time to consider ...

TODAY'S KEY DEFINITION ...

An **IMPLEMENTER** - One who puts things into **ACTION**; who brings things into **BEING** in accordance with a previously designed **PLAN**.

The Holy Spirit – the Third Person of the God Family – '*Pneuma Himself*' is God's '*Agent of Action*' ... the One designated to '*put things into action*' – the ONE who brings things into being in accordance with God's over-all plan.

The Great and Awesome God ... Yahweh Himself ... revealed this fact to the Prophet Zechariah long centuries ago.

I've chosen that '*revelation*' as ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... Zechariah 4:6

*"Not by (your) **MIGHT** nor by (your) **POWER**
But by my **SPIRIT** says the **LORD ALMIGHTY.**"*

'*Pneuma*' is the '*Divine Implementer*' ... He is the '*Catalyst*' for all the Works of GOD and (think of this now) He is the ONE who '*Companions*' you every day of your Christian Life!

He is the **ONE** who has been sent to '*Set into motion*' – to '*bring into being*' everything contained in the '*salvation package*' that you received when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

This morning I want us to take the next few minutes and '*See Him At Work*.'

Six Captivating Images of His Work arise from the Scriptures ...

Hopefully they will capture your imagination as they have mine.

The First of those Six Images is found in the second verse in the Bible.

1. "The SPIRIT of GOD ('pneuma') HOVERING over the WATERS"

(Genesis 1:2)

Here's how it reads ...

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep,
and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."*

That verse has always captured my imagination – the Eternal Spirit of God 'hovering in anticipation' over an unformed though already planned-out world.

How long can an Eternal Spirit hover and not get '**bored**' or '**impatient**' – a million years – a billion – 10 billion? He's got all the time in the world.

Can you see Him '**hovering over**' this world today – '**hovering over**' our church – '**hovering over**' your life – '**hovering over**' that one for whom you are praying? The image overflows with possibilities.

The point is that the very first chapter of the Bible indicates that the Third Person of the Trinity is the ONE who '**implements**' the Works of God – the ONE who brings the Power of the Almighty to bear on the physical universe.

Here now is a Second Captivating Image found in the very first chapter of the Gospel according to Luke ...

2. "The SPIRIT of GOD ('pneuma') OVERSHADOWING MARY"

(Luke 1:35)

*"The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit ('pneuma agios') will come upon you,
and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the Holy One
to be born will be called the Son of God'."*

Here we see '**Pneuma**' now given the designation "**Holy One**" assigned to '**come upon**' – to '**overshadow**' Mary, the young Jewish woman.

It was the plan of God that the eternal Second Person of the God-Head would take upon Himself human flesh and become the Sacrificed Savior of Mankind. Such a 'work' had never been accomplished before or since.

'*Pneuma*' was assigned the task of bringing it about. By his intervention in the normal flow of things, Mary conceived a truly Holy Child.

The Holy Spirit of God – '*pneuma agios*' – can bring life where no life has previously existed. That's what He accomplishes every time a person puts their faith in Jesus Christ – He plants in them the first living cell (as it were) of that new spiritual life. He produces a '*holy thing*' inside an otherwise sinful person.

This is accomplished as Today's Key Scripture expresses it ...

"Not by (human) might nor by (human) power but by My Spirit ..."
(and may I add)
Whom God sends into the world whenever such power is needed.

See '*Pneuma*' ...

"Hovering Expectantly Over The Waters" (and)
"Tenderly Overshadowing The Virgin Mary"

Now allow this Image to capture your mind and heart ...

3. "The SPIRIT of GOD (*pneuma*) DESCENDING upon JESUS"
(Mark 1:9-12)

*"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'
At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert ..."*

A key part of the plan of God in sending the Son of God into the world was that the Son of God would become indeed a '*Son of Man*.' He would live His Life under the Authority of God and by the Power of the Spirit of God just like any other '*Spiritually Alive*' human being does.

The Baptism of Jesus was the moment when '*Pneuma*' dramatically and visibly descended upon him and his earthly ministry was launched. It was '*Pneuma*' who filled him and who directed him into the wilderness to be tested by adversity and tempted by the devil himself.

The Scripture reports that Jesus returned from that time of testing in the wilderness *"in the power of the Spirit"* ... We could say, *'In the fullness of Pneuma.'*

Throughout his entire earthly ministry, Jesus relied upon the *'Power of the Spirit of God'* to accomplish the Works of God through him just like he would later on expect his followers to do.

Can you picture your companion, *'Pneuma'*, *'descending upon you'* each morning as you resolve to *'Walk with Him'* through the day?

This next image marks the transition between the period when the Holy Spirit would merely *'come upon people'* to empower them for service and the period in which we live now when the Holy Spirit actually enters into people to take up residence and become their inner companion.

Now, open the *'eyes of your hearts'* (as the Apostle Paul would say) and see ...

4. *"The SPIRIT of GOD ('Pneuma') POURED out at PENTECOST"*

(Acts 2:1-18)

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (languages) as the Spirit enabled them.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you ...

This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: `In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days ..."

With tornado-like exuberance, *'Pneuma'* entered into the hearts of men on that Day of Pentecost and transformed them into *'Spirit-Filled, Born-Again Sons and Daughters of God'* ...

They were transported into a realm they had never entered before – a realm of courage and power – a realm of insight and impact ...

They spoke dramatically and effectively, even in languages they had never learned ... They brought thousands to faith that very first day.

There was (as Peter would point out) no doubt about what was going on – the Spirit of God had been '*poured out upon them*' ... transforming them and transforming the world through them.

It was an awesome sight – feast your eyes upon it and imagine such a transformation in your own life.

Now following the exuberance of that Great Pentecost Moment (and so we don't perhaps get misled into thinking that all such works of '*Pneuma*' are accomplished in quite such dramatic fashion), the Spirit implemented the next major phase of God's Plan in a much more subdued way.

See now some years later ...

5. "The SPIRIT of GOD (*Pneuma*) SELECTING Barnabas and Saul."
(Acts 13:1-4)

"In the church at Antioch, (some 400 miles north of Jerusalem) there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So, after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus."

No thunderous wind – no flames of fire (probably to Saul's dismay) just the voice of '*Pneuma*' speaking through '*Spirit-Filled Prophets and Teachers*' giving specific directions for the Expansion of Christ's Church.

And through that '*Spirit-Directed Action*' the course was laid that ultimately brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our land and to our hearts.

The Spirit is still '*Selecting Followers of Christ for Specific Service*' – I will never forget the day that '*Pneuma*' Himself selected me and my wife, Linda, for this '*Specific Service*' called *Sonlife* Community Church.

There is a '*specific service*' that '*Pneuma*' has for each of us ... places where He would have us take the '*Good News*' of Jesus Christ – places where there are '*lost souls*' who need to hear of a Savior's Provision.

Are there '*lost souls*' in your family, in your place of work, in your school, in your neighborhood? Can you see the Holy Spirit, '*Pneuma*' '*selecting you*' to be the one to first '*show them*' and then '*tell them*' of the Savior you follow and the Eternal Life He offers them?

Perhaps that is the '*Image*' that will most captivate you this morning.

And now here is the *sixth* and *final* captivating image – the one that is perhaps the most important of all – the one that is as personal as '*Pneuma*' is personal.

Open wider than ever before those '*eyes of your heart*' and see ...

6. "The SPIRIT of GOD ('Pneuma') EXERCISING CONTROL over you."
(Romans 8:5-9)

"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires."

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit ..."

Can you see that?

That's what Paul called '*Walking with the Spirit*' ...

Walking completely under His Influence and in accordance with His Bidding ... Filled with the Understanding of things that only He can give – Content in the midst of things with a sense of Peace that only He can provide – Freed from the domination of sinful desires that only He can take away.

This is the ultimate image to carry in your heart – this is the reason that '*Pneuma*' has been sent to you – sent to indwell you – sent to continually and persistently transform you.

See Him doing His Job – Open yourself to His Influence and follow His Lead every single day. He will bring the Will of God to fruition in your life for He is the *Divine Implementer* of that Will!

And so ... having finished as it were today's '*Slide Show*' of these *Six Scriptural Images* of '*Pneuma*' at work, consider with me ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

'Pneuma' is the '*Earthly Implementer*' of the PLAN of GOD
In this WORLD – In our CHURCH – in your LIFE.

And there we have it ...

We live in the 'Age of the Spirit.'

All that God would accomplish in these days on this earth,
He accomplishes through His Holy Spirit – '*Pneuma*' Himself.

'Pneuma' has been sent (even as Jesus was sent) to '*companion*' us – to lead us and guide us – to accompany us – to stick to us '*closer than a brother*.' He will never leave us or forsake us ... Our '*Companion*' is exactly what He is.

But as our 'Constant Companion' He has been sent also as Christ was sent to '*do some awesome things*' ... things that '*Build the Glorious Church of Jesus Christ*' ... things that bring to fruition all the Will and Works of God in the world, in our particular church, in our individual lives.

He is 'THE DIVINE IMPLEMENTER'

And He is very good at what He does!

Today's (and really this entire series) key question then is simply this ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

ARE YOU READY FOR HIS WORK IN ALL OF THE ABOVE?

Are you ready to see and be part of His Work in the World – your world?
Are you ready to see and be part of His Work in the Church – our church?
Are you ready to see and be part of His Work in your Life?

These are important questions because the Apostle Paul has told us that it is possible for us to '**resist**' the Holy Spirit – to '**grieve**' the Holy Spirit – to even '**quench**' the Holy Spirit.

These are things that, of course, we do not want to do.

And so, as we come to the close of this message, I draw would draw our attention – yours and mine to ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I ask You to fully **IMPLEMENT** the Plan of God in this **WORLD** and in our **CHURCH** and in my **LIFE**.*

*I desire to **WALK** in step with You and be **FILLED** by You!*

Make that confession first thing every morning this week ...

It will be sweet music to '*Pneuma's*' ears and will allow Him to produce sweet music in your life!

Consistent then with that confession is today's ...

Final Thot ...

*'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit – is the **ONE** who **GETS** the **BALL ROLLING**.*

*Make sure He **KNOWS** you want to **PLAY!***

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – The Divine Testifier"

(John 15:26; 1 John 5:6-9; Hebrews 10:12-16; Romans 8:15-16, 23; John 16:8-11)

Intro ... What a delight this morning to continue '*Walking with 'Pneuma'*' as a congregation – to continue discussing what it means to have the Third Person of the Godhead as our Daily Companion.

Last week we saw that '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit Himself - is actually the '*Implementer*' of all the Works of God, from the Creation of the world right up until this present moment.

Indeed, we live in the '*Age of the Spirit*' – '*Pneuma-Time*' and the more we understand what that means the more productive and satisfying a Christian Life we will live.

There are at least nine Roles that '*Pneuma*' – our earthly companion - plays in our lives. Each of them is critical to our functioning as God's Children and Christ's Followers on this earth.

Today's ***Key Scripture*** identifies the ***second*** of those nine.

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... John 15:26

"When 'Pneuma' COMES ... He will TESTIFY about ME."

From that Scripture (and others that we will consider this morning) I submit to you that '*Pneuma*' – God's Holy Spirit – the Third Member of the Eternal Divine Godhead plays the role of '***Testifier***' in this fallen, sin-filled world.

That submission leads naturally to ...

TODAY'S KEY DEFINITION ...

TESTIFIER ... One who bears ***WITNESS*** to the ***TRUTH***;
One who ***KEEPS*** the ***RECORD STRAIGHT***.

Basically, a Testifier is A ***TRUTH-TELLER!***

In fact, that was perhaps Jesus' favorite designations for '*Pneuma*' ...

"SPIRIT OF TRUTH"

John 14:17 ... "I will ask the Father and He will give you another 'paraklete' (companion) to be with you forever – the **Spirit of Truth**."

John 15:26 ... "When the 'paraklete' (the companion) whom I will send to you from the Father, the **Spirit of Truth**, who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me."

John 16:13 ... "But when He, the **Spirit of Truth**, comes, He will guide you into all truth."

No question about it ... '*Pneuma*' (The Holy Spirit) has been sent into this world to fulfill the role of '**Truth-Teller**' – to be God's Divine '**Testifier**' - in a world that by and large knows little of such things.

Sad to say ... many Born-Again Believers know far less of God's Truths than God would have them know.

And so, we come to Today's Key Question ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

What are the **TRUTHS** that '*Pneuma*' has been **SENT** to **TELL** - of what has He been sent to **TESTIFY**?

I discover in the New Testament Scriptures, three specific **Types** or **Categories of Truths** about which '*Pneuma*' has come to testify.

1. TRUTHS CONCERNING THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST ...

(John 15:26; I John 5:6-9; Hebrews 10:15)

These are Truths designed to '***Build up our Confidence in our Savior!***'

"When the Counsellor 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."

(John 15:26)

Remember when I said a week or so ago that one of the tasks of the Holy Spirit in this world is to make sure that the Church of Jesus Christ '***Stays Christian?***'

'*Pneuma*' testifies – bears witness – keeps the record straight – concerning the **Person** and **Work** of Jesus Christ – the Son of God and Savior of the World. '*Pneuma*' has been sent to be sure that Jesus Christ is accurately and adequately perceived by those who bear His Name.

This next verse now goes a little deeper ... it reveals a bit more of the specifics that '*Pneuma*' has come to declare and to guard.

Speaking of Jesus, *John the Apostle* was inspired by the Spirit to write these words to the Church in the first little Epistle that bears his name (1 John 5:6-9) ...

"This is the one who came by water and blood — Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son."

(1 John 5:6-9)

Here John highlights the two most critical moments of Jesus life – His Miraculous ***Birth*** in Bethlehem (He came into this world by water just as every human does) and His Sacrificial, Substitutionary ***Death*** on Calvary (He fulfilled the purpose of his coming by shedding His Blood on the Cross in payment for the sins of the world like no one else but He could do).

Notice that John points out that there is now a ***threefold witness*** – the water testifies – the blood testifies and '*Pneuma*' testifies.

These are things that cannot in any way be denied ... It is a fact of History that the man Jesus was born and walked upon the earth – it is a fact of History that the man Jesus was crucified by the Roman Government at the instigation of an offended and outraged Jewish Leadership. We accept '*man's testimony to the fact*' or at least we should. It's a matter of historical record.

However, there is a more powerful witness than the mere '*facts of history*.' There is a '*Testimony from God Himself*' – a voice that speaks to the mind and heart of men - that witnesses to these truths more powerfully than even does the historical record.

This '*Testimony from God Himself*' is delivered by '*Pneuma*,' the very Spirit of God sent into this world. This testimony powerfully communicates the Truth regarding the Person and Purpose of Jesus Christ as He walked upon this earth. Vitaly important stuff to know.

The Writer of Hebrews takes the role of the testifier a bit further when he writes these words (Hebrews 10:15) ...

"... when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God ... because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this."
(Hebrews 10:15)

Here our gaze is cast into the Heavens where one of the Twelve Great Current Day Ministries of Jesus Christ is being carried out ... His On-Going Ministry as our Great High Priest.

The Once-For-All Sacrifice has been made and our Great High Priest is forever providing forgiveness and cleansing for those who trust in Him. This too is part of '*Pneuma's*' Witness to us.

'*Pneuma,*' in fact, is the very ONE who inspired the writer of the Book of Hebrews to urge all us believers to 'Fix Our Eyes On Jesus' as He carries out all those Incredibly Important Heavenly Ministries on our behalf.

What a vitally important task ...

***"To Bear Witness to the Truths Concerning the Person of Jesus Christ."
"To Build Up our Confidence In our Savior"***

But there's more ...

In addition to Truths regarding the Person of Jesus Christ, '*Pneuma*' has been sent into the world to Testify – to Bear Witness – To Keep the Record Straight – To make sure we understand the ...

2. TRUTHS CONCERNING THE CONDITION OF THE BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER ... (Romans 8:15-16, 23-24)

These are Truths designed to '***Build up our Confidence in our Salvation!***'

Here's what the Spirit had the Apostle Paul write to the believers in Rome ...

"For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

For in this hope we were saved."

(Romans 8:15-16, 23-24)

Until we believers are sure – absolutely sure – that we are saved, there is not much progress that we can make in the Christian Life.

If we doubt that we are really forgiven, then every single mis-step we take will throw us into a state of anxiety and self-incrimination – we picture the Gates of Hell opening up to receive us.

If we doubt that new life has actually come into us, then we will feel as bound to the past and to wrong tendencies as we did before we responded to the Gospel Message – we will still feel like victims.

We can doubt that a Holy God really has time or interest in us for we seem to be so lacking in qualities that would draw His attention to us.

We need a witness – a competent testifier – one who can absolutely convince us that we are in fact Born-Again Children of God and that everything that rightfully belongs to such '*Miraculous Born Children*' does in fact belong to us. We need to feel absolutely 'confident in our salvation.'

And that is exactly what '*Pneuma*' has been sent to be ...

The '**Witness**' – the '**Competent Testifier**' - the one who can and will absolutely convince us that we are in fact 'Born-Again Children of God.'

To use Paul's terminology ...

*"He testifies with our spirit (our new-born spirit)
that we are Children of God."*

Notice the sequence ...

First He testifies concerning the Person of Jesus Christ – both His Earthly and Heavenly ministries ...

Cannot be saved without embracing the Person and Work of Christ ...
Cannot be saved without possessing a great Confidence in Christ as the
Son of God and Savior of the World. Cannot be saved without truly
'*Looking Unto Jesus*' as the '*Author and Finisher of your Faith.*'

But when that '*Testimony of the Spirit*' is heard and received, then new birth into the Family of God is granted and with that '*new birth*' which produces that '*new spirit*,' '*Pneuma*' personally enters into the Picture and begins this '*internal testimony*' of which the Apostle Paul wrote so compellingly.

It's to that new, born-from-above, miraculously-provided spirit that '*Pneuma*' testifies ... that ***new spirit*** is made out of the same spiritual stuff that '*Pneuma*' is made out of ... We could say that they share similar spiritual DNA.

The testimony that '*Pneuma*' bears to our re-born spirit is simply this:

*'You are one of us now ...
You have become a full-fledged Member of the Eternal Family.
You can call the Almighty God, 'Father', just like the rest of us do!
You will never again feel completely 'at home' until you are at home
in the heavenly realms for that is where your new spirit yearns to be.'*

Practically speaking, could there be anything more important to us personally than for '*Pneuma*' to bear witness to ...

The Truths Concerning the Condition of the Born-Again Believer - To Build Up our Confidence In our Salvation?

Receive Christ as your Lord and Savior, see Him accurately '*As He Was*' and '*As He Is*' and then receive the '*Witness of the Spirit*' that you are indeed a forgiven, born-again, destined-for-heaven Child of the Heavenly Father!

No doubt about it ... The one sent into the world to be the '***Testifier***' – the '***Truth-Teller***' - plays a vital role in our lives as believers.

But there's more ... There's a ***Third Category of Truth*** that '*Pneuma*' has been sent into this world to declare – to set straight and to keep straight.

3. TRUTHS CONCERNING CURRENT REALITIES IN THIS FALLEN WORLD

(John 16:8-11)

These are Truths designed to
'Build up our Confidence in the Program of God.'

Check out this part of the Holy Spirit's assignment ...

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

(John 16:8-11)

In other words ...

'Pneuma' will simply *'tell it like it is'* ... that is, he will confront unbelievers with **three critical truths** that they must know:

* ***Truth about SIN*** – What is the **SIN** for which men go to **HELL**?

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin..."

What is the one sin – in fact the only sin – for which Men and Women are sent to Hell ... More specifically put, what is the one thing that fallen men and women do that demonstrates that they are in fact *'sinners deserving to experience God's wrathful judgment'*?

Jesus lists it in this passage ...

"They do not believe in me."

"They do not believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior"

Let fallen human beings argue all they want to about how they are *'not as bad as some'* or that they consider themselves to be just about *'as good as the next guy'* – maybe even *'better than most.'*

'Pneuma' has been sent to declare that that kind of reasoning is a waste of time – a calculation based on human comparisons.

The only thing that matters is whether or not a human being has placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as the Savior of the world.

Have they accepted God's *'Offer of Forgiveness and New Life'* provided through Christ's Incredible Sacrifice for them or not?

The ultimate sin – the only one that actually matters – is to deny Jesus Christ – to fail to *'believe in him.'*

The Holy Spirit has been sent to make that clear.

He has also been sent to make clear ...

* ***Truth about RIGHTEOUSNESS*** – Can anyone **EVER** be 'right' with God?

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to righteousness..."

For those who come to understand the *'fragileness of their human condition'* and for those who through life experience perhaps have come to see the impossibility of ever become truly *'Good,'* there can develop a deep-seated cynicism regarding the whole human enterprise.

Why bother ... just make the best of it – Don't try and don't chide. People are people and sooner or later they will show it.

Here *'Pneuma'* would enter the picture and testify to the fact that there has been One ... One who lived an absolutely *'perfect life'* ... One who because of that perfect life has been welcomed into the Presence of the Holy God ... One who rose above all earthly limitations and temptations and truly achieved *'right-standing'* with God.

It has been done – *'Righteousness in the Fallen World'* has actually been achieved by Jesus Christ.

The very One whom men refuse to believe in has achieved the very thing for which most human beings inherently strive ... **genuine righteous living.**

"Come to Christ" – the Spirit would say –
"Righteousness" can be found in Him!"

And now one last thing for our consideration this morning ...
One last thing that Jesus said *'Pneuma'* was sent to make clear ...

*** Truth about JUDGMENT – Who is God really MAD at?**

"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to judgment ..."

Here's the rest of the statement ...

"because the prince of this world now stands condemned."

Here's the point we make this morning ...

"Lucifer himself is the target of God rightful wrath – but all those aligned with him will suffer judgment right along with him."

In Matthew 25:41, Jesus points out that Hell's *'Eternal Fire'* was ...

"Prepared for the Devil and His Angels."

In that same passage, Jesus points out that those who have '*refused him*' will show themselves allied with the devil and will share in His Judgment.

Into such a devil-dominated world, '*Pneuma*' comes testifying to the devil's doom and urging all men to dis-associate themselves from him.

*'God is not mad at you ...
God loves you and has provided a way that you can be saved.'*

These then are the critically important '*Testimonies*' of '*Pneuma*' – the Spirit of Truth – the Divine Testifier Himself.

He has come to '*Set the Record Straight*' and to '*Keep the Record Straight!*'

Here then (as we close) is ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I ask You to TESTIFY convincingly to my HEART that I truly am a CHILD of GOD and that JESUS CHRIST is everything that God's WORD declares Him to be and that this present WORLD is anything but what it OUGHT to be.

*Erase all DOUBT and DISBELIEF from me –
Build CONFIDENCE and ASSURANCE within me
For I truly desire to WALK in step with You and be FILLED by You!*

Final Thot ...

*'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit – is the ONE who 'GETS THE WORD OUT!'
Take in as MUCH as you possibly CAN!*

***"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' –
The Divine Prosperity-Producer"***
(Galatians 5:16; 25; John 10:10; 3 John 1:2)

Intro ...

Today, I want to make to begin this message
by making an admission of error.

I have for years denounced or at least opposed what has been commonly
called "***The Prosperity Gospel***" and specifically the common summation
of it which could be expressed as ...

"Jesus wants me to be wealthy and healthy and happy."

It usually is promulgated by preachers with big salaries and big houses
and big diamond rings prominently displayed for all to see. It appeals to
those who have none of those things – it is generally expressed that
one needs only to '*Believe in the Goodness of God*' and '*Trust in His
Faithfulness*' to attain everything that the preacher has obviously
attained.

In reality, it frequently is a statement that only applies to the preacher
and it should go like this ...

*"Jesus wants me (the preacher) (to be) wealthy and healthy and happy
and he wants you (the people) to make it happen for me."*

It's that all too common reality that has caused me to turn away from
any such '*preaching on prosperity*' but in the process I have come to
realize that I might be guilty (as we say) of '*Throwing out the baby
with the bathwater*' ...

After all, does not Jesus want His Followers to be ...

*'Well-Off financially' and 'Well-Off Physically' and
"Well-Off Emotionally"?*

Does not our Loving, Merciful and Generous Heavenly Father
want the same for his still earth-bound Children?

Would not '*Pneuma*', our earthly companion through the mine-field that is life in this fallen world, also desire such a life experience for those He '*walks with*' day by day?

Could we possibly say that our Glorious Triune God, if given the choice, would actually desire us to be '*poor, sick and miserable*'?

OF COURSE NOT! IN A MILLION YEARS NOT!

Did not Jesus say (John 10:10) ...

"I came that they might have LIFE and have it to the FULL"?

Did not the Apostle John come right out and say to his dear friend, Gaius, in the little letter addressed to him (3 John 1:2) ...

"Dear Friend, I pray that you may enjoy good HEALTH and that ALL may go well with you, even as your SOUL is doing well."

There can be no doubt about it.

As Today's *First Key Concept* puts it ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ONE ...

PROSPERITY, that is, '*Full – Abundant Life*', is definitely the Heavenly Father's **PLAN** for all who are His.

That Key Concept obviously leads to ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

HOW do we who have been **BORN-AGAIN** into God's Family **ATTAIN** it?

(The Life that enjoys '*Pros perity*' [abundancy] financially and physically and emotionally)

Here now is ...

TODAY'S CRITICAL ANSWER ...

We cannot **WORK** ourselves into it;
We must **WALK** ourselves into it!

I'll explain that answer in a minute but first consider ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT TWO ...

Much **FINANCIAL** sickness and **PHYSICAL** sickness and **EMOTIONAL** sickness is the result of human beings chasing after the **DESIRES** of the **FLESH**.

Christians are not automatically **IMMUNE** to that **CHASE!**

An incorrect view of **CHRISTIAN PROSPERITY** can actually encourage us to **JOIN** the **CHASE** without us even **KNOWING** what we are doing.

Now that's a potent, packed paragraph ...

Let's read those main points again ...

"Much financial sickness and physical sickness and emotional sickness is the result of human beings chasing after the desires of the flesh. Christians are not automatically immune to that chase. An incorrect view of Christian Prosperity can actually encourage us to join the chase without us even knowing what we are doing."

You see ... our natural, fallen, flesh-driven nature truly desires and seeks for 'abundancy' – for 'prosperity' - but our fallen, sin-influenced nature does not have the means to achieve it though it possesses the energy to seek after it.

That's why '*Prosperity Preaching*' can actually be quite attractive to the flesh - it gives the flesh a desirable 'goal to pursue' and a seemingly workable '*program to follow*.'

However ... as a result of such a '*flesh-driven pursuit of the Good Life*' – the '*Abundant Life*', believers make foolish **financial** decisions and wind up deeply in debt or even bankrupt ... They make foolish **physical** decisions and bring harm not health to their bodies ... They make foolish **moral** choices and devastate themselves emotionally and the accompanying **stress** from all the foolishness leads to further physical and even psychological breakdowns.

And the shame of it all is that many believers wind up in such places without even knowing how they got there ...

They thought that they were pursuing the '*Life God has designed for them*' when all the time they were only pursuing a '*Christianized version of fleshly living*.'

So now consider with me *Today's Key Scriptures* and allow them to begin to form within you an understanding of the '*Answer*' I gave a moment ago to the question:

"How do we who have been 'Born-Again' into God's Family attain this 'Full and Abundant and Many-Faceted Earthly Life'?"

Remember the Answer?

*"We can't Work ourselves into it;
We must Walk ourselves into it."*

Here now are *Today's Key Scriptures* ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ... Galatians 5:16, 25

***"LIVE by the SPIRIT and you will not GRATIFY
the DESIRES of the SINFUL NATURE."***

"Since we LIVE by the SPIRIT, Let us keep in STEP with the SPIRIT."

'*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit of God Himself – has been sent not only to '*Guide Us*' but to '*Guard Us*' and He guards us without us even knowing that He is doing it.

The truth is ... when we '*Live by* (and with) '*Pneuma*' and when we '*Keep in Step with* '*Pneuma*', we don't actually get anywhere near those places where '*Fleshly Desires*' would take us.

We are no longer motivated by the twin desires for ***Independence*** and ***Indulgence*** that characterize the '*Fleshly Lifestyle*' ...

We don't seek '*wealth*' believing '*we deserve it*' and therefore justify just about any method to obtain it ... We don't demand 'health' because we've been told it's our God-Promised right ... We don't allow personal 'happiness' to be the motivation behind all of our life decisions.

Our goal and motivation in life is simply to '*Walk with Pneuma*' and experience life lived in fellowship with the Almighty God Himself.

And what is the earthly end of such a motivation – what is the real-life result of one who is consciously '*Walking with Pneuma*'?

The answer is spelled out in ...

TODAY'S FINAL KEY CONCEPT ...

All who WALK with PNEUMA walk in the DIRECTION Of PROSPERITY – their FINANCIAL decisions are biblically sound, their PHYSICAL decisions are biblically sound, their RELATIONAL decisions are biblically sound.

Fleshly DESIRES that lead to FINANCIAL Ruin and PHYSICAL Ruin and EMOTIONAL Ruin for many have been OVERCOME.

They will enjoy their own God-Designed LEVEL of PROSPERITY though the thing they will most be aware of is that they are WALKING with '*Pneuma*' and thoroughly ENJOYING it.

Lots to reflect upon there ...

Lots to rejoice in ...

Lots to rely upon!

You want a truly '*Prosperous Life*'?

Resolve to '*Walk with Pneuma*' every day – all the way.

Final Thot ...

In a word, PROSPERITY is 'WALKING with PNEUMA.'
He MAXIMIZES every aspect of LIFE!

“WALKING WITH ‘PNEUMA’ – The Divine Illuminator”

(1 Cor. 2:14; Gal. 1:7; 3:1; 2 Cor. 4:4,6; Rom. 12:2; Gal. 3:3; 2 Cor. 11:14; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 15:26)

Intro ... ‘Pneuma’ – ‘Pneuma’ – ‘Pneuma’ ... That’s the name the Holy Spirit chose for Himself when he chose the Greek language as the literary vehicle to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the First Century World.

‘Pneuma’ – the third person of the Trinity – the One sent by the Father and the Son to be the continual ‘Companion’ of the believer is the focus of this series of messages – a series I’ve entitled naturally “Walking With Pneuma.”

‘Pneuma’ – the Holy Spirit of God - suffers in many places today a kind of ‘Identity Crisis.’ ... He knows who He is but many of the Believers that He walks with don’t.

Too often we who love the Lord Jesus and who call the Almighty ‘Our Father’ have little to say when we are asked about our understanding of the Role of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

I have stood as guilty as most ... My only advantage is that I spent some years in Seminary intensely studying all aspects of Christian Doctrine so I at least have had an acceptable *‘Doctrinal understanding of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.’*

But a *‘Doctrinal Understanding’* – the type that can write and affirm the *‘Holy Spirit’* paragraph in a Church’s Statement of Faith is a far cry from understanding and appreciating and even participating in the Daily Ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life.

To do that requires much more insight into His Work in the World – insight that (fortunately) He Himself has chosen to give us.

That then is what this current series of messages is all about ... Coming to understand and appreciate and participate in the Ministry of the Holy Spirit – of *‘Pneuma Himself’* – in our lives.

So far we have seen that '*Pneuma*' is the *Divine Implementer* ... He is the ONE who sets the Plans of God in Motion – He is the ONE who brings into being all the Works of God ... and He is the ONE who '*companions*' us every single day.

We have seen that '*Pneuma*' is the *Divine Testifier* ... He is the ONE who '*Keeps the Record Straight*' concerning the Person of Jesus Christ our Savior and concerning the Fact of our Salvation and concerning the State of things in this fallen, sin-filled World.

Last week, we saw that '*Pneuma*' walks all those He '*companions*' in the '*Direction of Prosperity*' – He is the *Divine Prosperity-Producer*.

Walking with Him – Keeping in Step with Him – will bring us to our own '*God-Designed and God-Desired Level of Prosperity*' ... financially, physically and emotionally.

'*Pneuma*' has been sent into our hearts and into our lives with the purpose of '*Making our lives work well*' ... with the purpose of enabling us to live out our lives in this fallen world as '*full-fledged, triumphant Children of God,*' ... children born into God's Family through Spirit-Inspired Faith in Jesus Christ.'

Implementer – *Testifier* – *Prosperity Producer* ... three awesome '*roles*' He, '*Pneuma*' – The Holy Spirit - plays in our lives.

Today we examine a *Fourth Role* '*Pneuma*' plays in the lives of us still earth-bound Children of God.

As the title of this message announces, the One we '*Walk With*' is ...

'THE DIVINE ILLUMINATOR.'

Check out ...

TODAY'S KEY DEFINITION ...

ILLUMINATOR: One who brings LIGHT – specifically SPIRITUAL LIGHT.

Now that '*definition*' leads quite naturally to ...

TODAY'S FIRST KEY QUESTION ...

Why is Spiritual **LIGHT NEEDED?**

And that question in turn gives rise to ...

TODAY'S TWO-PART ANSWER ...

Light is needed because **UNBELIEVERS** walk in Spiritual **DARKNESS**
and **BELIEVERS** frequently walk in Spiritual **DIMNESS!**

(1 Corinthians 2:14; Galatians 1:7; 3:1)

Both parts of that answer arise directly from the Scriptures –
Scriptures inspired by '*Pneuma*' Himself ...

Here's the Biblical evidence for the first part ...

'Unbelievers Walk in Spiritual Darkness'

"The man without the Spirit (the natural man KJV) does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

(1 Corinthians 2:14)

Unbelievers simply cannot '*take in*' and adequately understand, let alone appropriately respond to '***Spiritual Truth.***' That's just how it is ...

So, when unbelievers look at you like you are '*crazy*' because of what you believe, don't be surprised because from their vantage point, you are!

In their natural state, they simply cannot process what you are saying. They are walking in '*Spiritual Darkness*' – they need to be '***Illuminated!***'

Now here's the Biblical evidence for the second part of that answer ...

'Believers frequently Walk in Spiritual Dimness.'

The Apostle Paul ran into that in the very first century, among some of the very believers that he had '*won to Christ*' and formed into a church body.

Here's what he wrote in his '*Epistle to the Galatians*' ...

*"Some people are throwing you into confusion and
are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ."
(Galatians 1:7)*

*"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?"
(Galatians 3:1)*

The sad truth is ...

Christians can '*get confused about things*' ...
Christians can '*forget important things*' ...
Christians can sometimes follow after '*harmful things*' ...
Christians can even fall under the spell of '*ungodly things*.'

So then, the Biblical Evidence underlying our assertion this morning
that ...

***'Unbelievers Walk in Spiritual Darkness' and that
'Believers frequently Walk in Spiritual Dimness'***

prompts the asking of ...

TODAY'S SECOND KEY QUESTION ...
And ***WHY*** is that?

And that absolutely relevant question requires a ***Two-Part Answer*** ...

Here's ...

ANSWER PART ONE ... 2 Corinthians 4:4
UNBELIEVERS walk in darkness because the
'*god of this world*' has ***BLINDED*** them.

Now that's a big pill for the unbeliever to swallow. In his natural state, he
will not receive that truth at all and will resist it with all his might and will
declare you to be a bigoted, closed-minded extremist if you share it with
him, but that's exactly what the Bible declares to be the case ...

*"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that
they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ ..."
(2 Corinthians 4:4)*

Now the plain truth is ... if they can't 'see it' then they can't 'see it.'
You are not their ophthalmologist or optometrist or even their optician.
You cannot simply manufacture a pair of magical spiritual glasses
for them. They have been blinded by the 'prince of darkness' himself.
And that's just how it is.

Until and unless the Holy Spirit 'Implements' the Regeneration Process
within them by which they receive 'New Birth' and thus 'New Eyes'
they will continue in darkness.

Now (just as an aside today) ... The Holy Spirit might well be planning to use
you in the process of Him bringing them to faith, so every now and then
(especially when you feel His prompting) hold up (as it were) a spiritual 'eye
chart' in front of them (that is, make some mention of your Faith in Christ and
what it means to you) and see if their eyes are opening a bit ...
See if they can at least 'see' the 'Big E' on the top.

If they can't ... then note it down in your mental chart that they are still
'Walking in Blindness' ... still 'Blinded by the god of this world' ... and
'Stop the Exam.'

Continue to pray that 'Enlightenment/Illumination' might someday
come to them.

Here now is ...

ANSWER PART TWO ... Romans 12:2; Galatians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 11:14

BELIEVERS frequently walk in DIMNESS because the
'god of this world' has BLIND-SIDED them.

They fall prey to worldly PHILOSOPHIES and
fleshly INADEQUACIES and demonic STRATEGIES.

Believer ... Hear now 'Pneuma's voice as He speaks to us through the very
Scriptures He inspired ...

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world ..."
(Romans 12:2)

'Worldliness' is a 'Way of Looking At Life' not a 'Set of Behaviors.'

It's possible to rid our lives of all the ungodly behaviors that typically characterize the unbeliever and still be most 'worldly.'

The devil is excellent at '*complementing us*' for our progress in '*Christian Living*' even while he's '*Messing with our mind.*'

He says ...

"You are doing so good ... God is definitely going to make your life go smoothly now – God is definitely going to 'pour out blessings upon you now.' Get out the catalog and start picking out all the stuff that you know will bring you real happiness and contentment."

Have you ever heard that voice? Have you ever followed its suggestion and wound up '*mesmerized once again by materialism*'?

Then again there are those among us who are far too '*humble/honest*' to ever think that we have arrived at such a commendable level of victory for we know that there are still those '*besetting sins*' that we deal with constantly.

So, in *our* ear the devil says something like this ...

'Wow, you need to really start getting serious about this Christian Life you are living ... You know God's not going to just 'make it happen' so get yourself into the Word and discover all the stuff that God doesn't like and then talk to people and find out what kinds of things that 'Real Christians don't do or say' and make a list and start working on it.

Put your best effort into it, don't allow anything else to get in the way (especially the annoying needs of other believers) and you will arrive at a level of spirituality that will amaze you and probably inspire others.

Your own energy and passion and discipline are all that will be needed."

Something like that is what the Galatians were hearing (and believing). Here's what the Apostle Paul wrote to them ...

"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?"
(Galatians 3:3)

The devil is tricky ... He can sound so '*spiritual*' while he '*messes with us.*' He will send people into our lives to do the same thing.

Those '*Blind-Sided Believers in the Galatian Church*' had been taken in by some of the Devil's finest. And so had some of the Believers in Corinth. Here's what Paul wrote to them ...

"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising ... if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness."
(2 Corinthians 11:14)

Indeed, sometimes the devil's voice comes to us '*over the radio*', or '*on the internet*', or on someone's '*Facebook page*' or through a '*TV program*' or from the '*printed page.*' And it comes from people we admire and find believable.

Spiritual Blindness – Spiritual Dimness ...
What is the answer – How can they be overcome?

Listen to and take to heart these Scriptural Testimonies with which we close this message this morning.

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURAL TESTIMONIES ... 2 Cor. 4:6; John 8:12; John 15:26

* "God made His **LIGHT** to shine in our **HEARTS** ..." (2 Corinthians 4:6)

That was the Apostle Paul speaking on behalf of himself and all the other Apostles and all those who have been Born-Again through faith in Christ.

God through His Holy Spirit has provided Illumination – Light to dispel the darkness and the dimness. '*Walk with Pneuma ... He keeps the light on.*'

* "He who **FOLLOWS** me will never walk in **DARKNESS** ..." (John 8:12)

This is the testimony of Jesus Christ himself.

While Jesus was on the earth there was no doubt about where He was going and those who '*Followed Him*' followed Him clearly. They didn't have to wonder '*Where He was*' or '*What He was doing.*' He was right there in front of them. Their eyes were open and they could clearly see.

However, Jesus knew that he was '*going away*' ... going to initiate all the incredible heavenly ministries that He even now continues on our behalf.

He knew that in His Absence, **Dimness** could come upon those who are His and that **Darkness** would once again reign supreme in the world and so He told His Followers that he would be sending '**Another**' like Himself to 'Walk with them' and He said ...

* "*When he ('pneuma') comes, he will **TESTIFY** of me.*" (John 8:12)

He will '*Turn on the Floodlights*' – He will turn '*Dimness into Brightness*'
He will '*Open Our Eyes*' ever wider until the '*Glory of Christ*'
overwhelms everything else.

'Pneuma' will walk us right into the '*Brilliance*' that is Jesus Christ.

Remember this old song – it still captures the heart of the matter...

*"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the **LIGHT** of His **GLORY** and **GRACE**."*

That's what '*Pneuma*' does – He is the **DIVINE ILLUMINATOR**.
That's exactly what we need done ... every day!

What would it be like if we started every day with ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, shine the **LIGHT** that is Jesus Himself upon me – Flood my **SOUL** with an ever deeper understanding of the Gospel of His Glory. Lift me from **DIMNESS** and bring me into the brilliance of His **TRUTH** for I truly desire to **WALK** in Step with You and to be **FILLED** by You."*

And as we '*Walk with Pneuma – Our Divine Illuminator*', we will more and more come to understand the truth contained in *Today's Final Thot ...*

Final Thot ...

Internal **ILLUMINATION** produces external **DEMONSTRATION!**

“WALKING WITH ‘PNEUMA’ – The Divine Witness-Enabler”

(Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:4; Acts 2:36; Mark 13:11)

Intro ... So today is our congregation's 21st Anniversary ... Our very first public worship service was held September 18, 1994 – during the last century!

We have met in three different locations (a chapel, a tabernacle and now this wonderful sanctuary) and had hundreds of people come through our doors – some for only a week, some for months, some for years and a few for all 21.

We have considered and still do consider each person that comes through our doors as one with whom God Himself is entrusting us. Each of you has arrived here by God's direct intervention and direction in your life, I am humbled that God would trust me with even a week of your life, let alone with years.

There is a power that has been at work at *Sonlife* Community Church from the very beginning. We who have been here over the years have consistently sought to avoid seeking to control or usurp it.

Today's message seems wonderfully appropriate for this Anniversary Celebration ...

“WALKING WITH PNEUMA – The Divine Enabler.”

'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit of God – is the ONE who has *'enabled'* the birth and life of *Sonlife* Community Church. *'Pneuma'* has been and is the Divine Presence in our midst. *'Pneuma'* has always been God's Earthly *'Enabler.'*

Let me remind you of the great explanation verse that we shared in the second message of this series ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE REMINDER...

***"Not by (your) MIGHT nor by (your) POWER
But by my SPIRIT says the LORD ALMIGHTY.
(Zechariah 4:6)***

Everything that God has accomplished on this earth, He has accomplished through the means of His Holy Spirit – the very '*Spirit*' who chose the name '*Pneuma*' for Himself when he chose the Greek Language as the literary vehicle to carry the Gospel to the entire Civilized World.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who enabled *Sonlife* Community Church to take form and thrive in a country where over 80% of all church starts fail to last as long as 5 years.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who has brought people to our doors without us engaging in any form of advertising at all.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who plans and coordinates our worship service week after week.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who has touched so many of your hearts and brought you to a firm and sure faith in Jesus Christ.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who has blended us into a loving '*Family of Faith*,' a true Community of Believers who love and care for one another.

'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who has escorted so many of our members over the years safely and securely into their Heavenly Father's arms.

It is '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit of God Himself – who has '*enabled*' everything that has happened in this place over the past 21 years.

What we have experienced here in this place certainly gives rise to ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

Whatever the **WORK** that God would have done.
'*Pneuma*' is the ONE who **ENABLES** God's Children to do it.

That, of course, is the declaration God made through Zechariah long centuries ago ... centuries even before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

"Not by (your) Might nor by (your) Power
But by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty.

This morning on this our Personal Opportunity to reflect upon and to testify to the '*Enabling Work*' of God's Holy Spirit in our midst, I want us to realize that we stand in a long line of '*enabled believers*' ...

And as we '*look back*', may we be even more encouraged as we '*walk forward*' into the years ahead.

As we '*look back*,' may we realize more than ever before that it is the '*Spirit of God*' – '*Pneuma*' Himself - who '*makes us able*' to serve God faithfully in this place.

Several *Key Scriptures* will guide our eyes ...

Here's...

TODAY'S FIRST KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"And Jesus returned to Galilee
In the **POWER** of the **SPIRIT**."*

(Luke 4:14)

I am sure that many believers have non-reflectively read that verse, announcing the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry, and simply attributed to Jesus Himself this unique divine power that would heal the sick, and raise the dead, and still the storm and open the eyes of the physically and spiritually blind.

After all, He was the Son of God – the Eternal Second Person of the Godhead – All Power in heaven and earth was His!

And yet that's not what the Scripture says ... The Scripture clearly points out that in His Earthly State – as a result of His Willing Descent into Human Flesh and into the Human Condition – Jesus, like every other earth-bound Child of God was '*made able*' to do awesome things by the '*enabling power*' of the Holy Spirit who '*completely possessed Him*.'

At His Baptism Jesus experienced a kind of '*Pentecost Preview*' ...

'Pneuma' descended upon Him and took charge of Him – '*Drove Him into the Wilderness to be tempted and tested*' and then '*Brought him back to initiate the Works of God in the world of men*.'

It was the 'Power of the Holy Spirit' that ***infused*** the Person of Christ and made possible his awesome earthly ministry.

And as a result, Jesus paved the way for all who would respond to His Call.

Here's ...

TODAY'S SECOND KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"You shall receive **POWER** (dunamis) when the **HOLY SPIRIT** comes upon you and you shall be my **WITNESSES** ..."*

(Acts 1:8)

Jesus was not announcing God's Plan B ...

He was not saying that the Disciples would have to rely upon a different 'Power Source' than He had relied upon. He was clearly declaring to them that the ***very same Spirit*** that had come upon Him at his Baptism would now come upon them!

The ***very same Power*** that they had seen Him demonstrate time and time again would now be theirs. They would be '*enabled for ministry*' the same way He had been.

But lest they go crazy imagining all the '*mountains they would move*' and all the '*miracles they would perform*' and all the '*multitudes they would feed*', he told them very specifically how the '*Spirit's Enabling Power*' would primarily be used in their lives.

He told them exactly what it was that '*Pneuma*' would primarily '*enable them*' to do!

He gave them the perfect answer to the question we followers of Christ frequently ask ...

"What is God's Plan – God's Purpose - for my life?"

I call it ***Today's Key Insight*** and here it is ...

TODAY'S KEY INSIGHT ...

The Primary Work that '*Pneuma*' ***ENABLES*** the believer to do is to bear ***WITNESS*** to the ***PERSON*** of Jesus Christ.

"You shall receive the Spirit's Power and you shall be my witnesses – first here and then everywhere."

That's what Jesus said would happen – That was the plan ... They would be enabled to *'Tell the world the wondrous Truth about Jesus Christ.'*

They didn't have to *'Be Jesus'* ...

There was only one *'Jesus'* ... ***There was*** only one Son of God who left the Glories of Heaven to enter into the world of men ... ***There was*** only one perfect man who could substitute himself in the place of sinful, imperfect men and take upon himself God's judgment for their sin ... ***There was*** only one who would be *'Exalted to the Highest Place and given a name that is about every name'* ... ***There was*** only one who could say ...

"All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me."

And they were ***Not Him*** ... They didn't have to try to *'Be Him'* ... They, by the awesome enabling power of the Holy Spirit – their earthly companion, would be *'made able'* – completely capable ... *'To witness **Of Him.**'*

And, boy O boy, were they ever - It happened exactly as Jesus said ...

Here's ...

TODAY'S THIRD KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"All of them were **FILLED** with the Holy Spirit and began to **SPEAK** in other tongues as the Holy Spirit **ENABLED** them."*

(Acts 2:4)

This happened on the Day of Pentecost when the city of Jerusalem was filled with tens of thousands of fervent Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the Annual Festival.

Into this great multitude, 120 of Jesus' Disciples, the 12 Apostles among them, poured out of the house where they had gathered – the house where the Holy Spirit had descended upon them - and they burst into an awesome demonstration of *'Witness'* to the Person of Jesus Christ.

'*Pneuma*' made the moment extra special by granting to them the ability to speak their witness in every language and dialect of the people who were gathered there. That '*every-language witness*' was almost as impressive as what they were declaring.

And what were they declaring?

Today's *Fourth Key Scripture* gets right to the heart of their message.

Peter had the privilege of being the one to declare it ...

Their '*Bottom Line*' *Witness* ... It's still the '*Bottom Line*.'

Here it is ...

TODAY'S FOURTH KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"God has made this **JESUS**,
whom you (who was) crucified, both **LORD** and **CHRIST**."
(Acts 2:36)*

That is the fundamental, essential, Christian message ...

Jesus, the man who walked the earth long years ago, is *Lord* and *Christ*. He is *Sovereign* and *Savior* ... There is no one else to whom allegiance should be given and no one else by whom salvation can be granted.

Take it or leave it ... that's just how it is and that's all that we as Christ's Followers are called upon to say.

On that Day of Pentecost alone, 3,000 Jews '*took it*' and stepped into the '*light*' as '*Pneuma*' opened their eyes while no doubt thousands of others '*left it*' and remained in '*darkness*.'

Peter could no more '*take credit*' for those who '*believed*' than he should '*accept blame*' for those who didn't. He had done his part.

Now obviously the world has changed a lot since that Glorious Day – The Birth-Day of the Church of Jesus Christ.

That day has passed ... We will never experience such a day ... We do not live in the City of Jerusalem ... We will most likely never get an opportunity to address a company of thousands of Jewish people.

The final part of our Witness will always be the same ...

Jesus is Lord and Christ – He is both Sovereign and Savior.

But the first part of our Witness will, of course, depend upon the situation. It will depend upon the person/person we are talking to – It will depend upon the circumstances that have led to the encounter – It will depend upon our own experience and knowledge ...

But that's where '*Pneuma*' comes into play ...

Here's ...

TODAY'S FIFTH KEY SCRIPTURE ...

***"Do not WORRY about what to SAY...
it is not YOU speaking, but the HOLY SPIRIT."
(Acts 2:36)***

Remember this statement of Jesus that we looked at several weeks ago:

"When He ('Pneuma') comes He will testify of me" John 15:26

'Pneuma' loves to testify about Jesus ... 'Pneuma' loves to choose the right words for the setting and to deliver them through us whom He has 'walked right into that setting.'

Jesus says to us ...

"Don't worry – Just be willing – The words will come."

See if Today's Key Confession doesn't stir a response in your heart ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, ENABLE me to speak CLEAR and COMPELLING words of witness when called upon to do so. Speak the TRUTH about JESUS through me – remove all STRESS and STRAIN from me, as I WALK in step with you and am FILLED by you."

Final Thought ...

Those who 'Walk with Pneuma' need only OPEN their MOUTHS when WORDS of WITNESS need to be SPOKEN. He will ENABLE them to say all that NEEDS to be said!

“WALKING WITH ‘PNEUMA’ – The Divine Prayer-Enhancer”

(Romans 8:26-28)

Intro ... How awesome is it that we '*Born-Again Sons and Daughters of God*' get to '*Walk with ‘Pneuma’* – the Holy Spirit Himself – every day we live in this fallen, sin-filled world!

He has been sent into the world to '*Companion*' us ... to be with us.

He is the great *Implementer* of all the work that God would do (and is, in fact, doing) in this fallen world.

He is the divine *Testifier* who assures us of the effectiveness of that work.

He is the divine *Prosperity-Producer* who walks us into fullness of life.

He is the awesome *Illuminator* of the Truths God has revealed through His Word; and as we saw just last week ...

He is the ever-present *Enabler* who makes us '*able*' to bear *True Witness* of our Sovereign and Savior, Jesus Christ.

'*Pneuma*' is the *Gift* our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ have given to all who have been '*Born-Again*.'

For every question we might have concerning the living of a God-Pleasing, Soul-Satisfying Christian Life in this fallen world, '*Pneuma*' is the answer.

This morning I would draw our attention to one of those questions - a question that most '*believers*' are quite familiar with ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

***HOW CAN I PRAY PERFECT, GOD-PLEASING,
GOD-ACTIVATING PRAYERS?***

Indeed, who would not want to pray such prayers? Who would not want to pray prayers that reflect such a level of maturity (perfection) ...

Prayers that please God when He hears them ... Prayers that touch the Father's heart and stir Him to set into motion 'answering actions'?

And so we ask ... "*How can I do that, that is, 'pray such prayers'?*"

Well, given the very nature of our current study and even the comments made just a few moments ago, here's ...

TODAY'S NOT TOO SURPRISING ANSWER ...

Take '*Pneuma*' into your ***PRAYER CLOSET*** with you!

He is your Divine ***PRAYER-ENHANCER***.

We need ***help*** with our '*praying*' ...

God has known that from the very beginning ...

We earth-bound, flesh-containing, devil-targeted '*Followers of Christ*' are inadequate in ourselves to properly and triumphantly communicate with God.

Fortunately, God has provided for our inadequacy ...

Listen to the way the Apostle Paul explained it in his letter to the Romans ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... Romans 8:26-28

*"In the same way, the Spirit ***HELPS*** us in our weakness. We do not know ***WHAT*** we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words ***CANNOT*** express.*

*And He who searches our hearts knows the ***MIND*** of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's ***WILL***."*

*And we know that in all things God ***WORKS*** for the ***GOOD*** of those who love him ..."*

Several ***Key Observations*** arise from that Scripture ...

1. Prayer can be a DIFFICULT and even DESPERATE Enterprise ...

"In our weakness" – (our human condition)

"We do not know what we ought to pray for"- (our human awareness)

The more ***DESPERATE*** the time,
the more ***DIFFICULT*** it might be to pray with confidence.

Have you ever been in a spot when you just didn't know '*What to ask God for*' and yet you felt it was your responsibility to present a '*request*'?

Have you ever (as a result) felt the '*Pressure*' to '*make a good prayer*'?

Have you ever felt completely inadequate to '*formulate*' such a prayer'?

Paul makes it clear that even for him ... '*weakness*' can come into play when we kneel down to pray ... could be *physical* weakness – could be *emotional* weakness – could be a kind of *intellectual* weakness even for he goes on to say ... '*We do not know what we ought to pray for.*'

The point is we don't have the *mind* of God – we don't have the *perspective* of God – we don't have the *patience* of God ... and yet frequently situations arise about which we know we must '*talk to God.*'

Without question, all who have engaged themselves in it recognize that specific prayer – prayers of petition for themselves and others – is a *difficult* and often *desperate* enterprise.

And that '*recognition*' leads to *Observation Two* ...

2. Obviously then, Prayer can be a DISCOURAGING Enterprise ...

If we '*do not know what we ought to pray for*', how can we ever know if our prayer has been appropriately *PHRASED* or effectively *RAISED*?

It could be easy to '*GIVE UP ON PRAYER*' altogether.
That would be both *DISOBEDIENT* and *TRAGIC*.

Now our *enemy*, the devil, would *really like us* to make that decision for he knows how harmful to his cause it is when the Almighty is '*Activated*' in response to the prayers of His People.

Our sinful, *fallen nature* would *really like us* to make that decision for it knows how prayer has a way of bringing us under God's Sovereignty which is the exact opposite of the independent life the flesh promotes.

But we *do not* want to make that decision because we know how vital prayer is and how much of a priority God puts upon it. God, in fact, had the Apostle Paul instruct the Thessalonian believers (1 Thess. 5:17) to ...

'PRAY CONTINUALLY.'

So, we could be stuck '*Between a rock and a hard place*' ...

We ***must*** pray for God Himself ***directs*** us to pray, but prayer is fraught with all kinds of ***discouraging uncertainties*** when we try to pray specifically.

Here now comes the '***answer***' - the one we alluded to earlier ...

Observation #3 points out that ...

3. '***Pneuma***' ***ENHANCES*** this ***PRAYER*** Enterprise ...

"He helps us in our weakness"

Notice it doesn't say he '*takes our weakness away*' – to do that he would have to take us '*out of our human condition.*' What he does is 'help us' while we remain ***in*** that '*human condition.*'

Here's the point ... He ('pneuma') is ***not limited*** by our human condition. Here's what he does – it's a parallel situation to the one we considered just last week.

Just as He '***ENABLES***' our witness on earth by '*putting appropriate words in our mouths*' so He '***ENHANCES***' our prayers in Heaven by '*adding expressions that go beyond human language.*'
He adds what we could never ***say*** or ever ***know!***

He makes sure that our prayers are (to use our earlier description) '*appropriately ***PHRASED***' and '*effectively ***RAISED!****'*

Let that sink in for a moment ...

The very thing that we can't be sure of when a prayer leaves our lips, '***Pneuma***' make sure of before it reaches the Father's ears!

Now you might want to ask ...

SO WHY IS 'Pneuma' SO EFFECTIVE?

Because He knows what we ***NEED*** (our deepest needs – the needs of the situation) ***and*** He knows what our Heavenly Father ***WILLS.***

He ***ASKS*** the Father to do the very thing that we ***most*** need done and that the Father ***most*** desires to do – He ***MATCHES*** things up perfectly!

Here now is ***Romans 8:27*** again ...

"He who searches our heart (The Father) knows (is tuned into and is one with) the mind of the Spirit ('Pneuma') because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's Will."

So you see ... When '*Pneuma*' gets done '*enhancing*' our prayer, it has actually become a request for the Father to do what the Father most wants done and what we (or the one we are praying for) most need to be done.

The end result is the Father saying ...

"I'll do it - It's exactly what I want to do."

Truly awesome is what '*Pneuma*' accomplishes with our prayers!

So, at this point I think we should all be ready to embrace what I'm calling this morning ...

THE SECRET TO POWERFUL PRAYER ...

PRAY 'PNEUMATICALLY'!

See your Heavenly Father Holding His ***ARMS OPEN WIDE.***

See your Heavenly Intercessor Holding the ***DOOR OPEN WIDE.***

See Yourself walking right in with '*Pneuma*'

Your ***PRAYER-ENHANCER*** by ***YOUR SIDE.***

Speak to the Father personally, (He's your Heavenly Father – you are His Beloved Child); speak to the Father passionately (Let your concerns for the needs of this life and for the people who make up your life be fully expressed); speak to the Father confidently knowing that all that is lacking in your prayer '*pneuma*' (who stands right there beside you) will provide.

Now that's how to pray powerful
God-Hearing, God-Heeding Prayer!

Now in addition to us '*Speaking to the Father*' personally and passionately and confidently, the Fourth and final Observation arising from Today's Scripture will encourage us to '*speak to the Father*' ***expectantly*** for you see ...

4. *'Pneumatic Prayer' is designed to bring GOODNESS into our lives.*

"In all things God works for the 'good' of those who love Him."

Only GOOD comes out of the 'ENHANCED' prayers that 'Pneuma' brings before the Father's Throne.

'Pneuma' immerses our prayers in the announced intentions of God ...

'Pneuma' knows that the Divine Program involves God's personal involvement in all the circumstances of our lives – in all those situations that stimulate prayers of petition and supplication and even desperation.

'Pneuma' is well aware of the Divine Commitment to 'Work all things together for good' (KJV) for us who love the Lord and are called (and submitted) to His Purposes.

And so 'Pneuma' perfectly coordinates Our Prayers with the Program of God and thus guarantees us that something truly 'Good' will emerge from the very circumstance that has caused us concern.

'Pneuma' turns prayer into a 'Goodness-Producing Machine.'

Indeed, He 'Enhances' our 'Pneumatically-Prayed Prayers' exponentially!

Are you ready now for Today's "Walking with Pneuma Key Confession"?
Here it is ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION

"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, enhance my PRAYERS and cause them to be heard and heeded on High.

Help me to truly believe that my Heavenly Father is working for my GOOD in the midst of all the circumstances of my life.

Remind me each day just how important it is to GIVE myself to prayer as I WALK in step with you and am FILLED by you."

Final Thot ...

'Pneuma' cannot ENHANCE a prayer that hasn't been PRAYED.

He can't FINISH what we haven't STARTED.

So, make 'PNEUMATIC PRAYER' a continual PRACTICE of your Life!

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – The Divine Baptizer"

(1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:5-6)

Intro ... Today, we take up a topic in our "*Walking with 'Pneuma'*" series that all of you knew we would get to eventually – The '***Baptism of the Spirit.***'

Whole books have been written on the subject – entire Church Groups have made it their central doctrine.

It's a topic that has captured the minds and hearts of believers throughout the centuries – it's a topic that has unfortunately at times divided the Glorious Church of Jesus Christ into almost warring factions.

The amazing thing is that there is only one passage in the entire Scripture where the Holy Spirit is actually identified as a '***Baptizer*** and I've chosen it as the first of ***Today's Key Scriptures*** ...

The Second of ***Today's Key Scriptures*** reveals a marvelous effect of His Baptizing Ministry ...

Here they are:

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...

"For we were all BAPTIZED by one SPIRIT into one BODY - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one SPIRIT to DRINK."

(1 Corinthians 12:13)

* * * * *

"He (God the Father) saved us through the WASHING of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He POURED out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior ..."

(Titus 3:5-6)

Several ***Fundamental Observations ...***

**1. There is only one WAY into the BODY of CHRIST ...
One must be 'BAPTIZED' into it by 'Pneuma' Himself.**

It truly can be said ... "Unless you have been 'BAPTIZED by the Holy Spirit'
you cannot enter into Christ's CHURCH – His Eternal BRIDE."

What a vivid picture ... This is a baptism that unlike 'water baptism' does not 'Bring a Person Back Up' once they have been 'Lowered down.'

This is an 'immersion' that is permanent – once the person is 'immersed', they remain immersed.

This is not an 'immersion' that is intended to 'picture' the life and death of Jesus Christ or the 'passing from death to life of the believer.'

This is an immersion that is 'permanent' ... 'immersed forever' in the Body of Christ. It's the Spirit's doing and is not duplicated or illustrated by any 'human' activity or ceremony.

So, it's not inappropriate to ask someone if they have been 'Baptized by The Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ' ...

It's not inappropriate for us to ask ourselves that question for it's the only way anyone can enter the 'Glorious Thing' that Jesus, our Heavenly Contractor, is building on this earth – His Church – His Eternal Bride.

However, we must ask that question in a Biblically sound and relevant way.

Carefully consider this **second** of Today's Four Fundamental Scripturally Based Observations ...

2. All BORN-AGAIN Believers have indeed been 'Baptized' by the Holy Spirit ... His Baptism has 'washed a NEW life into them' even as it has 'washed the OLD life out of them.'

Remember that **Second Key Scripture** we read a few moments ago?

"He (God the Father) saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior ..."

(Titus 3:5-6)

Could say that God the Father '*drenched us with the Spirit*' before the Spirit in turn '*Immersed us in the Body of Christ.*'

Two Fascinating Phrases in that verse ...

The '**Washing of Rebirth**' ... that's the born-again experience. To use our phrase of the day ... The Holy Spirit, having been poured out upon us by the One who had chosen to become our Heavenly Father, '*washes a new life right into us*' – we become Children of God!

The '**Washing of Renewal**' ... that's the 'flip-side' of that experience. Again – to use our phrase of the day ... In the process of '*washing a new life into us*', the Holy Spirit '*washes the old life out of us.*' He fundamentally **changes** us.

As the Apostle Paul would later put it in his second letter to the Corinthian Believers (2 Corinthians 5:17) ...

*"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The Old has gone – the New has come!"*

That's the **first evidence** that you have been '*Baptized By the Spirit*' into the Body of Christ ... You have been **fundamentally changed** and you know it. Old things have (and are being) passed away and everything has (and will continue to) become new. That's what the Bible clearly says.

Now just in passing let me say that the reason that so many believers have over the years considered this '*Baptism of the Holy Spirit*' to be a '**Second Work of Grace**' is because what they have considered to be their '**First Work of Grace**' (salvation) was no real work of grace at all.

It was some kind of '*human*' accomplishment – a mental assent to the facts of salvation perhaps – an acceptance of certain church teachings or a submission to certain church practices but it was not an action of God.

This '*human activity*' got them on to the rolls of some '*human organization*' but it did not get them into Christ's Glorious Church.

In the process of '*Pneuma's Baptism*' a true life-changing **conversion** is experienced ... salvation is granted and new life is experienced.

And as a result of genuine conversion, two other results are identified in this sole '*Baptism of the Spirit*' Scripture...

3. Earthly DISTINCTIONS no longer carry any real SIGNIFICANCE.

(No Jew/Gentile distinction; no slave/free distinction;
no rich/poor; not even male/female)

In the First Century (and really in every century since) this is a profound **evidence** of the '*Spirit's Baptism*' ...

The '*Body of Christ*' that we have been '*Baptized Into*' is a uniform body.

Like Adam in the Garden when God brought Eve to him – true believers when they enter the true Church of Jesus Christ are overwhelmed and overjoyed to find '*Others like themselves*' ... '*Bone of their Bone*' and '*Flesh of their Flesh*' and (most importantly we could add) '*Spirit of their Spirit*.'

Earthly Distinctions that mean so much to unbelievers are not the most important things ... in fact, in Christ's Church, they are not even really noticed.

All the members are much more impressed with their similarities as Children of God through faith in Christ and the Baptism of the Spirit than they are impressed with their differences racially or economically or '*genderly*' or in any other way.

This view of one another in the Body of Christ is a second evidence that we have been truly '*Baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ*.'

And now **one more thing** we find in this incredibly packed passage ...

Not only do '*Earthly Distinctions Lose Their Significance*' but all members of Christ's Church share a particular '*Life Experience*' or as we put it in this final Key Observation of the Impact of the Spirit's Baptismal Work ...

4. All members are UNDER the same INFLUENCE.

(*'Given the same Spirit to drink'*)

You know why alcohol is so prevalent in social gatherings, don't you?

It helps '*loosen people up*' and '*helps people relax and get along*' and as long as it's not overdone, it works pretty well.

However, we all know how easily it can be 'overdone' and we know how 'temporary' its impact is.

The members of the Church of Jesus Christ have their own '*Beverage of Choice*' ... It's a drink that frees them from suspicion and judgment, a drink that makes them all appear attractive, a drink that draws them together in a wonderful harmony and fellowship ... it's a drink that makes every one of their social gatherings a 'h it' ... They are always eagerly anticipated.

This Scripture says that the believers '*Drink of Choice*' – the '*Drink that makes everything better*' is the Holy Spirit Himself. All of them drink it whenever they get together.

Need I point out what a near '*blasphemy*' it is for a bone-fide member of the Church of Jesus Christ to '*fall back upon earthly stimulants*' to accomplish what '*Pneuma*' Himself has been sent to provide?

I believe that using alcohol for these purposes is actually a form of 'grieving' and even 'quenching' the Holy Spirit in our lives.

My encouragement to you as your Pastor would be ...

'Restrict yourselves to the Intoxicating Beverage that your Heavenly Father has provided for you.'

Drink regularly and deeply of the Holy Spirit ...

Your '*Thirst for Him*' is a ***third evidence*** that you have truly been '*Baptized By Him*' into the Body of Christ.

Here now is ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I praise you for having baptized me into the 'Body of Christ.' Continue to 'WASH' the old life out of me even as you continue to WASH the new life into me. BRING all the members of my church under your INFLUENCE and draw us together as ONE as we WALK in step with You and are FILLED by you.

Final Thot ...

We should leave this place every Sunday
'SOAKING WET' and ***'COMPLETELY TIPSYP'***, spiritually speaking!

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – The Divine Gift-Giver"

(1 Corinthians 12:1-12; Romans 12:6)

Intro ... 'Walking with Pneuma' – that's our theme. Let's allow Pneuma this morning to 'Walk us into and through' some very key Scriptures ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...

"Now concerning SPIRITUAL GIFTS ... I do not want you to be IGNORANT."

(1 Corinthians 12:1)

"We have different GIFTS according to the GRACE given us"

(Romans 12:6)

"There are different KINDS of gifts but the SAME Spirit."

(1 Corinthians 12:4)

"Now to EACH one (of us) the manifestation of the SPIRIT is GIVEN for the common GOOD."

(1 Corinthians 12:7)

Three '*Distinct Greek Words*' are used in these verses to convey the truths that God would have us know ... The limitations of our English language has caused at times the very 'ignorance' that the Apostle Paul so feared.

The English translators have commonly used the word "*Gifts*" or term '*Spiritual Gifts*' for them all as though Paul was talking about '*static*' (unchangeable or even inter-changeable) things.

Let's start by looking at each word and begin to draw some comparisons between them.

1 Corinthians 12:1 ... "*Now concerning 'Spiritual Gifts'*" ...

In that verse, the word is "*pneumatikos*" ... one word not two ... could be literally translated ...

*'Now concerning the spirituals' or (to use our term) ...
the 'pneumatics'...*

'The pneumatics' ... that is, things having the quality of '*pneuma*' upon them – things that are '*pneuma-related*' ... '*pneuma-characterized*' ... '*pneuma-enabled*' ... '*pneuma-like*.'

Paul used this word in Galatians chapter six verse one when he was giving instructions concerning the *'wayward believer.'* He says that those who are the *'pneumatikos'* should pursue that one and seek to bring him back. Basically, he is saying that those who were *'pneumatized'* and only those should seek to *'win back the wayward one.'*

In our English language, it reads ...

'You who are spiritual' or 'You who are spirit-enabled.'

You and I would say ...*'You who are 'pneuma-powered' ...
The 'Pneumatics' among you.*

Wouldn't it be great to say ...

*"I'm part of the 'Pneumatic Movement' – a movement focused
upon a life-changing, life-enabling companionship
with the Holy Spirit Himself?"*

Now do note before we move on that Paul expresses a concern regarding this *'pneumatic realm.'* He says that he does not want us to be *'ignorant'* – that is, *'lacking in understanding'* concerning such things.

Illustration:

How many of you have ever used a hammer to drive home a nail?
Probably your dad or some other adult showed you how when you were a kid.
Showed you how you have to support the nail with one hand while you wield the
hammer with the other. Perhaps suggested you just give it a little tap to start it
before you take a fuller swing.

How many of you have ever suffered a bruised thumb as a result of a wayward
blow? There's a lot of ways to do it wrong, aren't there?"

Now imagine that your father had handed you a *'pneumatically-powered nail gun'*
or that someone handed you one of those today? Think about all the wrong
approaches that one can take with that powerful tool.

A pneumatic nail gun can indeed become a lethal weapon. Ignorance of its
capabilities and requirements can have devastating consequences.
You could easily make a mess of the project if not *'shoot someone'* in the process.

At the very least, a person ignorant of the *'pneumatic option'* or ignorant of the
'pneumatic method' might well decide to simply *'do it the old-fashioned way'*
and just *'hammer on.'*

That's what Paul was afraid of ...

He was afraid that those believers in Corinth (and we here in Apple Valley) would be so '*ignorant*' of all things relating to '*Pneuma*' that we would either '*mess things up trying to involve Him in our lives*' or we would choose to '*Do it the Old Uninformed Way*' and just 'Rely upon Our Father in Heaven' and 'Relate to our Savior as He was when He walked upon the earth.'

Neither of those options is Our Father's Plan for us. He wants us to know and use all the '*Pneumatics*' – all the '*pneuma-powered things*' - that He has provided for us. Indeed, He would have us enthusiastically Join the "*Pneumatic Movement.*'

First Key Greek Word ... 'Pneumatikos' - Keep it in mind.

Now the **Second** Greek Key Word that Paul uses is found both in Romans 12:6 and in 1 Corinthians 12:4 ...

*"We have different gifts according to the grace given us."
"There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit."*

Here we have one Greek word being translated by two different English words ... twice with our English word, '*gifts*' and once with our English word '*grace*.'

It's not the word '*pneumatikos*' (pneuma related) but the word '*charisma*' – a most familiar and commonly used New Testament Word. It's a form of the word for '**Grace**.'

We could easily translate (and perhaps should translate) '*charisma*' as '**Gracings**' meaning '*Those things that are uniquely brought into being by the Holy Spirit's Gracious (completely unmerited) Provision for our lives.*'

Over the past 50 years or so in this country especially, those who have focused themselves upon these '*Powerful and Beneficial Provisions of the Spirit*' have commonly referred to themselves as '**Charismatics**.'

So that's the **Second Key Greek Word ... 'Charisma' ...** Keep it also in mind.

The **Third** Greek Key Word that comes into play in these verses is found in 1 Corinthians 12:7 ...

*"Now to each one (of us) the **MANIFESTATION** of the Spirit is given for the common good."*

This Greek Word is the word "**Phanerosis**" and simply means 'To appear' or 'To become visible or noticeable.'

The Point is ...

'Pneuma' produces '**noticeable things**' in the lives of those who are '**Walking with Him**' and who are thus '**pneumatized**' by Him!

Now think about that ...

'Pneuma' intends our lives to 'make a splash' – a 'noticeable difference' in this world!

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

What kind of '**DIFFERENCE**' – what kind of '**SPLASH**' does '**Pneuma**' want to make **THROUGH** me?

TODAY'S KEY (and hopefully insightful) **ANSWER ...**

'Pneuma' will make **WHATEVER SPLASH** Is **NEEDED** at the **TIME!**

The New Testament is filled with examples of the kinds of '**Splash**' He has made in the past ... things done through his '**Pneumatized Saints**' ...

Romans chapter 12 has quite a list ...

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.

If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to His faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

If you have ever come under the influence of someone who can clearly and powerfully present the Word of God – If you have ever been ministered to by a believer with a genuine servant's heart ...

If you have ever been blessed to be in the presence of a gifted teacher of God's Truth – If you have ever had your heart and mind transformed by the ministry of an effective encourager – If you have ever been blessed by some believer's generosity – If you have ever lived under someone's good and godly leadership – If you have ever been the beneficiary of a completely undeserved act of genuine mercy, then you know from personal experience what kind of 'splash' these 'gifts' can produce in the world!

1 Corinthians chapter 12 has quite a list of example as well ...

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

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, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits (discernment), to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as (and when) He determines."

Now whereas Romans 12 lists '*attitudes of the heart*' that lead to many kinds of actions, this passage zeroes in on some very '*splashy*' actions that arise from those '*heart attitudes*.'

What a blessing to be the recipient of a true 'Message of Wisdom' – a much needed insight concerning your life circumstance – a word that points out to you the '*path that honors God and will bring His Blessing upon your life*.'

A 'Message of Knowledge' is also a blessing to receive – it moves us out of spiritual dimness into spiritual light ... our minds are enlightened and our spirits lifted.

To experience the 'Gift of Faith' ... extraordinary ability to trust God in extraordinary times ... is a marvelous blessing. People whose faith nothing can shake amaze the world – it's a gift from '*Pneuma*' himself.

And on and on we could go ... gifts of Healing, gifts of miraculous powers, gifts of prophecy, gifts of discernment, gifts of tongues and the gift of interpretation of tongues.

Many of these 'gifts' the Apostle Paul experienced in his own life and ministry.

These '*pneumatic actions*' are splashed all over the pages of the Book of Acts. These '*gifts*' were a big part of the observation made that these Christians had '*turned the world upside down.*'

We are the beneficiaries of all those gifts ... They are all '*given*' by the '*one and same spirit*' ... They can be given anytime '*Pneuma*' desires ... They can be given and have been given in every chapter of the Church's history..

The point is ... '*Pneuma*' will use these and other gifts as well to make '*whatever splash is needed in the world at the time.*'

What a waste of energy it is to debate whether any of these '*gifts*' have ceased as though '*Pneuma*' has exhausted His supply. The only question is whether or not any of these '*gifts*' are needed to accomplish His Purpose at the time ... And only '*Pneuma*' knows that!

In 1 Corinthians 14 ... Paul identifies another kind of '*spiritual experience*' – I would be remiss if I did not mention it – it's the one that is commonly called '*Speaking in Tongues*' ...

*"He who 'speaks in a tongue' does not speak to man but to God.
No one understands him; he utters 'mysteries' with his spirit."
(1 Corinthians 14:2)*

In contrast to '*speaking in a known (but unlearned) human language,*' this is more properly called '*ecstatic utterance*' – a form of genuine worship that goes beyond human comprehension.

It can bring a sense of comfort and communion and encouragement to those who practice it. Sometimes it is called one's '*Prayer Language.*'

I have never experienced this though I know that some of you have. I would characterize this phenomenon as another of pneuma's '*Gracings.*' Not to be sought or necessarily taught but to be received if given.

Paul points out in this passage that such '*utterance*' is best reserved for one's private prayer life because '*declaration in understandable language*' is far more beneficial when believers gather together.

Keep in mind (and I say this merely in passing) that nearly every religion in the world and nearly every Christian Cult is experienced with some form or other of such '*ecstatic utterance.*' That fact alone disqualifies it as any kind of ultimate evidence of one's born-again condition.

SO NOW HOW DO WE DRAW ALL OF THIS TOGETHER?

SEVERAL KEY SUMMARIZING OBSERVATIONS ...

1. GOD WANTS US TO UNDERSTAND THE '*Pneumatics*' OF OUR FAITH.

(To ignore them or to be ignorant of them is to frustrate the Father's Plan).

It is even more important in our day than it was in Paul's day that we not be ignorant of these things. We are so far removed from the original events and from the people who shared in those events that we must make a definite effort to inform ourselves about the role and responsibility God has given the Holy Spirit in our lives.

We need to enthusiastically join the '*Pneumatic Movement*.'

We need to consciously and consistently '*Keep in Step with Him*.'

This is a series of messages that we must review 'again and again.'

**2. PNEUMA 'GRACES' US THAT WE MIGHT
'MAKE A SPLASH' IN THIS WORLD.**

(Pneuma's '*gracings*' are never '*unneeded*' or go '*unnoticed*!')

We can never forget that '*Pneuma's Focus*' is forever upon the Person of Jesus Christ. All that '*Pneuma*' provides for us is for the purpose of '*re-creating*' (as it were) the Life and ministry of Jesus Christ upon this earth that all men might be drawn to Him.

'*Pneuma*' walks us in the direction of the extraordinary and things extraordinary do not go unnoticed ... things extraordinary, these spirit-produced things, are intended to capture people's attention even as Jesus did himself when He walked upon the earth.

**3. THE 'GIFTINGS' PNEUMA BESTOWS UPON US
ARE OF HIS OWN CHOOSING.**

(They never become '*ours*' - they are always His.)

Much confusion (yes, even the very '*ignorance*' that Paul feared) has come as believers through the years have somehow confused themselves with '*Pneuma*.' They have taken '*ownership*' of their '*gifts*' as though they were in charge of them. They like Samson of old simply assume that the '*gift is there for the using*' whenever they so choose. Sadly, defeated have many of them been.

Whatever circumstance we find ourselves in, the solution is to ...

'Allow Pneuma to walk us through it, trusting Him to make available to us whatever spiritual resources (gifts) He determines to be appropriate.'

This is a dynamic relationship that we have with Him.

His '*giftings*' like our Lord's Mercies are '*new every morning*.'

4. THE 'GIFTINGS' PNEUMA BESTOWS UPON US ARE MINISTRY FOCUSED.

(If they come from Him, they are designed to '*make the Body better*'.)

'*Pneuma*' has come to earth and has taken up residence within every believer in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ whose sole agenda for the earth is the '*Building of the Church*.'

'*Pneuma*' loves the Church – those who walk with Him will quickly discover that fact. All of his work with us believers individually is for the purpose of perfecting us corporately.

One of the most moving speeches ever given on American soil was General Douglas MacArthur's farewell address to the Cadet Corps at the United States Military Academy at West Point – a venerable institution that I once imagined myself attending – an institution that MacArthur had not only attended but actually served for a period as its Superintendent.

General MacArthur had had a most decorated and difficult military career. He was the originator of the line that Arnold Schwarzenegger made famous in the movie '*Terminator*.'

When the US military forces were driven from the Philippines at the beginning of WW II, He famously promised "*I shall return*."

It was a promise he kept. He became a national hero – He was a '*soldier first and foremost*.' But after the War was over, there was little use for a driven man like him and he wound up even being relieved of his command. It was a devastating development.

So, it was with a certain national notoriety and interest, that he, near the end of his life, long after his lengthy military career had ended, took the podium and gazed into the faces of some of the nation's finest young men and women – men and women about to pledge their lives to the defense of their country – young men and women who had become (through their four years at West Point) members of one of the most unique fraternities in the world ... the Corps of West Point Cadets.

After commending them and challenging them without any sense of self-defense or without any attack upon what might be viewed as an unappreciative civilian government, he closed with this powerful personal statement ...

*"In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry,
the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield.*

*But in the evening of my memory, I come back to West Point.
Always there echoes and re-echoes:
Duty, Honor, Country
(The West Point Motto).*

*Today marks my final roll call with you. But I want you to know that
when I cross the river, my last conscious thoughts will be of ...
'THE CORPS and THE CORPS and THE CORPS.'*

Now that's how 'Pneuma' views
THE **CHURCH** – THE **CHURCH** – THE **CHURCH!**

All his 'Giftings' are ministry-focused – intended to enhance the beauty of Christ's Bride.

What a privilege to share in that great and glorious task.

Here now is the *fifth* and *final* observation I'd share this morning ...

**5. MOST OF THE 'GIFTINGS' PNEUMA BESTOWS UPON US
ARE SIMPLY 'POWER-PACKED VERSIONS' OF WHAT IS
EXPECTED OF EVERY BELIEVER.**

('Giftings' are extraordinary expressions of ordinary Christian Living)

That statement pretty much says it all ...

The '*normal*' Christian Life is intended to be extraordinary by ordinary worldly standards.

Indeed, it's true ...

Everyone who '*Walks with Pneuma*' walks in the direction of the extraordinary.

'*Gifts*' simply elevate that '*ordinary/extraordinary life*' a notch higher whenever the situation calls for a bit more punch.

And '*Pneuma*' is the one who decides the who and the where and the when of such '*gifting*.'

The Bottom line is ...

'Pneumatic Living' will bring out of each of us an incredible array of Christ-Honoring, Church-Enhancing, Soul-Satisfying Activity!

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O '*Pneuma*', Most Holy Spirit of God, I praise you for being the GIVER of all SPIRITUAL GIFTS ...

I trust you to POUR into my life each day all the 'GIFTINGS' that my life circumstances REQUIRE as I WALK in Step with You and am FILLED by You."

Final Thought ...

One who is WALKING with '*Pneuma*' need never FEAR that any spiritual GIFTINGS are being missed.

'*Pneuma*' will provide all the 'GIFTINGS' NEEDED for us to successfully CARRY OUT the Father's Plan.

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – The Divine Fruit-Producer"

(Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:31; 1 Corinthians 14:1)

Intro ... Today as we continue our discussion of what it means to be *'Walking with 'Pneuma'*, we are going to *'walk'* right into a marvelous array of Scriptures.

These are Scriptures that speak right to the heart of what this *'Walk with Pneuma'* is all about ...

We are not yet ready to put our finger on the *'Final Thing'* and the most *'Glorious Thing'* about this walk but we are close.

Consider with me the first of several *Key Scriptures* ...

TODAY'S FIRST KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"Now the **FRUIT** of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."*

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Today I want to share a approach to these *'FRUITS'* that perhaps you have never heard or considered before. But before I do and in preparation for what I plan to share, consider these next two *Key Scriptures* ...

TODAY'S SECOND KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"And now, I will show you the **MOST EXCELLENT WAY!**"*

(1 Corinthians 12:31)

This promise of Paul's concludes his discussion of the *'Gracings'* (Gifts) of the Holy Spirit that fills the entire twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians and sets the stage for the subject that will fill all of chapter thirteen – the subject of ***Christian Love***.

TODAY'S THIRD KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"**FOLLOW** the way of **LOVE** and (or as you) eagerly desire (the) **'PNEUMATICALS.'**"*

(1 Corinthians 14:1)

Here Paul summarizes the content of chapters 12 and 13 in one very important two-part directive. Notice the order that he places them in.

Attitude should precede and motivate and characterize **Action**. Spiritual gifts only produce spiritual results when they are **practiced in love**.

Consider now with me ...

TODAY'S FIRST KEY CONCEPT ...

1. LOVE (AGAPE) IS THE ULTIMATE CHRISTIAN VIRTUE

Paul calls it the '*most excellent way*.'

It's the '*way*' he directs us to follow' ...

In other words, it's obviously the '*way*' that '*Pneuma*' himself is walking – It's the way that those who '*Keep in step with Him*' will be traveling. It's the only way to get where the Lord would have us wind up!

Consider Jesus' own comment on the subject ...

*"By this all men will KNOW that you are my disciples:
'If you LOVE one another."* (John 13:35)

Consider also Paul's great '*Spirit-Inspired Conclusion*' to that awesome I Corinthians 13 '*Love Chapter*' ...

*"And now these three remain: FAITH, HOPE and LOVE.
But the greatest of these is LOVE."* (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Consider now thirdly what '*Pneuma*' bought out of the heart of Jesus' most beloved disciple, John ...

*"GOD is love. Whoever lives in love LIVES in God, and God in him"
(1 John 4:16)*

Finally (and most conclusively) let's add to our collection of '*considerations*' what '*Pneuma*' had the Apostle Paul declare to the Galatian Believers ...

*"The ONLY thing that counts is faith EXPRESSING itself through LOVE."
(Galatians 5:6)*

In God's Heavenly Scoring System, Love trumps everything!
Love is the Greatest of all Christ-Like Qualities ...
It is the ultimate Christian Virtue for a Follower of Christ to possess.

This fact 'Pneuma' knows well. This 'Christ-Like Love 'Pneuma' is committed to producing in the lives of all those he 'companions.'

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:1 ...

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

If 'Pneuma' had written a verse from His own perspective, he might have said something like this ...

"If I fail to produce genuine 'agape' love in these whom I companion, then my time with them has been wasted, for love is the sole dynamic that gives rise to the life that truly blesses the Father."

And in light of that understanding of 'Pneuma's' perspective, we affirm ...

TODAY'S SECOND KEY CONCEPT ...

2. LOVE IS THE FIRST AND ULTIMATE FRUIT PRODUCED BY 'PNEUMA.'

"Now the Fruit of the Spirit is LOVE ..."
(Galatians 5:22)

It was not by accident – it was certainly not just by alphabetical order that 'Pneuma' had the Apostle Paul list love ('agape') first in this verse.

Consider the perspective given in this statement 'Pneuma' inspired the Apostle John to make on the subject ...

"In this way (living in God and God living in us), Love is made COMPLETE (expresses itself completely) AMONG us."
(1 John 4:17)

And now we come to the heart of the matter ... the discussion of the Fruit of the Spirit and the way that it (singular) expresses itself in our lives ...

TODAY'S THIRD KEY CONCEPT ...

3. LOVE (the singular 'fruit') COMES IN EIGHT DELICIOUS FLAVORS

Here's a simple and most common earthly illustration ...

Think of an '*apple*' ... What kind of an '*apple*' are you thinking of?

Someone might say what do you mean ... An Apple is an Apple, isn't it?

But like the great detective, '*Clouseau*' in the movie '*The Pink Panther*'

I would say ...

'Ah, but that is where you are wrong' ... An Apple is not an Apple.'

There are Red Delicious and Yellow Delicious, there are Macintosh and Pippins, there are Fujis and Granny Smiths – Winesap and Jonathans – each with its own flavor and texture and best use.

In the same way '*Love is not Love*' ... '*agape- love*' as the '*Fruit of the Spirit*' produced in the Heart of the Believer comes in *Eight Delicious Flavors* – thus expressing itself completely in the Life of the Believer.

Let's look once again at the '*Fruit of the Spirit*' passage and see how it works out ... Let's see how love can be understood to be the singular motivating factor in Godly, Spiritual-Enabled Christian Living.

"Now the FRUIT of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Let's understand this passage to be an explanation of the manner in which the fullness of our faith is expressed through love and an illustration of the various ways that genuine Christian Love is expressed through our lives.

Here then are the *Eight Flavors of the Fruit of the Spirit* defined in terms of the expression of *Genuine Christian Love* ... See if this exposition strikes a chord with you ...

JOY (can be understood as) ... Love expressing itself as *DELIGHT*

A heart in which '*agape*' is found will be a heart that continually marvels and yes '*delights*' in the Goodness and Greatness of God. There is no '*grumpiness*' in the life of a '*love-filled*' believer.

PEACE (can be understood as) ... Love expressing itself as *CALMNESS*

Panic and anxiety are just '*not in the cards*' for one who has '*Love trumping everything that comes along.*'

Love keeps us in tune and in touch with the '*One who loves us and watches over us.*' We fear no evil even when we walk (as it were) through the '*Valley of the Shadow of Death.*'

PATIENCE (can be understood as) ... Love expressing itself as **ENDURANCE**

'Agape Love', being a Fruit of the Eternal Spirit of God, knows no space or time boundaries – it is not limited or determined by clock or calendar.

Love is not even aware that it is 'enduring' – it simply is 'being' and 'trusting' and 'waiting' until things 'Temporal' are caught up in things 'Eternal.'

KINDNESS (can be understood as) ... Love expressing itself as **COMPASSION**

'Agape Love' is the very thing that filled the heart of Jesus Christ and there is no phrase more expressive of his heart than this one frequently found in the Gospels ... "***And Jesus, filled with compassion.***"

A kind consideration for those in need – for troubled souls – springs naturally from a heart filled with the 'Love of Christ' – a love placed there by 'Pneuma' Himself.

GOODNESS (can be understood as) ...

Love expressing itself as **PURE-HEARTEDNESS**

'Agape Love' knows nothing of 'deceit' or 'deception' – Agape Love creates openness and honesty – Agape Love tends to regard all things in the best possible light and believe the best about all people. As it was said of Jesus so is it said of one who possess His Love, '*There is no guile in him.*'

FAITHFULNESS (can be understood as) ...

Love expressing itself as **STEADFASTNESS**

In the midst of 1 Corinthians 12 – that great love chapter – we read these words ... "***Love never fails***" (v. 8) Love never deserts, love never stops loving its object, love is sure and certain, love can be absolutely 'counted on' by those in its embrace. This very steadfast nature of the Almighty is the inspiration for those in whom 'Pneuma' has successfully produced the 'Fruit of Love.'

GENTLENESS (can be understood as) ...

Love expressing itself as **HUMBLE-HEARTEDNESS**

'Agape Love' has no place for 'haughtiness' – 'Agape Love' is so focused upon the object of its love that even a sense of 'Self' is placed in the background. All that matters is the 'one' upon whom this love is focused. And such 'loving focus' expresses itself in gentle, tender ways.

And now lastly ...

SELF-CONTROL (can be understood as) ... Love expressing itself as **RESTRAINT**

'Agape Love' does not allow us (even when our intentions are good) to just 'run anyone over' ... Love causes us to '*hold our tongue*' and to '*hang on to our opinions*' and to even 'save our best solutions' until '*the time is right*' – until '*Pneuma*' himself stirs us to action.

'Agape Love' does not allow us to ever get '*out of control*' ...
'Agape Love' does not allow us to '*Burn Bridges*.'

'Agape Love' brings about a life lived '*under control*' and thus keeps us from ever being '*thrown out of the game*' because of some '*personal foul*.'

So ... without a doubt ...

LOVE is the ultimate and animating '*Fruit of the Holy Spirit*.'

LOVE is the thing that '*Pneuma*' most wants to produce in our lives for He knows that once produced, **LOVE** will '*Express itself*' in an incredible number of God-Pleasing, Ministry-Enhancing, Soul-Satisfying ways!

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O '*Pneuma*,' Most Holy Spirit of God, **PRODUCE** within me the **FRUIT** of genuine **LOVE** that I might truly experience life's '*Most Excellent Way*.'

Enable me to express that Love **FRUITFULLY** in all the circumstances of my life as I **WALK** in Step with YOU and am **FILLED** by YOU."

Final Thot ...

Genuine Christian Love is a '*Many-FLAVORED Thing*' ...
There's an appropriate 'FLAVOR' for every life situation.

It's one more way for us to 'TASTE and See that the Lord is GOOD.'

“WALKING WITH ‘PNEUMA’ – The Three Big ‘DON'TS’”

(Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19)

Intro ... I don't know when I have been so '*caught up*' in a series of messages. This "*Walking with 'Pneuma' Series*" has absolute '*captured*' my mind and heart.

Never before have I been quite so aware of the Personal Presence of the Holy Spirit in my life – not manifested in great '*signs and wonders*' but in a multitude of daily *directions* and *corrections*.

I've come to understand and value in a fuller way than ever before that '*Pneuma*' – the Most Holy Spirit of the Almighty God – is my *DAILY COMPANION*. He is the ONE who is with me 24/7, just like Jesus was with the Original Twelve so many years ago.

And what I have learned over these past weeks about this *Daily Companion* is that He doesn't just '*Keep me company*' ...

He is my *DIVINE IMPLEMENTER* ... He causes to happen all that the Father and the Son desire to have happen in my life and in the world.

He is my *DIVINE TESTIFIER* ... He clearly and compellingly witnesses to the Truth concerning the Son of God and my relationship to my Heavenly Father.

He is my *DIVINE PROSPERITY-PRODUCER* ... He walks me in the direction of Prosperity and Blessing ... Physically and Financially and Emotionally and most of all Spiritually.

He is my *DIVINE ILLUMINATOR* ... He opens the '*eyes of my heart*' so I can clearly see the glorious Truths of God ... He removes spiritual '*Dimness*' from my life.

He is my *DIVINE ENABLER* ... He empowers me to function as a genuine '*Child of God*' and '*Follower of Christ*' in this fallen, broken, sin-filled world.

He is my *DIVINE PRAYER-ENHANCER* ... He '*re-formats*' my prayers so that all of them are '*appropriately phrased*' and '*effectively raised*.'

He is my **DIVINE BAPTIZER** ... He has immersed me into the glorious 'Body of Christ' and He is continually washing a 'new life' into me even as He washes the 'old life' out of me.

He is my **DIVINE GIFT-GIVER** ... He 'graces me' for 'service' whenever and wherever such 'service' is needed. I can rely upon Him completely.

He is my **DIVINE FRUIT-PRODUCER** ... He plants genuine 'Agape Love' in my heart which expresses itself in every conceivable Christian Virtue. He causes me to be a 'blessing' wherever I am.

These are **nine** incredible **purposes** and **passions** with which 'Pneuma' – the Most Holy Spirit of God – enters into the lives of all 'Born-Again Children of God.'

There is **one more** that is yet to be mentioned ... it's the most awesome of all. However, it will require a great deal of 'Pneumatic involvement' if we are to fully accept it. It will lead us into the next series of messages.

But before we turn our attention to this most 'Awesome of all Tasks' assigned to the Spirit of God as He enters our lives, I want to share with you (and me) this morning a most 'Strategic Consideration.'

This is something that, if we would 'Keep in Step with Pneuma' and experience the fullness of the life he came to provide, we **must** take into account.

Here's the way I phrased it in ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

There is a potentially '**FATAL FLAW**' – a potential 'Monkey Wrench in the Machinery' – as 'Pneuma' seeks to carry out His **WORK** in our lives.

That **FLAW** is the **BELIEVER**.
The **BELIEVER** can **FRUSTRATE** the entire **PROCESS!**

That's a scary admission – we might consider that to be a tremendous oversight on the Lord's part.

However, the Holy Spirit, as our *Illuminator*, has not left us in the dark about it. He has told us what things can 'frustrate the process' and urges us to avoid those things at all cost.

Therefore, it's imperative that we ourselves become aware of just how it is that we can and frequently do 'frustrate that process' because at this point (knowing what we have come to know and experiencing what I trust all of us are increasingly experiencing) we don't want this process to be in any way frustrated, do we?

That's why I've called this message this morning:

"THE THREE BIG DON'TS."

Three incredibly important things that we must seek to 'NEVER DO' in our relationship with '*Pneuma*' – Our Earthly Companion.

They are all listed and exemplified in the Scripture – not extensively but sufficiently. Let's look at them one by one ...

1. DON'T RESIST HIM ...

- RESISTING leads to a loss of BLESSING -

Wherever He was LEADING you don't GET to GO!
Whatever He was PLANNING you don't GET to EXPERIENCE.

Consider with me these ...

KEY SCRIPTURES ...

*"You are just like your fathers: You always RESIST the Holy Spirit."
(Acts 7:51)*

That's what Stephen said to the Jewish authorities when he was called before them. He pointed out that the Jews had a long history of 'Resisting the Leading of the Lord' ...

Since the Day of Pentecost had already come, Stephen boldly proclaimed that it was '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit Himself - that their fathers had resisted – just like it was '*Pneuma*' that those leaders were resisting in Stephen's day.

Stephen was saying that this had *always been* the nation's '*Fatal Flaw*' ... God would speak, God would lead and they would resist. Their resistance in Stephen's day (and still today) concerned their failure to receive the Spirit's testimony concerning Jesus Christ – the Son of God - sent from the Father to provide salvation for sin.

*"Today if you hear His (Pneuma's) voice,
Do not **HARDEN** your hearts."
(Hebrews 3: 8 & 15; 4:7)*

Here the writer of the Book written specifically to the Hebrews – the Jews of the First Century and every Century since – appeals to the current generation of Jews to not '*harden their hearts*' - to not '*resist the leading of the Spirit*' as their fathers continually did in the days of their wilderness wanderings.

Resisting happens when we hear '*Pneuma's voice*' speaking to us through the Scripture – through a message – through an impression deep within us and we '*stiffen our back against it*.'

We dislike the implications of what is said and so we either adopt an alternative course of action or we simply '*drag our feet*' in obeying it.

Almost every time ... *Resistance* leads to actually *Disobedience*.

Now that observation leads us to consider the *second* great '*DON'T*' ...

2. DON'T GRIEVE HIM ...

- *GRIEVING* leads to disciplinary *ACTION* –

SIN is what brings him to *GRIEF*.

Our *SIN* changes His *AGENDA* – He must now *ADDRESS* our *ISSUES*.

Consider now with me this set of ...

KEY SCRIPTURES ...

*"Do not **GRIEVE** the Holy Spirit ..."*
(Ephesians 4:30)

In the process of telling the Believers in Ephesus not to '*Grieve the Holy Spirit,*' the Apostle Paul is informing them that they can (in fact) bring grief/sorrow to Him.

'*Pneuma*' is not a mere '*impersonal, objective by-stander in their life*' ... '*Pneuma*' like the Father Himself and like Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior is personally and passionately concerned with the outcomes of their lives.

And when those outcomes are sinful, '*Pneuma*' as their Divine Companion '*grieves*' over them.

*"The Lord was **GRIEVED** greatly that he had made man on the earth (and sent the flood)"*
(Genesis 6:6)

That verse is preceded by this one ...

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on earth had become" ...

Man's sin brought ***grief*** and that grief expressed itself in Disciplinary Action. It still does today.

*"How often they rebelled against him in the desert and **GRIEVED** him in the wastelands."*
(Psalms 78:40)

God's entire agenda changed when the people resisted His Direction and refused to enter the Promise Land. The people who had experienced the '*Miracles of the Exodus*' were intended to experience the further '*Miracles of the Possession of the Land*' but instead (due to their 'grief-causing resistance') all they experienced were 40 years of '*Discipline in the Desert.*'

There are believers today who are living under the discipline of the God they have resisted and thus brought to grief. When a Christian resists the Spirit and steps into sin, 'Pneuma's' entire agenda changes.

Top priority becomes '*Returning this believer to the path of obedience and blessing*' ... Much might be involved. Discipline can take many forms.

But know this ... that discipline is administered by ONE who cheeks are '*stained with tears.*'

Don't Resist the Spirit's Leading in your life and lose His Blessing
Don't Grieve the Spirit by the committing of willful sin.

This is indeed a downward path ...
Here's the final terrible possibility on that path.

We can actually 'Quench the Spirit' ...
We can actually 'Put Out The Fire' of His purpose and passion within us.

Obviously then, it's imperative that we ...

3. DON'T QUENCH HIM

- **QUENCHING** ('Putting out His Fire') leads to **AIMLESS WANDERING**

-

'Quenching' leaves us in the **DARK** and in the **COLD**.

Consider now this final set of ...

KEY SCRIPTURES ...

"Do not PUT OUT (quench) the Spirit's FIRE"

(1 Thessalonians 5:19)

Well there it is ... There's no doubt that the deed can be done. A believer can so completely resist the leading of the Holy Spirit and can so rebel under his discipline that the Spirit's voice and influence is effectively squelched.

The Fire of His Presence and Power and Passion for Godliness is snuffed out and only a coldness of heart and life remains.

Our life becomes cold and His Heart remains broken. This is the end of a tragic journey and there is no guarantee that such a person ever finds the fire re-kindled.

*"God gave them OVER to a depraved MIND"
(Romans 1:28)*

This, I suggest, is why the '*Absence of Fire*' leaves one in the dark and there are believers who have found themselves in some pretty dark places.

This is the result of '*Silencing the Spirit*' ... this is the result of God allowing the resistant, rebellious believer to chart his own course.

Darkness and Coldness ...that's the life condition of a '*Child of God*' who has '*Quenched the Holy Spirit*' in his life. In many ways it's worse to be such a person than to be one who has never heard the '*Gospel*' at all.

Is it any wonder that the same Scripture that highlights for us the marvelous gift that the Holy Spirit is in the life of a '*Born-Again Child of God*' would warn us so directly ...

Don't *Resist* Him – Don't *Grieve* Him – Don't *Quench* Him?

Surely anyone who has genuinely '*Tasted of this Holy Spirit Life*' ... Surely anyone who has even briefly experienced '*Walking with Pneuma*' would certainly honestly and urgently raise ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

How can we (I) make SURE we (I) don't do the 'DON'TS'?

ANSWER: By making sure that we (I) DO the 'DO's'!

THREE CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ITEMS ON THE 'DO LIST' ...

1. DO LISTEN FOR HIS VOICE

He never SHOUTS but He can be CLEARLY HEARD.

Long years ago 'pneuma' spoke these words to the saints in Old Testament Days ...

*'Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."
(Isaiah 30:21)*

Jesus put it this way ...

*"My sheep hear my voice and follow me"
(John 10:27)*

In this day and age – Jesus' voice comes through '*Pneuma*.'

Do Listen for His Voice every time you open the Scripture, every time you hear a message, every time you find yourself reflecting upon your life, every minute you are awake – wherever you are, whatever you do.

2. DO WATCH FOR 'RED FLAGS'

Spirit-Grieving **SIN** doesn't just 'pop up' ... there are '**WARNING SIGNS**.'

Peter tells us that we should ...

*'Be alert, because our enemy prowls around like a lion seeking someone to devour' –
(1 Peter 5:8)*

We must **listen for His roar**.

This past week in our Cell Groups we sought to suggest '***Red Flags***' with regard to the '***Fruit of the Spirit Passage***' we examined last week.

It's much easier to spot '*anxiety*' or '*fretfulness*' or even '*feelings of panic*' in our lives than it is to identify and verify the presence of '*Peace*.'

Our point is that these things should be like bright '***Red Flags***' announcing

'Danger – You are not currently walking in Step with the Spirit!'

All '*Spirit-Grieving Sin*' comes with its own Red Flag.
Watch for it and respond appropriately.

Do **Listen** for His Voice – Do **Watch** for '***Red Flags***'

Thirdly and finally and perhaps most protective of all ...

3. DO WARM YOURSELF AT HIS FLAME

We will never 'QUENCH' Him as long as we are ENJOYING Him.

In addition to telling the Galatians that they should

'Keep in Step with the Spirit' (Galatians 5:25)

Paul told the Ephesians that they should be

'Filled with the Spirit.' (Ephesians 5:18)

"Filled with the Spirit" could be understood to mean

'Completely Set on Fire by Him' ...

Enflamed – Enthralled – Enthused by the reality of
'Pneuma's' Daily Companionship in your life!

In such a state, one does not even 'Resist' let alone 'Grieve' or 'Quench' the Holy Spirit of God with whom we have been 'Sealed for the Day of Redemption.' In such a state, we 'Embrace Him' in a spiritual bear-hug.

Surely now at this point we are ready for ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – do 'HAVE Your WAY' in me.
SENSITIZE me to the things that would 'Grieve' or 'Quench' you.
The LAST thing I ever want to do is 'Resist' you. I surrender my WILL
completely to you as I WALK in step with you and am FILLED by you."

Here then is Today's Final That ...

Final That ...

'Pneuma delights in turning 'FATAL Flaws' into 'FINISHED Products.'
Don't GET in His WAY – WALK with Him.

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' The Divine Glory-Generator"

(2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 1:27-28; John 17:1, 22)

Intro ... Today we come to the message that I have been waiting all series to preach! It's the message that reveals the ultimate purpose for which 'Pneuma' has been placed in our lives – His Ultimate Objective.

Everything that we have discussed previously is in preparation for what we discuss today. We would not be ready to hear today's message if we had not heard all the others and we might still find today's message difficult to accept for it runs contrary to much that is taught today.

It might well challenge us to view our earthly life differently than the way we have viewed it in the past. In this message we will consider some most familiar verses in some unfamiliar ways. Our minds and hearts will need to be open to the Spirit's Voice. Are you ready for that?

Everything that we will discuss today arises from **Today's Key Scripture** ... the one that I have saved for this message. It's one that I'm sure you have heard or read many times.

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ...

*"And we ... are being **TRANSFORMED** into his **LIKENESS** with ever-increasing **GLORY**, which comes from the **LORD**, who is the Spirit."*

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Here's the larger text which leads up to this Key Scripture ...

" ... You are a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. (No indeed) ... We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

(2 Corinthians 3:3-18 selected)

The background event that the Apostle Paul uses to illustrate his point here was Moses' 40-day experience on Mt. Sinai when he met the Almighty face to face and received the Ten Commandments.

When Moses descended the mountain, the Scripture tells us that his face was glowing with such radiance that the people could not look directly at him. He was forced to cover his face with a heavy veil.

Paul uses this event to illustrate the Glorious Ministry of the Holy Spirit as He fully possesses born-again believers. He produces an effect that is visible and undeniable.

He is ... as the title of this message declares ...

"Our Divine Glory-Generator."

Now having said that by way of introduction, let me walk us through ***Today's Key Scripture*** and several others as well.

FOUR INCREDIBLE TRUTHS and ***THREE VITAL IMPERATIVES*** will (hopefully) capture our attention this morning.

FOUR INCREDIBLE TRUTHS Jump Out Of This Passage ...

TRUTH ONE:

'Pneuma' comes into our lives with the ***AUTHORITY*** of Jesus Christ. He is more than just our ***COMPANION*** – He is our ***LORD*** and ***MASTER!***

In ***Today's Key Scripture*** we find this phrase ...

"From the Lord who is the Spirit."

This is a most important identification that the Apostle Paul makes here.

'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit – is not the *'Junior member of the Trinity.'*

He is not the one who has been sent to *'baby-sit'* the believer through the ups and downs of life. He comes into our lives with the full *'Authority'* of the Almighty. When he speaks to us ***it is the same*** as when God spoke to Moses on the mountain. When he speaks to us – when he reveals truth to us – ***it is the same*** as when Jesus Himself spoke to His Disciples.

TRUTH TWO:

'Pneuma' comes into our lives determined to **TRANSFORM** us.
If we are not being **CHANGED**, we are not **WALKING** with Him!

In *Today's Key Scripture* we also find this phrase...

"We ... are being transformed ..."

Notice the direct statement here – We 'are' being transformed.
The point is that we cannot '*walk with Pneuma*' without being changed
and it's not just a little change that is referred to here.

It's not that all of a sudden we start '*going to church*' or we start
'*learning some Christian vocabulary*' or that we even start
'*giving some of our money*.'

It's bigger than that – more dramatic than that.

The Greek word '*Pneuma*' chose here to describe this life transformation
is the word '*metamorphomai*.' It's the word that is used in Mark chapter
9 verse 2 where it is reported that on the Mount of Transfiguration ...

"Jesus was 'transfigured' (metamorphomai) before them."

All His Divine Glory was revealed before the three who were with him.
John, who was one of those three, would later write in the Gospel
that bears his name (John 1:14) ...

*'And we beheld His Glory, the glory of the One and Only,
who came from the Father full of Grace and Truth.'*

One commentator has suggested that to be transfigured is to be literally
'*turned inside out*' so that all that is within is made obvious.

This Greek word '*Metamorphomai*' is the word from which we get our
English word '*metamorphosis*' which is used to describe the process by
which a not so attractive caterpillar becomes a beautiful butterfly.
He retreats inside that cocoon and in secret is transformed.

The Apostle Paul used the same word in his letter to the Roman Church
when he wrote these words to them (Romans 12:2) ...

"Be 'transformed' (metamorphomai) by the renewing of your minds"

Like the butterfly, believers are going through a process but rather than it happening in secret, inside some kind of spiritual cocoon, our transformation – our metamorphosis – happens right out in the open where all can see.

Those who know us best are the ones who are most aware that we are changing – really changing!

But what are we changing into?

TRUTH THREE:

'Pneuma' comes into our lives determined to *'transform us'* into the **LIKENESS** – the **CHARACTER** and **QUALITY** – of **CHRIST** Himself. The **LONGER** we walk with *'Pneuma'* the more like Jesus we will **BE!**

Again, **Today's Key Scripture** provides a key phrase ...

"We are being transformed into His likeness (His Image) ..."

His 'Likeness' - His 'image' – an undeniable 'identification.'

Paul used the same word here that Jesus used his encounter with the Pharisees and the Herodians when they asked him about the appropriateness of *'paying taxes to Caesar'* (Mark 12:16) ...

"Whose image is this?" he asked them.

Their obvious and immediate answer was ... "Caesar's"

They could have added (and maybe under their breath they did add) ...

"Any idiot knows that."

In the same way, when people run into a properly *'transformed'* Christian, they should quickly say ...

"Yep, there's no doubt about it; that's a Follower of Christ alright."

Here's how Paul explained it in his letter to the Romans (Romans 8:29) ... He points out to them that the ultimate plan of God in salvation is for every born-again believer ...

"To be conformed to the image of His Son."

(A glorious new humanity)

Someday I would love to do a series of message on the nature of that '*Glorious New Humanity*' demonstrated by the Lord Jesus as he walked upon this earth.

That's the very kind of '*Glorious New Humanity*' that you and I are called upon to live – a humanity that rises above all the ordinary human distinctions.

It rises above race and gender and economic status and any other category by which we humans sub-divide ourselves. I think that I would call such a series "*Growing In Glory*" – perhaps more provocatively "*Achieving Perfect Humanity*."

But for today let's just say that that's 'Pneuma's goal – to transform us into the very life and character of Jesus Christ – the most perfect man who ever walked upon this earth.

TRUTH FOUR:

'Pneuma' comes into our lives determined to **PRODUCE** in us something truly **GLORIOUS**.
Every Believer is **GLORY-BOUND!**

This is the result of the **LIFE** of **CHRIST** being re-produced in us!

Here's the final phrase we take from *Today's Key Scripture* ...

"With ever-increasing glory"

"We are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory."

Now there's the same word that John used to describe what he and James and Peter saw on the Mountain ...

*'We beheld His 'Glory' – **His Divine Radiance**.*

Every believer under 'Pneuma's' care is '*Glory Bound*' and by that phrase I don't mean '*Heaven Bound*.' I mean bound for a '*Glory-Filled Life*' here on this earth- a life just like Jesus lived. 'Pneuma' comes into our lives at our Spiritual Birth determined to produce just such a life in us.

Now knowing that fact might help us understand this familiar phrase in a new and different way.

The Apostle Paul dropped a theological bombshell on the Colossian Believers when he told them (Colossians 1:27) that the richest of all the mysteries of God was this ...

"Christ in you the hope of glory."

This is not the hope that someday we will be '*in glory*' but that through Christ and the work of His Spirit within us we have the hope of '*Becoming Glorious*' ... Becoming someone that truly has been '*Transformed into His Glorious Image*.'

Paul supports that understanding of this passage by adding this explanation of his ministry in the very next verse (Colossians 1:28) ...

He says that the reason he labored so earnestly among them is ...

*"That we may present everyone perfect
(truly glorious) in Christ"*

Now that's *Pneuma's* ultimate objective – that's why he has been sent to '*companion us*' – to walk with us through every moment of our earthly life.

He has come into our lives to transform us little by little – degree by degree – into something truly '*glorious*' – into something so like Christ that the identification of us with Him cannot be missed by anyone!

That is the '*Plan of God for Man*' – that Jesus Christ His Son become the '*Firstborn among many brothers*' (Romans 8:29) ... The '*First-Born*' of many '*Born-Again, Spirit-Filled, Spirit-Transformed, Increasingly-Glorious Children of God*.'

Those then are the Four Incredible Truths with which we conclude this series of messages ... What should they mean for us now that we understand them? How should we live knowing what we now know?

Consider with me three **VITAL IMPERATIVES** for the Glory-Bound Believer:

IMPERATIVE ONE:

RECOGNIZE that ***GLORY*** is your ***EARTHLY*** destination.
- A Life that accurately reveals the ***GLORY*** of ***CHRIST*** in you –
That's the ***DIRECTION*** '*Pneuma*' is '***WALKING*** you.'

Everything that '*Pneuma*' does in our lives is done to that end. He is like the Hollywood Make-Up master who is able to transform the ordinary into something extraordinary – even something '*breathtakingly beautiful*.'

Say to yourself (quietly, of course) ... *Pneuma's* plan is to make me '*breathtakingly beautiful*' - '*dashingly handsome*'... spiritually speaking!

Every word that He speaks to our hearts, every circumstance into which He directs our feet is for the purpose of enhancing the beauty of Christ's Bride – of increasing the intensity of the Glory that shows on our face.

It's imperative that we recognize that '*Glory*' ... the '*Likeness of Christ*' ... is our earthly destination ... that's the direction that '*Pneuma*' walks us.

Here now is ***Imperative Two*** ... It's one that you probably will have to take a deep breath and ponder for a moment before you act upon it ...

IMPERATIVE TWO:
REQUEST your Heavenly Father to ***GLORIFY*** you.
This is His ***PLAN*** for you – connect yourself to it – ***EMBRACE*** it.

Now the only way that we are going to be able to do this is to see this in '*spiritual terms*' not in '*fleshy terms*' ... We are not asking God to make us '*breathtakingly beautiful*' or '*dashingly handsome*' physically speaking.

We are not asking God to make us '*filthy rich*' or give us '*celebrity status*' or provide us with '*unassailable health*' or any other such thing.

What we are going to do is '*Follow in the Footsteps of our Savior*' who prayed (John 17:1) ...

*"Father,
Glorify your son that your son may glorify you."*

Our prayer will take the form ...

'Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit transform me into the very image of your Son, Jesus. Bring His Glory into my life that I in turn might bring glory to you on this earth.'

The appropriateness of that prayer is demonstrated by this comment that Jesus made regarding His own specially chosen Disciples (John 17:22) ...

"I have given them the glory that you have given me."

What Jesus personally did for His Disciples,
'*Pneuma*' now would do for us.

Request of the Father that the process be accomplished in your life.
In other words, tell the Father that you are in agreement with
His Plan for your life!

And doing that brings us to the *Third* and *Final Imperative* that we
'*Glory-Bound Believers*' must act upon ...

IMPERATIVE THREE:

RELINQUISH the control of your life to '*Pneuma*.'
Consider Him to be the **SPIRIT** of your Lord and Master.
He is the one who causes the **GLORY** of **CHRIST**
to shine in our lives.

This is a daily action of one who would '*Walk with 'Pneuma*.'
It's an action that I believe can be expressed in and built upon ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

*"O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – WALK me in the direction
of true earthly GLORY by conforming me more and more
to the image of my Savior, Jesus.*

Cause my life to SHINE with the GLORY of His Grace and Goodness.

*I YIELD complete control of my life to you
as I WALK in step with you and am FILLED by you.*

Final Thot ...

Nothing on earth is as **GLORIOUS** as a **SPIRIT-FILLED**,
SPIRIT-CONTROLLED Follower of Jesus Christ!

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – Part One Wrap-Up"

(Psalm 96:9; John 4:23; Job 22:21; John 10:27; 1 John 5:3; John 15:10)

Intro ...

SURPRISE – SURPRISE

'Pneuma' has intervened in my life!

I began last Sunday's message by saying ...

"This is the message that I have waited all series to preach for it reveals the ultimate purpose for which 'Pneuma' has been sent into our lives."

I had planned to begin this week's message by saying in reverse fashion ...

"This is the message that I have dreaded all series to preach for it means that this marvelous adventure – this 'Walk With Pneuma' Series is over. This is our wrap-up message."

And yet here we are and I am not going to start this message with that statement for it has been made clear to me that what we are *'Wrapping Up'* today is merely *"Walking With Pneuma – Part One."*

There is more to be said – more for us to evaluate and consider.

Next week, we will transition into ...

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' – Part Two."

However, here's what I would have us focus our attention upon this morning. Here's what we are *'Wrapping Up'* today ...

<p><i>"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – Part One"</i> <i>(<u>UNDERSTANDING</u> 'Pneuma's Role In My <u>LIFE</u>)</i></p>

And what a role it is!

These things concerning the role that *'Pneuma'* plays in our lives are things that we need to keep ever clear in our minds and hearts for these are things that the enemy of our souls seeks to make fuzzy and cloudy. These are things that the Church of Jesus Christ has become confused about and sometimes even purposefully set aside.

These are things that too often get relegated to (buried in even) a paragraph in the Church's Doctrinal Statement – affirmed in keeping with Orthodox Christian Faith but far too controversial for day to day embracing.

And as a result, far too many Christians, whether they know it or not, are walking through life with no sense of God's Presence with them.

They rely upon a doctrinal understanding of things and they try to imagine Jesus walking with them, but it just never seems to be anything like what the Disciples experienced.

When they think of the Holy Spirit they think of Him more as a '*Power for Great Deeds*' than as a '*Person of Great Worth*.'

That's why this series has '*so powerfully impacted so many of us*' ...

We have discovered and embraced the clear Biblical Teaching concerning the various *roles* that '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit of God – plays in our lives.

Here are the ones that we have identified:

He is our **DAILY COMPANION** ... He is the One who is with us 24/7 just like Jesus was with the Original Twelve Disciples so many years ago.

He is our **DIVINE IMPLEMENTER** ... He causes to happen all that the Father and the Son desire to have happen in our lives and in the world.

He is our **DIVINE TESTIFIER** ... He clearly and compellingly witnesses to the Truth concerning the Son of God and our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

He is our **DIVINE PROSPERITY-PRODUCER** ... He walks us in the direction of Prosperity and Blessing - Physically and Financially and Emotionally and most of all Spiritually.

He is our **DIVINE ILLUMINATOR** ... He opens the '*eyes of our hearts*' so we can clearly see the glorious Truths of God.
He removes spiritual '*Dimness*' from our lives.

He is our **DIVINE ENABLER** ... He empowers us to function as genuine '*Children of God*' and '*Followers of Christ*' in this fallen, broken, sin-filled world.

He is our **DIVINE PRAYER-ENHANCER** ... He 're-formats' our prayers so that all of them are 'appropriately phrased' and 'effectively raised.'

He is our **DIVINE BAPTIZER** ... He has immersed us into the glorious 'Body of Christ' and He is continually washing a 'new life' into us even as He washes the 'old life' out of us.

He is our **DIVINE GIFT-GIVER** ... He 'graces us' for 'service' whenever and wherever such 'service' is needed. We can rely upon Him completely.

He is our **DIVINE FRUIT-PRODUCER** ... He plants genuine 'Agape Love' in our hearts which expresses itself in every conceivable Christian Virtue. He causes us to be a 'blessing' wherever we are.

He is our **DIVINE GLORY-GENERATOR** ... He generates 'Glory' in us as He transforms us into the likeness of Christ. He re-creates in us the very nature of Jesus, the most perfect man who ever lived. He is engaged in a Ministry of Transformation and our lives are changing into something increasingly glorious.

That's 'Pneuma's' role and what a role it is!

All that Our Heavenly Father desires to have accomplished in our lives – All that Jesus Christ our Exalted Lord and Savior is making possible for our lives – 'Pneuma' has been sent into our lives to actually make happen.

Just like Jesus was sent to earth with a specific assignment – "To give His Life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45) – so 'Pneuma' was sent to earth with an equally specific assignment – "To prepare the Bride of Christ" for Her Savior!

'Pneuma' is more than capable of carrying out this task – He has every Divine Resource at His disposal – He knows exactly what it is that needs to be done to prepare us for that glorious moment when we enter into Christ's Presence.

But as I mentioned several weeks ago – there is a potentially fatal flaw in that marvelous plan – something that can bring the whole process to a 'screeching halt.'

That 'potentially fatal flaw' in the Plan of God and in the earthly ministry of the Spirit of God is the **believer** himself.

The Scripture is well aware of the ability (and the tendency) that the believer possesses to do things that '*gum up the works*' ...

It's been that way since the Garden of Eden.
And so, the Scriptures tell us ...

***DON'T RESIST THE SPIRIT ... DON'T GRIEVE THE SPIRIT ...
DON'T QUENCH THE SPIRIT.***

Those are the '***BIG THREE DON'TS***' of the Christian Life we touched on.
Each of us is capable of doing all three!

In that same message, we identified '***THREE BIG DO's***'
of the Christian Life.

***DO LISTEN FOR HIS VOICE ... DO WATCH FOR 'RED FLAGS' ...
DO WARM YOURSELF AT HIS FLAME.***

These, we born-again people are capable of as well.

And so ... Reminding myself of that message caused me to realize
that there is more that needs to be said here.

There's more that needs to be explained here.
There's a bit more '*nitty-gritty*' that most likely
needs to be dealt with here.

And thus, I came to the conclusion that they must be a ...

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – Part Two"

(UNDERSTANDING My Role In 'Pneuma's MINISTRY Of Transformation)

The point is that each of us has a tremendously important role to play in
the *Plan of God* to honor His Son, Jesus, as the '*Firstborn Of Many Brothers*'
(*Romans 8:29*).

So that's what we will be discussing together over the next several weeks.

Today, though, I want us to take one more insightful look at the ONE sent
to us from the Father and the Son to '*Walk Us Triumphantly All The Way
Home.*'

Three Things I would share with you regarding '*Pneuma*' Himself. These are things that sprang into my mind as I was reflecting upon Him this past week.

Hopefully these are things that will make him even more 'personal' to you. I know that they have done that for me.

THREE PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS ...

#1. WORSHIP is the air '*Pneuma*' BREATHES

"True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth"
(John 4:23)

"Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness"
(Psalm 96:9)

That first passage is what Jesus said to the '*Woman at the Well*' in Samaria. He went on to say that the Father is actively '*seeking*' such worshippers.

The second passage from the Shepherd King, David, reminds us that the One we worship is the Holy One Himself.

Human Beings were designed from the very beginning with a '*worship mechanism*' within them. Adam and Eve easily and eagerly recognized the awesome worth of their Creator and rejoiced in their relationship with Him. All the heavenly hosts were created similarly. How does one not '*worship*' – adore and honor – the Almighty?

When we take '*Pneuma*' with us into moments of true worship – moments of praise and celebration of the Goodness and Greatness of God – He fills His lungs as it were with the '*atmosphere*' of heaven.

Worship honors Him and places Him at the very center of our being. His Holy Nature is affirmed as is our commitment to Holy (Godly) Living. Nothing can energize '*Pneuma*' more than genuine worship.

Here's a **second conclusion** that I have drawn ...

#2. SURRENDER is the food upon which '*Pneuma*' FEEDS

Long years ago, back near the dawn of time, the ancient one, the patriarch Job wrote ...

*"Submit to God and be at peace with him;
in this way prosperity will come to you."
(Job 22:21)*

In more recent days, Biblically speaking, Jesus Himself said ...

*"My sheep listen to my voice ..."
(John 10:27)*

That which originally came naturally to man (submission and surrender to the Will and Ways of the Almighty) has now (due to the entrance of sin into the world) become a matter of choice.

Worshippers of God, though, make that choice and thus add to the blessings that '*Pneuma*' enjoys in their lives.

Not only do they worship but the genuineness of their worship is seen in the willing surrender of their lives to the 'Call of Christ' upon them.

They confess Him not only as their 'Savior' but also and even more importantly as their '**Lord.**' They listen '**for**' and '**to**' His Voice.

And that very attitude '*Nourishes and Encourages*' the One who has been sent to '*Guide them into all truth*' and to '*Remind them of everything that Jesus has said.*'

Indeed, I find it exciting (and personally motivating) to say that:

***"Worship is the Air that 'Pneuma' Breathes (and that)
Surrender is the Food upon which 'Pneuma' Feeds."***

One more **Personal Conclusion** would I share with you this morning ...

#3. OBEDIENCE is the outcome '*Pneuma*' NEEDS

*"This is love for God: to obey his commands.
And his commands are not burdensome"
(1 John 5:3)*

*"If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love,
just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love."
(John 15:10)*

Here now is the heart of the matter – the final demonstration that 'Pneuma' is, in fact, having His Way in our lives:

* Our lives are changing.

* Our patterns of thinking and reacting are changing.

* The Presence of the Almighty God within us whom we worship and to whom we surrender our lives is now enabling and encouraging us to take steps of obedience in keeping with His Desires for our lives.

* And in the process of *'taking those steps of obedience'*, we resist the *'sinful cravings of the flesh'* and the *'idolatrous attitudes of the world'* and the *'insidious deceptions of the devil.'*

'Pneuma' assists us in all of that and He **rejoices** in all of that as He moves ever closer to His Goal of *'Perfecting/Glorifying the Beautiful Bride of Christ.'*

These then are the things that *'Strengthen 'Pneuma's Hand'* and *'Delight His Heart'* as He carries out His Marvelous Ministry of Transformation in our lives ...

WORSHIP and **SURRENDER** and **OBEDIENCE!**

A believer characterized by such things will not be *'resisting'* or *'grieving'* let alone *'quenching'* Him.

A believer characterized by such things will in fact be *'listening for and to Him'* and will be *'watching intently for any sin-preceding red flags'* while delightfully *'basking in the warmth of His Presence.'*

In such a believer's life, 'Pneuma' can work absolutely freely.

Let's keep those three words continually in our hearts and minds:

WORSHIP – **SURRENDER** - **OBEDIENCE**

And now before we conclude this initial *'Wrap-Up'*, allow me to remind us of those ***Three Biblical Realities*** that have popped up several times over these past few weeks ...

"Walking with the Spirit"
"Keeping in Step with the Spirit"
"Being Filled by the Spirit"

Let's consider them together this morning as both a conclusion and a kind of prelude to what's coming next.

Here then are:

THREE SUMMARY ASSERTIONS accompanied by
THREE CLARIFYING QUESTIONS.

SUMMARY ASSERTION ONE:

'WALKING with '*Pneuma*' is my **REALITY**
(My Basic life **ORIENTATION**)

CLARIFYING QUESTION ONE: WHO AM I?

I am one who is '*Companionship by the Holy Spirit of God*' ('Pneuma' Himself).
He is present with me every hour and minute of the day.

SUMMARY ASSERTION TWO:

'KEEPING in step with '*Pneuma*' is my **RESPONSIBILITY**
(A Daily **DECISION**)

CLARIFYING QUESTION TWO: WHAT IS MY TASK?

I am responsible to '*Walk with Pneuma each and every day.*'
He sets the direction and the pace of my life.
I am responsible to '*Keep myself in step with Him.*'

SUMMARY ASSERTION THREE:

'Being FILLED with '*Pneuma*' is my **RECOVERY**
(My **LIBERATION** from fallenness)

CLARIFYING QUESTION THREE: WHAT IS MY SECRET?

For a Follower of Jesus Christ, '*Pneuma*' is the answer to everything.
He brings the Personal Presence of God in my life – He provides the Power that enables me to rise above and to break free from the '*fallenness of this world.*'

Final Thought ..

'Pneuma' is the **ONE** who makes
all of Christ's Heavenly Ministries **FRUITFUL!**

He will walk Christ's Followers right into the Father's **WELL DONE!**

WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA'

"Maintaining a Spirit of Thanksgiving"

(1 Thess. 5:18-19; Eph. 5:18-19; James 1:2; Psalm 100:4-5; Romans 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:16)

Intro ... Today we officially begin "*Walking With 'Pneuma' – Part Two.*" Last week we wrapped up "*Walking With 'Pneuma' – Part One*" which I characterized this way ...

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – PART ONE" ...

UNDERSTANDING 'Pneuma's Role In My LIFE

The '*Understandings*' that we have gained over these past months have been life-changing for many of us.

'*Pneuma*' - the Holy Spirit of God – is the ONE who is with us, the ONE who has been sent from heaven by our Heavenly Father and our Exalted Lord and Savior, Jesus, to be our '*Earthly Companion.*' He walks with us and ministers on our behalf in a wondrous variety of ways.

Each of the roles He plays in our lives contributes toward our continuing '*Transformation into Christlikeness.*' He has become more real and personal than ever before, has He not?

We must never, never forget these truths that we have discovered and discussed. We must never slip back into that place where the Holy Spirit becomes once again merely a paragraph in our Doctrinal Statement or at best a '*Power upon which we rely in times of great need.*'

We have risen above that mostly academic view – '*Pneuma*' is not and must never again be viewed primarily as that '*Power upon which we rely in times of great need*' ... He must forever be understood to be the '*Divine Person with Whom we relate every single moment of the day.*'

He is our Daily Companion and the Implementer of all that God would have accomplished in our lives.

To help us bridge that gap between the academic and the immediate we have chosen to use the Greek Word by which He is identified in the New Testament as a personal name for Him.

'*Pneuma*' – '*Pneuma*' – '*Pneuma*' ... is the ONE who walks with us. We cannot walk through this life successfully and victoriously without Him.

However, it's also true that He **cannot** accomplish His Mission of Perfecting and Beautifying the Body of Christ without our cooperation.

As we pointed out a few weeks ago, we believers have the ability (and even the tendency) to mess up the plans of God with regard to our own '*Growth in Grace*' – our own personal '*Transformation into Christlikeness*.'

Recognizing that fact has necessitated the development of ...

"WALKING WITH '*Pneuma*' – PART TWO"...

UNDERSTANDING My ROLE In '*Pneuma*'s MINISTRY Of Transformation

'How To RELEASE '*Pneuma*' – God's Holy Spirit - in My Life'

Put another way:

'What we MUST do so that '*Pneuma*' CAN do what He WOULD do in our lives.'

Over the past few weeks we have touched upon all the key "**Do's**" and "**Don'ts**" when it comes to our relationship with '*Pneuma*.'

***Do "Walk with the Spirit" – Do "Keep in Step with the Spirit"–
Do "Be Filled with the Spirit."***

***Don't "Resist the Spirit" – Don't "Grieve the Spirit" -
Don't "Quench the Spirit."***

As I said we have merely '*touched on them*' because our primary purpose was to "*Understand '*Pneuma*'s Role in our lives*" – the ways He works and the things He seeks to accomplish in our lives as HE walks with us day by day.

However, now it is time to do more than just '*touch*' on these things in a general, almost academic way. What do these '*phrases*' mean ... How are they to play out in our lives?

In short, since we can '*Mess things up*' - that is, '*Frustrate 'Pneuma,*' what specifically can we do to fully '*Release 'Pneuma*'?

And believe it or not ... there are some very specific things that we can and must do if '*Pneuma*' is to be not resisted, not grieved, not quenched but in fact fully and wonderfully '*Released*' ... Set free to function productively!

Today I would share with you the very first one ...

TODAY'S KEY 'PNEUMA' - RELEASING RESPONSIBILITY ...

MAINTAIN A SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING

Give Thanks Continuously!

Consider with me ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURES ...

*"Give THANKS in all circumstances,
for this is God's WILL for you in Christ Jesus.*

Do not PUT OUT (quench) the SPIRIT'S fire."

(1 Thessalonians 5:18-19)

"Be FILLED with the Spirit (and)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always

giving THANKS to God the Father FOR everything,

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(Ephesians 5:18-20)

SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS arise from those verses (and a few others as well) ...

1. A *Spirit* (and practice) of THANKSGIVING is CONNECTED to both the 'FILLING of the Spirit' and the 'QUENCHING of the Spirit.'

Could say that '*Filling*' is DEMONSTRATED by a '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' while the POSSIBILITY of '*Quenching*' arises when such that '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' is MISSING.

The link that the Apostle Paul was inspired to point out here is undeniable.

'*Giving thanks*' (maintaining a spirit and practice of thanksgiving) is linked both to the blessing of '*Filling*' and the horror of '*Quenching*.' By consistently '*giving thanks*' we experience the one and avoid the other.

A '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' creates an environment in which '*Pneuma*' can thrive!

2. A Spirit of Thanksgiving is **EXPECTED** no matter what is happening. A believer **WALKING** with and **FILLED** with '*Pneuma*' will be **THANKFUL** **IN** everything and **FOR** everything,

"Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's Will for you ..."
"Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything ..."
(1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20)

And let's add this one from James, the Lord's earthly brother ...

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers,
whenever you face trials of many kinds ..."*
(James 1:2)

This is not the '*joy*' or the '*thanksgiving*' that comes as a result of us just '*talking ourselves into a better outlook*' when difficult times arise. It's not just a '*Christian Version*' of what unbelievers do.

The truth is ... These verses are talking about a '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' (and joy) that is unfazed – unaffected – by circumstances.

These verses reflect a '*determined decision to be thankful – regardless.*' In everything and even for everything. This is a decision that '*Pneuma*' desires and actually requires as He does His work in our lives. It's a big assignment.

The ***third*** and ***final observation*** that arises from these key verses broadens out our perspective a bit ...

3. Thanksgiving is a **CORPORATE** function and an integral part of **WORSHIP**. A Spirit of Thanksgiving stirs '**SONGS** of all kinds':

"Speak to one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"

It's like our Christian Life is to be more of a Broadway '**Musical**' than an "**Edge Of Your Seat**' Cinematic Drama.

Three kinds of '**songs**' Paul identifies as part of our '**musical score**' ...

PSALMS – Songs Directed **To** God (**Prayers** set to music)

HYMNS – Songs Declaring Things **About** God (**Sermons** set to music)

SPIRITUAL SONGS – Songs Describing my Experience **With** God
(**Testimonies** set to music)

All three of these have been part of our worship this morning:

Here's something we sang directly **to** God ...

*"O Most High – You who are my stronghold;
You will not forsake the one who seeks Your face."*

Here's something we sang **about** God ...

*"Forever God is faithful; forever God is strong
Forever God is with us – forever, forever."*

Here's something we sang about our relationship **with** God ...

*"I can't remember a trial or a pain He didn't recycle to bring me gain.
All I have need of His Hand will provide. He's always been faithful to me."*

Our musical experience this morning has been consistent with '**Pneuma's Desires**' and has been intended to strengthen within us a '**Pneuma-Releasing**' Spirit of Thanksgiving.

And now let's broaden out our Biblical Framework a bit more as we come to the second set of three observations of the morning ...

4. Thanksgiving Has **ALWAYS** Been At The Top of God's **AGENDA**

Consider these directives from the Old Testament Scriptures ...

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name."*

(Psalm 100:4-5)

*"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done."*

(1 Chronicles 16:8 - found three times in OT)

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

(1 Chronicles 16:34 - found eighteen times in OT)

Here's one from the Apostle Paul written to the Thessalonian Church ...

'We ought always give thanks to God for you ... because from the beginning God chose you to be saved ... (and) He called you ... that you might share in the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

(2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

Here's a recorded response from the 24 Elders who surround the Throne of God in heaven itself ...

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty ... because You have taken your great power and begun to reign."

(Revelation 11:16)

Indeed, Thanksgiving has always been (and will always be) at the Top of God's Agenda for all His Created Beings ...

And because of that fact ...

5. Failure To Be THANKFUL Has Always Been A Serious SIN.

*"For although they knew God,
they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him ..."*

(Romans 1:21)

Isn't it amazing that along with the '*laundry list*' of sins that Paul identifies in Romans chapter one – the sins for which the ancient world fell under the severe judgments of God – He would list (almost in a kind of summation or explanation for all of their evil deeds) that they failed to '*give thanks to their Creator*.'

The absence of that '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' put them on an increasingly depraved path.

Is it any wonder that such an absence in the hearts of believers would grieve and possibly even quench '*Pneuma's Work*' in their lives?

Therefore, can there be any doubt (as our sixth and final observation of the morning puts it) that ...

**6. MAINTAINING a Spirit of THANKGIVING Is Critically IMPORTANT.
Such a 'Spirit' RELEASES 'Pneuma' in our lives.**

Think about that for a moment ...

Consider with me just what such a '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' accomplishes in our lives. **Consider** just how necessary it is to '*Pneuma's proper functioning*.'

Here are three things that occur to me.

Three reasons a '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' is critically important –
Three ways such a '*Spirit*' releases '*Pneuma*' our lives ...

Here's the **first thing** about this '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' that has occurred to me and the first reason why I believe it's so critically important for us ...

* It **AUTHENTICATES** our **RELATIONSHIP** with Him.

'He leads the way – I eagerly accompany Him.'

That's the testimony – the settled heart of one who possesses this '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' - this grateful heart.

Such a believer does not enter into the day questioningly (wondering about - perhaps even doubting everything). Such a believer does not enter into the day strategically (figuring out or even plotting out everything).

The '*Presence of this Spirit of Thanksgiving*' which stands in sharp contrast to the '*Circumstance-Based Thanksgiving of the Unbeliever*' testifies to the **Authenticity** – the **Genuineness** – of our Relationship with the Spirit of God.

'*Pneuma*' need not spend one moment of the day '*wooing us*' or '*encouraging us*' to walk with Him ... We eagerly and gratefully take our place at His Side. And as we do so we '*release Him to function freely*.'

Here's now a **second thing** about this '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*' and the second reason why it's so critically important for us ...

* It **COMMUNICATES** our complete **TRUST** in Him.

'He walked me into this for a reason – I will be grateful.'

That's also the testimony – the settled heart of one who possesses this *'Spirit of Thanksgiving'* - this grateful heart.

Not only does such a believer start the day unquestioningly and non-strategically, such a believer proceeds through the day in the same way. Nothing that comes up destroys his delight and confidence in his *'Companion.'*

Since we *'Trust Him'* and since we know that He walks us in the direction of *'Prosperity'* and *'Glory'*, we are grateful for every circumstance into which He *'walks'* us.

He has a reason and we are thankful for His Leading. Such an attitude of trust truly releases *'Pneuma'* to simply and confidently do his job!

Here's a ***third thing*** about this *'Spirit of Thanksgiving'* and the ***third reason*** why it's so critically important for us ...

* It **ILLUSTRATES** our transformation from worldly **THINKING**

'We regard on one (no thing) from a worldly point of view.'
(2 Corinthians 5:16)

'Worldly Thanksgiving' is based entirely upon earthly circumstances and man's analysis of them. Positive mental attitude sometimes comes into play here. Genuine gratitude for genuinely good stuff does too.

Once every year Americans stop on Thanksgiving Day to reflect upon the Good Things that have made this Land the place that it is.

However, that is *'Thanksgiving'* (as Paul would say) from a *'worldly point of view.'* It's genuine but it's limited ... It's not at all attributable to the *'world-freeing transformation'* that *'Pneuma'* is seeking to accomplish within us.

A genuine, ever-present *'Spirit of Thanksgiving'* is a living, breathing, flesh and blood *'Illustration'* of an inner transformation that has been accomplished by the One whose task is to do just that ... to free us from the patterns and practices of the fallen world around us.

And when we become that *'Living Illustration,'* *'Pneuma'* is released to aggressively continue his work in our lives.

Honesty would force a good number of us (no doubt) to confess:

*"I do not find myself possessing that kind of
'Circumstance - Ignoring Thanksgiving.'*

*I find that my feelings of Thanksgiving are largely based upon the
circumstances of my earthly life just like the unbelievers around me.*

*I find myself at times far less than 'thankful' ...
I confess that I am frequently fretful and even
resentful as things unfold in my life.*

Now that's not where '*Pneuma*' would want us to be and I would imagine (knowing what we know now) that that is not where we want to be ourselves.

Perhaps for the first time this morning you have been made aware of just how much importance God Himself puts upon this '*Spirit of Thanksgiving*.'

Perhaps you have been made aware of just how much is riding upon you '*maintaining*' such a '*Spirit*.'

If you have arrived at that awareness and if you have recognized the great responsibility that is laid upon you in this regard, then you are surely ready to embrace and declare ...

Today's Key Confession ...

*O 'pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to maintain
a spirit of thanksgiving within me at all times for I know that such a
spirit greatly pleases You and releases You to do Your work in my life.*

*I will 'give thanks' in all things and for all things
for I truly desire to walk with You and be filled by You!*

Now that is a confession that '*Pneuma*' can line Himself up with. That's a determination that indeed '*Pleases*' and '*Releases*' Him in our lives.

And I trust that our determination will only deepen as we reflect upon the image and the significance of Today's ...

Final Thot ...

*'Pneuma' responds to a SPIRIT of THANKSGIVING
like a Nascar Driver responds to the 'Green Flag' ...
He HITS the GAS!*

WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA'
"The Mindset of Christ – Relinquishment"
(Philippians 2:5-8)

Intro ... Today we continue our advance into "Walking with 'Pneuma' Part Two" which we began last week. You remember how we distinguished the two parts, don't you?

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – PART ONE" ...
UNDERSTANDING 'Pneuma's Role In My LIFE

And what a *'role'* it is! Eleven essential functions He performs in our lives as He seeks to transform each of us into the very *'Image'* of Jesus Christ. There will always be more understanding that we can gain concerning *'Pneuma's Role'* in our lives. We need to review these truths continually.

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – PART TWO" ...
UNDERSTANDING My Role In 'Pneuma's MINISTRY Of Transformation
'How To RELEASE 'Pneuma' – God's Holy Spirit - in My Life'

Put another way:
'What we MUST do so that 'Pneuma' CAN do what He WOULD do in our lives.'

LAST WEEK'S KEY 'PNEUMA' - RELEASING RESPONSIBILITY...

If we would *'Release Pneuma in our lives'*, we must ...

**** MAINTAIN A SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING***
Give Thanks Continually!

Last week we saw just how critically important that *'Spirit of Thanksgiving'* really is.

Now let me draw your attention to *Today's Key Scripture*. We could call it *'Paul's Advent Scripture'* – His contribution to the story of Christ's Birth.

It contains some profound insights into the character and purposes of Christ and it communicates a fundamental directive for Christian Living. It has provided material for almost endless scholarly debate. It will form our focus for the next several weeks.

Here's today's portion ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... Philippians 2:5

Three different versions:

(KJV) "Let this MIND be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS ..."

That KJV rendition gave rise to the Hymn Linda and I sang frequently when we were students at Wheaton College ...

*"May the mind of Christ my Savior live in me from day to day.
By His love and power controlling all I do and say."*

(NIV) "Your ATTITUDE should be the SAME as that of Christ Jesus."

(Phillips) "Let Christ Jesus be your EXAMPLE as to what your ATTITUDE should be."

Without a doubt, '*Pneuma*' is telling us through this directive that there is a **key** thing that we must do if He is to make the progress in our lives that He desires to make – if He is to be fully '*released*' in our lives.

Here's the way I would express ...

THIS WEEK'S KEY '*PNEUMA*' - RELEASING RESPONSIBILITY ...

If we would '*Release Pneuma in our lives*', we must ...

*** ADOPT THE MINDSET OF CHRIST –
Approach everything Christianly!**

'*Pneuma*' would surely say "*Amen*" to that ... His ultimate goal in this world is to '*transform*' every one of us into the very '*Image of Christ*.' But before He can do the '*transforming*' we must do some '*adopting*'... It assists Him greatly if we '*commit ourselves to*' the very thing that He desires to produce within us.

And so, He told the Apostle Paul to tell us that we must '*Adopt – Accept – Allow*' the very Mindset of Christ to possess us – to be the desire and focus of our lives.

And then He told the Apostle Paul to identify for the Philippian Believers (and us) some of the most critical and comprehensive aspects of that Mindset.

In this Incredible Passage (Philippians 2:5-8) Paul reveals
Four Essential Elements of Christ's Mindset...

Four Examples of what it means to '*Approach Everything in Our Lives Christianly*' - To approach life in this fallen world just like Jesus did.

Consider with me now the rest of ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... Philippians 2:5-7a (NIV amplified)

"Your attitude (that is, your mindset) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider EQUALITY with God something to be GRASPED (that is, held on to tenaciously or desperately) but made himself NOTHING (that is, emptied himself of all Divine Privilege) ..."

In that Scripture is revealed ...

ESSENTIAL ELEMENT ONE ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST CONTAINS

"A WILLINGNESS TO RELINQUISH ALL PERSONAL PRIVILEGE"
A WILLINGNESS TO BECOME NOTHING!

The '*mindset*' of Christ contains the '*willingness to relinquish*' ...

Now the circumstances of life determine whether or not such relinquishment is necessary.

In coming to earth, Jesus' '*willingness*' become evident to all the heavenly host and by the ministry of the Holy Spirit it becomes evident to anyone who will read and believe God's Word.

And so, we come to ...

TODAY'S FIRST KEY QUESTION ...

So what '*Personal Privileges*' did CHRIST relinquish when He CAME to EARTH?

Three such '*Privileges*' I would share with you this morning.
Think deeply about them as I do ...
Allow '*Pneuma*' to take you further than I can ...

Before coming to earth, the Eternal Son of God, who would be given the earthly name 'Jesus', personally possessed ...

1. THE PRIVILEGE OF EXPERIENCING FULL EQUALITY WITH GOD

Consider these '*Pneuma-Inspired*' Scriptures; they communicate a very core truth of our Christian Faith ...

*"In the beginning was the WORD and the Word was WITH God and the Word WAS God. He was in the beginning with God."
(John 1:1)*

Jesus Himself caused the Jewish Leaders of His day no small amount of consternation when he said to them straight out ...

*"BEFORE Abraham was born ... I AM"
(John 8:58)*

It is essential that we understand that the beautiful '*Babe in the Manger*' and even the charismatically attractive '*Man of Ministry*' whose life spanned a mere 33 revolutions of our planet around its sun was an incredibly reduced version of the Eternal Son of God.

The Son of God – The Word – The Second Person of the Godhead – existed from Eternity Past.

If failing to understand Christ's current ministry in heaven diminishes Him (and we discovered in our previous series of messages that indeed it does), then failing to understand His Pre-Incarnate Ministry most certainly does as well.

We cannot start the Story of our Savior with His Birth in Bethlehem.

His birth in a dusty manger in a cattle shed in a small dirty barely civilized town called Bethlehem was an incredible step down for ONE who was Himself identified with and who had experienced the privilege of full equality with the '*Ancient of Days*.'

Here's another great personal privilege that the Second Person of the Godhead possessed before He '*came to earth*' ...

2. THE PRIVILEGE OF EXERCISING THE FULL AUTHORITY OF GOD

*"For **BY** him were all things created ... all things were created by him and **FOR** him ... in him all things **HOLD** together."
(Colossians 1:16-17)*

Here we have the Apostle Paul's account of the '*Creation Story*' and it features the Second Person of the Godhead, (the one who became the man, Jesus), as the actual '*Agent of Creation*' – the **Creator** and the **Sustainer** of all things.

If Paul could have spoken with today's terminology, he might well have said:

"The One of whom I speak is the one to whom you owe your very existence for it is by the exercise of His ancient authority that the very cells of your body as well as the fabric of the universe itself holds together.

Were it not for him and the processes He set in place long eons ago, you would evaporate into thin air."

This is the authority exercised by the Son of God – the Second Person of the Godhead – the one we now know as Jesus Christ.

Thirdly and finally this morning, consider this '*Personal Privilege*' possessed by the Eternal Son of God ...

3. THE PRIVILEGE OF ENJOYING THE FULL GLORY DUE GOD

This Jesus was well aware of.

Consider the prayer he prayed just hours before His Earthly Life ended ...

*"Father, **GLORIFY** me in your presence with the glory I **HAD** with you **BEFORE** the world began."
(John 17:5)*

Incredible Glory had been His in His Pre-Incarnate State!

Here's how '*Pneuma*' (who, of course, had personally viewed that Glory) had the writer of the Book of Hebrews express it ...

*"The Son is the **RADIANCE** of the Father's **GLORY**
And the exact representation of His **BEING** ..."*
(Hebrews 1:3)

*"When God brings his first-born into the world He says,
'Let all the **ANGELS** of God **WORSHIP** him!'"*
(Hebrews 1:6)

On the Mount of Transformation, Peter and James and John got to see some of that Glory and they were blown away by it. John in his later years was caught up to heaven in a vision and saw the Lord Jesus in the fullness of that Glory and He fell on his face in worship.

These then are Three Incredible '*Privileges*' that belonged to the Eternal Son of God:

The *Privilege* of Experiencing Full Equality with God;
The *Privilege* of Exercising the Full Authority of God;
The *Privilege* of Enjoying the Glory due God

This is some of what Christ was '*willing to relinquish*' and when he came to earth that's exactly what he *did* relinquish ...

We read in John 1:14 ...

*"And the Word became **FLESH** and made his dwelling among **US**."*

And in our passage of the morning (Philippians 2:7) ...

*"He made himself **NOTHING**" (comparatively speaking)*

** No longer did he experience full **EQUALITY** with God.*

He was fundamentally changed when he took upon himself human flesh. For at least nine months he was not even capable of conscious thought.

For a period of years, the ONE who had made the universe couldn't even make himself lunch.

He forever limited himself to a particular time and space.

Never again would He experience that full equality of infinite being with the Father and the Spirit. He let it go ... He did not cling to it.

*** No longer did he exercise the full AUTHORITY of God.**

O, he exercised authority all right ... people marveled at the authority with which he spoke and the power he displayed in the many miracles that he wrought but he himself pointed out very clearly ...

*"...the Son can do nothing by himself,
he can only do what he sees his Father doing ...
(John 5:19)*

*"I have come to do your will, O God"
(Hebrews 10:7)*

*"And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan
(where he had been baptized) and was led by the Spirit into the desert ...
Jesus returned to Galilee in the Power of the Spirit ...
(Luke 4:1 and 14)*

Jesus submitted himself to the Plan formed long before the world came into being ... He functioned by the power of the Spirit and adopted a mindset that allowed the Spirit to completely fulfill God's Plan in His earthly life.

*** No longer did he enjoy the full GLORY due God.**

The praise and worship of Heaven was a distant memory by the time Jesus began his earthly ministry.

His own parents chided him for sequestering himself at the age of twelve in the temple where he could discuss spiritual things with the recognized leaders of the people.

His mother and brothers considered him '*Out of his mind*' and went to '*take control of him*' in the midst of a wonderful period of ministry. (Mark 3)

Many who had declared themselves '*disciples*' turned away once he began to reveal his reason for coming (John 6)

The Leaders of the Jews – the Teachers of the Law – the Priests who served in the temple – mocked him and condemned him. They found him worthy not of honor and glory but of death.

*** He truly allowed himself to become 'NOTHING'**

Compared to what He had been.

It was an incredible '*loosing of His grip on these privileges of deity*' when he said (Hebrews 10:5) ... '*A body you have prepared for me.*'

Now that '*body that had been prepared for him*' was a perfect human body – a sinless body – a fully functional body – a body any of us would love to have - but to an eternal, infinite Spirit Being, it was a willingly-chosen '*prison.*'

And here's the thing ... The Son of God understood all of that before he ever crossed the Threshold of Heaven and He came anyway because that is just How His Mind Works.

And that now leads us to this ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

Christ embodied a **WILLINGNESS** to relinquish all the Personal Privileges that were His as the Son of God if something **REQUIRED** it.

Those who **FOLLOW** Him – those who **WALK** with His Spirit
Are **DIRECTED** to do the **SAME!**

*"Let this **MIND** be in you which was also in **CHRIST JESUS.**"*

And of course, something did '*require him to relinquish it all*' ...

*"God's **LOVE** for a **FALLEN** World"*

(John 3:16)

And so, we come to ...

TODAY'S SECOND KEY QUESTION ...

Are we **WILLING** to do the same?

*"Are we willing to **RELINQUISH** all forms of personal privilege for the sake of the Work of God if the **SITUATION** calls for it?"*

Now here's the thing ... We who are truly '*Walking In Step With 'Pnuema'*' know that actually we no longer possess any personal privileges for we surrendered them all when we put our hand in His.

But the world and the flesh and the devil will try to tell us that we do.

The world, the flesh and the devil will all conspire together to keep us from adopting this 'Mindset of Christ.'

The world, the flesh and the devil will seek to bring us back to that place where we were before we stepped over the '*Threshold of Salvation*' and yielded our entire lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Back there on the '*other side*' of that '*Salvation Threshold*' are things like '*personal rights*' and '*personal agendas*' and '*personal privileges*' of all sorts – some that we worked extremely hard to obtain.

Just see how easily you can still finish this sentence ...

"I have a right to _____."

Or this one ...

"I might be a Christian but _____."

Or

"I don't see anything wrong with _____."

Probably all of us can fill them in without too much trouble.
And some of us would probably say ...

"I don't see anything wrong with the fact that I can."

Well, here's the question ...

Even if we can identify some '*rights*' or '*privileges*' or '*agendas*' that we feel still rightfully belong to us ...

Are we willing to '*Relinquish them*' if God's Work calls for us to do so?
Are we willing to '*Adopt the Mindset of Christ*'?

The Scripture tells us that it's our Responsibility to do so and our current Study tells us that doing so will 'Release 'Pneuma' ever more fully into our Lives.'

And knowing how we want that '*Release of Pneuma*' in our lives, I offer ...

Today's Key Confession ...

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my daily life.

Specifically, I will seek to more and more 'relinquish my hold' on whatever personal rights or privileges or agendas that the world or my flesh or the devil tell me I possess for I truly desire to walk with You and be filled by You!

And also knowing how difficult this process can be, I offer today's ...

Final Thot ...

Even the 'WILLINGNESS to be WILLING' gives '*Pneuma*' something to WORK with.

WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA'
"The Mindset of Christ – Servanthood"
(Philippians 2:5-8)

Intro ... Today we press on in our quest to discover what it means to 'Walk with Pneuma' – Our Divine Earthly Companion.

Several Weeks ago, we concluded ...

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – PART ONE" ...
UNDERSTANDING Pneuma's Role In My LIFE

Nine Specific Roles we discovered 'Pneuma' – the Holy Spirit Himself – fulfills in our lives – **nine absolutely essential roles** – roles concerning which many Followers of Christ are either ignorant or severely lacking in understanding. Those are messages that we need to review often.

We are now several weeks into ...

"WALKING WITH 'Pneuma' – PART TWO" ...
UNDERSTANDING My Role In 'Pneuma's MINISTRY Of Transformation
"How To RELEASE 'Pneuma' – God's Holy Spirit - in My Life"

Put another way:

"What we MUST do so that 'Pneuma' CAN do what He WOULD do in our lives."

There are basically ***Two Responsibilities – Two Essential Things*** – that Followers of Jesus Christ must do if they would see 'Pneuma' fully released in their lives.

KEY 'PNEUMA' - RELEASING RESPONSIBILITY ONE ...

If we would 'Release Pneuma in our lives', we must ...

MAINTAIN A SPIRIT OF THANKSGIVING - Give Thanks Continually!

'Pneuma' makes clear in the Scriptures just how important this is.

(1 Thess. 5:18-19; Eph. 5:18-19; James 1:2; Psalm 100:4-5; Romans 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:16)

Here now is the '*Other*'...

KEY 'PNEUMA' - RELEASING RESPONSIBILITY TWO ...

If we would '*Release Pneuma in our lives*', we must ...

ADOPT THE MINDSET OF CHRIST - Approach everything Christianly!
(Philippians 2:5-8)

In that message, we identified the ***First*** of ***Four Essential Expressions*** of the Mindset of Christ - all four are revealed in Philippians Chapter Two.

Two weeks ago, we identified ...

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION ONE ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EXPRESSES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

"A WILLINGNESS TO RELINQUISH ALL PERSONAL PRIVILEGE"
A WILLINGNESS TO BECOME NOTHING!

No living being has ever been called upon to '*relinquish*' all that the Eternal Son of God laid aside when He came to earth in fulfillment of the Plan of God.

However, those who have given their lives to Him are called upon to be equally '*willing*' ...

That first '*essential expression*' presents an incredible challenge – Only those who are truly '*Walking with Pneuma*' can do it or would even be willing to do it but with His Help and Encouragement they can!

Today we gaze further into the passage from which our understanding of the Mindset of Christ arises ...

TODAY'S KEY SCRIPTURE ... Philippians 2:5-7 (NIV amplified)

"Your attitude (that is, your mindset) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (that is, held on to tenaciously or desperately) but made himself nothing (that is, emptied himself of all Divine Privilege),

TAKING the very NATURE of a SERVANT,
being MADE in HUMAN likeness ..."

In that Scripture is revealed ...

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION OF THE MIND OF CHRIST TWO ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EXPRESSES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

"A WILLINGNESS TO SERVE OTHERS – TO SEEK TO MEET THEIR NEEDS."

In that Scripture is also revealed **TWO KEY ASPECTS** of such Service:

First ... THE INTERNAL ASPECT ...

Christ took upon Himself the '**VERY NATURE OF A SERVANT**'

This is an inner attitude – a personal perspective – a defining characteristic – a way of looking at life that determines the actions taken in life.

Here is the ...

KEY SUPPORTIVE SCRIPTURE ...

"For even the Son of Man came not to be SERVED but to SERVE ..." (Mark 10:45)

Some Bible Scholars have considered this to be the defining statement in Mark's Gospel – It reveals the very heart of Christ – the purpose and passion behind His Coming to earth.

"He was the Son of Man sent to meet the Needs of Men."

Central to the very '***Mind of Christ***', the Servant of men, is this ...

Key Word: INVESTIGATION

What are their **NEEDS** and how can I **MEET** them?

The various answers Jesus found to that investigative question fill the pages of the Four Gospels ...

* He began his earthly ministry by providing wine for an embarrassed host at a Wedding Feast in the city of Cana.

* He taught the Word of God to the multitudes day after day – On several occasions he fed them physically as well as spiritually.

* He shared life-changing truths with the Woman at the Well and to the entire village of Samaritans where she lived.

* He calmed His Disciples' fears when they were caught in a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee.

* He reached out and healed the leper.

* He gave sight to the blind.

* The very night that he would be betrayed, he humbled himself and '*literally*' became a servant as he took a basin of water and washed His Disciples dirty feet.

Then he said to them ...

"I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you"
(John 13:15)

Followers of Jesus who are willing to take to themselves the '*very nature of a servant*' will forever be asking the question about the people around them:

"What are their needs and how can I meet them?"

That's the internal aspect of such '*Christ-Like Service*.'

The Second aspect of such service is ...

THE EXTERNAL ASPECT ...

Christ took upon Himself the '**APPEARANCE OF A MAN**'

Paul tells the Philippians that Christ was '*made in human likeness*' ... What people saw was one who '*appeared to be just like them*' – a fellow human being, a fellow Jew, living in Palestine in the First Century.

Consider these ...

KEY SUPPORTIVE SCRIPTURES ...

"The WORD became FLESH and made His dwelling among us"
(John 1:14)

That's how the beloved Disciple John expressed Christ's Coming into the world.

*The **Eternal Son of God*** – the Eternal Word of God – the One who was in every way equal to God – the ONE by whom and for whom all things were created - *became human*; that is, he took upon Himself–placed Himself within - a real flesh and blood human body with all its limitations and frustrations.

And in doing so, he provided a pattern for those who would '*Adopt the Mindset of Christ*' as they walk with '*Pneuma*' through life.

Consider the implications of this '*testimony*' the Apostle Paul shared with the Believers in Corinth ...

"I have BECOME all things to all men so that by all possible MEANS I might save some."
(1 Corinthians 9:22)

It's interesting and certainly informative that Paul, the one-time committed Pharisee, is sharing this testimony with a bunch of Gentiles – people that he normally would not even speak to, let alone fellowship with. But, taking on the '*Mind of Christ*', changed all of that.

If the Son of God could take upon Himself human flesh so that he could fully relate to human beings, then surely a born-again Follower of Christ can take on whatever is necessary to be able to relate to the lost around him.

Central to the very '*Mind of Christ*', the Word Become Flesh, is this ...

KEY WORD: ACCOMMODATION

*How do they PERCEIVE themselves and how can I RELATE to them?
How can I make them as COMFORTABLE as possible?*

As we draw near to the close of this message I would share with you a couple of Great Examples of this Christ-Like Quality of Accommodation.

First A Great Missionary Example: **Hudson Taylor** to China in the middle to late 1800's – an English-Born Man.

Hudson Taylor was the founder of the China Inland Mission – tens of thousands of Chinese are in heaven today because of his willingness to go and preach the Gospel of Christ in that distant land.

Hudson Taylor was able to preach that Gospel in five different Chinese dialects – he accommodated himself to their language – He learned it and used it ... He did not require them to learn his. He translated the New Testament into one of those lesser known dialects.

His more notable accommodation however was viewed at the time (by the folks back home) as almost scandalous. It involved him deciding that he would adopt Native Chinese Dress – He even chose to shave the crown of his head and wear his hair in a pig tail. His wife and all who worked with him dressed similarly.

However, he did not begin his ministry that way. And he did not begin his ministry successfully. Initially he wore the standard British fashion for a preacher – dark suit, white shirt and a long black overcoat.

He decided to change (I should probably say 'Pneuma' convinced him) when he discovered that his '*standard uniform*' – especially the long black coat had earned him the nickname '*Black Devil*'.

In one form or another, he raised the question we just posed a few moments ago.

For when seeking to meet the needs of those around us – when seeking to bring Christ and His Servant's Heart into play in the community in which we find ourselves, it becomes very relevant to ask ourselves ...

*"How do these people perceive themselves and how can I relate to them:
How can I make them feel comfortable in my presence?"*

No doubt, stirred by his initial failures and stung by the negative impact that such a minor thing as fashion should have upon his ministry and certainly inspired by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, Hudson Taylor wrote these ministry-transforming words in his Journal ...

*"Let us in everything not sinful become like the Chinese,
that by all means we may save some."*

Distinguishing between things that are '*sinful*' and things that are merely '*cultural*' is not always easy but '*Pneuma*' will show us the way even as He did with Hudson Taylor. We must not allow '*Christian Culture*' to get in the way of '*Christ's Gospel*'.

Accommodation will often open the door for us even as it did for Christ.

And now allow me to share a Great Personal Example: ***My Mom***

Over the years I have shared enough about my personal life that most of you know that I was raised in a very committed, very strict Christian home by a set of very faithful, diligent Christian parents. They did not smoke, they did not drink, they did not attend movies. They did not do anything that would have been considered '*worldly*' or '*sinful*.' They expected their children to live the same way.

All five of their children are following Christ today ... That was not always the case.

My older brother, Keith, with whom I shared a bedroom until he went off to war and I went off to college was the adventurous one, the wayward one – the live-it-up and have fun one.

Keith became a Marine and only by the Grace and Protection of God (and my mother's prayers) did he survive the year he spent in the jungles of Vietnam.

One night his unit came back from a firefight and he discovered two holes in the front of his uniform blouse – one in and one out. The heat of the bullet no doubt singed the hair on his chest.

He, like so many, came home with a multitude of emotional scars ... But he, in contrast to many, came home to the mother, the strict, godly mother who had prayed him safely through – the mother who he discovered possessed a servant's heart – who cared more about his well-being than anything else.

Imagine my surprise when I came home from my equally strict college to discover beer in the refrigerator in the kitchen and ashtrays on the coffee table in the living room.

My mother (and father) had made a decision – they would accommodate themselves to their war-wounded son for they recognized that Keith, at that time in his life, had far deeper needs than the need to quit smoking and drinking. They did not make him choose between those vices and their company.

They knew intuitively that **Accommodation** will often open the door for us even as it did for Christ. They did not allow '*Christian Culture*' to get in the way of '*Christ's Gospel*.'

Imagine my (and their) delight when several years later, Keith wrote me a newsy letter and almost as a P.S. added '*I gave my life to Christ last week*.'

He's maintained a solid walk ever since and was the one of us who watched over my mom for many years following my father's death. She who at a most critical time '*accommodated herself*' to him has seen him '*accommodate himself and his life*' to her as she has aged.

And now I think it is time to share ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

Christ expressed a **WILLINGNESS** to **FUNCTION** as a **SERVANT**
Whenever and **Wherever** and for **Whomever NEEDS** arose.

Those who **FOLLOW** Him – those who **WALK** with His Spirit
Are **DIRECTED** to do the **SAME!**

*"Let this **MIND** be in you which was also in **CHRIST JESUS**"*
(and I could add: Just as it was in Hudson Taylor and Sadie Mikels)

Again, we see that the 'Mindset of Christ' involves a decision ... a decision to 'Willingly follow His Example' ...

In this case it means to 'take upon ourselves the nature of a servant and be found in an approachable, non-threatening form.'

Here now is...

Today's Key Confession ...

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will **SEEK** to adopt the very 'Mindset of Christ' as I go about my **DAILY** life. Specifically, I will seek to function as a **SERVANT** in my daily life. Help me to accurately assess the **NEEDS** of the people around me and help me to lovingly **ACCOMMODATE** myself to them as I walk with You and am filled by You.

Once again, we realize how much of our 'normal' thinking or expecting we might have to 'relinquish' if we are in fact to do this. This requires the Spirit's Work as he continues to 'conform us to the image of Christ' but we are the ones who must 'open the door for that work.'

We must express ...

A Willingness to **Serve** Others – To **Minister** to Those Around Us.

And knowing how difficult this process can be, I offer once again this ...

Final Thought ...

Even the '**WILLINGNESS** to be **WILLING**' gives 'Pneuma' something to **WORK** with.

"WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA' The Mindset of Christ – Obedience"

(Philippians 2:5-8)

Intro ... Once again, I would turn your attention to the Scripture that we are seeking to wrap our minds around.

It's a gift from '*Pneuma*' to each of us.
We have been '*unwrapping it*' (as it were) little by little.

The main directive of this Scripture identifies for us the second of the ***Two Great Responsibilities*** that fall to every believer who would desire to "*Walk with 'Pneuma' and Keep in Step with Him and be Transformed by Him.*"

As you, no doubt, remember, the ***First*** of those ***Two Great Responsibilities*** is that we who hold such a desire in our hearts must '***Maintain a Spirit of Thanksgiving***' – ***at*** all times, ***in*** all things, ***for*** all things.
It's a great challenge.

The ***Second*** of those ***Two Great Responsibilities*** (the one revealed in this 'gift' passage) is that we who desire to "*Walk with 'Pneuma' and Keep in Step with Him and be Transformed by Him*" must '***Adopt the very Mindset of Christ.***'

That is, we must learn to think about life, to view life, to understand our place and purpose in this fallen world in the same way Jesus did.
That's an even greater challenge.

In Jesus Christ, that ***Mind-Set*** took physical form – it expressed itself in tangible, visible ways. Four of those ways can be discovered in this '*Gift Scripture*' that we have been '*unwrapping*' (as it were) week by week.

Here's what we have '*unwrapped*' so far ...

*"Your attitude (your mind-set) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be
grasped (held on to tenaciously or desperately) but made himself nothing
(emptied himself of all Divine Privilege), taking the very nature
of a servant, being made in human likeness.
(Philippians 2:5-7)*

And here are the two '*Essential Expressions*' of that '*Mindset*' that we have discovered so far ...

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION ONE ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EXPRESSES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

**"A WILLINGNESS TO RELINQUISH ALL PERSONAL PRIVILEGE"
A WILLINGNESS TO BECOME NOTHING!**

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION TWO ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EMBODIES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

"A WILLINGNESS TO SERVE OTHERS – TO SEEK TO MEET THEIR NEEDS."

Now let's unwrap it just a bit further this morning and focus upon today's additional phrase ...

TODAY'S EXPANDED SCRIPTURE ... Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV amplified)

"Your attitude (your mindset) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

*Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (held on to tenaciously or desperately) **but made himself nothing** (emptied himself of all Divine Privilege), **taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.***

*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself
And became **OBEDIENT** ...*

Out of that additional phrase arises ...

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION THREE ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EXPRESSES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

**"A WILLINGNESS TO OBEY THE WORD OF GOD."
A WILLINGNESS TO SURRENDER OURSELVES TO THE CALL OF GOD!**

"HE ... BECAME OBEDIENT"

What an awesomely comprehensive statement! What a contrast to the way fallen mankind ever since Adam and Eve had been characterized.

Paul wrote in Romans chapter one that men chose to '*worship and serve (and thus obey) themselves rather than their Creator*' (Romans 1:25).

Disobedience to the Will and Ways of God was the inevitable outcome.

Not so this One who gave up the Glories of Heaven to come to earth.

He (Jesus) took upon himself the Mindset of an Obedient Person.

He became '*Characterized by Obedience.*'

He didn't just '*obey*' when called upon to do so;

He embodied (fleshed-out) a '*Mindset of obedience.*'

He possessed a '*Bias toward Yes*' when it came to the Call of God.

There was no question about it or resistance to it.

He was '*obedience personified*' – just awaiting an opportunity.

What a way to be – What a testimony for a believer to carry. Obedience is not so much a decision to make over and over as it is an attitude we adopt once and for all. How does it impact your heart to say these words to yourself:

"I've become obedient to God – that's who I am"?

Think of the delight that declaration brings to our Earthly Companion, 'Pneuma.' He can say every day ...

'I have an obedient child of God walking with me!'

That's exactly what 'Pneuma' was able to say about Jesus ...

**OBEDIENCE WAS AN ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION
OF THE NATURE HE POSSESSED.**

The writer of the Book of Hebrews reports (Hebrews 10:7):

*"When he (Christ) came into the world, He said ...
'Here I am ... I have come to do Your Will, O God!'"*

A Couple of Comments ...

*** HE CAME TO OBEY THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD**

The phrase '*It is written*' introduced every response he made to Satan's Temptations in the Wilderness.

It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'

It is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'

It is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.'

That same phrase, '*It is written*' announced his condemnation of the Temple practices the day he drove out all the merchants.

"It is written,

'My house shall be called a house of prayer'."

When it came to His crucifixion, He encouraged his heart, no doubt, by reminding himself 'It had been written' (by the prophet, Isaiah, long ago) that he would be 'numbered with the transgressors' in his death. His humiliation had been foretold – it was part of the plan.

Jesus was a '*card-carrying member*' of the fraternity of those whose mantra is: '*If the Bible says it, I believe it and that settles it.*'

He came to obey the Written Word of God.

*** HE ALSO CAME TO OBEY THE WHISPERED WORD OF GOD**

He obeyed the Word that whispered ...

"Go to the Jordan and be baptized by John." (Matthew 3:13)

He obeyed the Word that whispered the names of those who became His Chosen Twelve as he spent an entire night in prayer. (Luke 6:12)

He obeyed the Word that whispered '*It's time to move on*' even though His ministry in Capernaum was thriving. (Mark 1:38)

He obeyed the Word that whispered to Him '*The time has come*' as He concluded his final supper with His Disciples (John 17:1)

He completely submitted himself to both the Written and Whispered Word of God. Such submission came absolutely naturally to Him.

Obedience was indeed an expression of the Nature He Possessed!

But, I want us to see as well that ...

**OBEDIENCE WAS ALSO AN EXPRESSION
OF THE NURTURE HE RECEIVED.**

From his youth He was surrounded by Obedient People:

* His Mother **Mary**

"Let it be to me as you have said" – It was.

* His Earthly Father, **Joseph**

"Take Mary as your wife" – He did.

"Take Mary and the child and flee to Egypt" – He did.

* His Entire Earthly **Family**

"Celebrate Passover in Jerusalem every year" – they did.

* His Mother's Cousin **Elizabeth** and Her Husband **Zechariah**

"Name your baby boy, John" – they did.

* John the Baptist **Himself**

"He is not to drink wine or any other fermented drink" – He didn't.

Jesus was raised in an environment where obedience to the Living God was as natural as breathing.

Surely growing up in such an environment encouraged the development of a '**Mind-Set**' that would possess a '*Bias towards Yes*' when it came to God's Call upon His Life.

Never sell short the value of being raised in a Christian Home where obedience to the Lord is viewed as something '*normal*' not something '*abnormal*.' **Never** doubt the significance of providing such an environment for your children or grandchildren.

For Jesus Himself, obedience was not only an expression of the **Nature** He possessed but also an expression of the **Nurture** He received.

This is the very nature '*Pneuma*' is seeking to create in each one of us and the nurture that He desires each of us to receive from one another.

Obedience is an incredibly critical part of the Mindset of Christ. He became obedient and so can we!

And now, as we conclude this message, we come to ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

Christ embodied a WILLINGNESS to OBEY the WRITTEN and the WHISPERED WORD of GOD - A WILLINGNESS to SURRENDER HIMSELF to the CALL of GOD upon His LIFE.

Those who FOLLOW Him – those who WALK with His Spirit
Are DIRECTED to do the SAME!

"Let this MIND be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS"

Can you see yourself functioning that way – Can you see yourself as a person in whom obedience to God is second nature?

Can you sense what it would be like to never have to 'wrestle with obedience again' but to have such a 'Bias toward Yes' that before you hear the question, before the Call of God comes, you already know your answer?

That, my fellow-travelers, is a very special part of what it means to have the 'Mindset of Christ' – it identifies us as those who are indeed being 'transformed into His Likeness' by the Spirit He has sent to 'Companion' us.

So here now is...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will SEEK to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my DAILY life.

Specifically, I will seek to respond obediently to both the WRITTEN and WHISPERED Word of God.

I willingly SURRENDER MYSELF to the CALL of GOD upon my LIFE as I walk with You and am filled by You.

In many ways these '*confessions*' are becoming harder not easier. Therefore, this reprised final that is even more necessary this week than it has been the previous two ...

Final That ... Even the 'WILLINGNESS to be WILLING' gives '*Pneuma*' something to WORK with.

WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA'

"The Mindset of Christ – Death-Embracing"

(Philippians 2:5-8)

Intro ...

Here's the Scripture that we've been '*unwrapping*' as it were these past several weeks. It's the passage that highlights the **Second Great Responsibility** that falls to us who would walk faithfully and fruitfully with '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit Himself.

In this special Scripture, we discovered that we are responsible to **'Adopt the Mindset of Christ.'**

That's something that we are each responsible to do – no one can do it for us. However, doing it allows '*Pneuma*' to work freely and fruitfully in our lives.

So far, as we have unwrapped this Scripture little by little, we have discovered in this key passage **Three Essential Expressions** of the Mindset of Christ:

1. The Mindset of Christ Expresses (Demonstrates in tangible ways)
*'A willingness to relinquish all personal privilege ...
A willingness to become nothing!'*
2. The Mindset of Christ Expresses (Demonstrates in tangible ways)
*'A willingness to serve others ...
A willingness to minister to their needs.'*
3. The Mindset of Christ Expresses (Demonstrates in tangible ways)
*'A willingness to obey the Word of God ...
A willingness to surrender ourselves to the Call of God!'*

Today we unwrap the final part and discover the **fourth** and **final** Essential Expression of the Mindset of Christ.

Here's the whole passage with today's section highlighted ...

TODAY'S EXPANDED SCRIPTURE ... Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV amplified)

*"Your attitude (your mindset) should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:
Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped (held on to tenaciously or desperately)
but made himself nothing (emptied himself of all Divine Privilege),
taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

*And being found in appearance as a man,
He humbled himself and became obedient ...*

To DEATH – even DEATH on a CROSS!

Here's how I would express ...

ESSENTIAL EXPRESSION FOUR ...

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST EXPRESSES (Demonstrates in tangible ways)

"A WILLINGNESS TO SUFFER DEATH FOR THE SAKE OF THE KINGDOM."

A WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE.

There is no question that for the Son of God whose earthly birth we annually celebrate ... *"Death was the Name of the Game."*

Someone once said ...

"Christianity is an INVITATION to come and DIE."

That *'invitation'* the Son of God both heard and accepted.

He willingly came and He willingly died.

He willingly sacrificed himself for the sake of the Kingdom.

Apart from His Death there could be no lasting forgiveness for sins;
Apart from His Death there could be no gift of eternal life offered to men.

Christ's death on the cross was the Plan of God before time even began!

Now let's jump right to ...

TODAY'S KEY CONCEPT ...

Christ embodied a **WILLINGNESS** to **SUFFER DEATH** for the **SAKE** of the **KINGDOM** – A **WILLINGNESS** to make the Supreme **SACRIFICE**.

Those who **FOLLOW** Him – those who **WALK** with His Spirit –
Those who would be **TRANSFORMED** into His **LIKENESS**
Are **DIRECTED** to do the **SAME!**

*"Let this **MIND** be in you which was also in **CHRIST JESUS**"*

This is not a concept much talked about in today's Americanized Christianity though it used to be talked about a lot. It used to be understood to be part and parcel of a genuine conversion experience.

It was always understood that something died when new life in Christ was received. It was something that 'Pneuma' could pretty much count on as He began His Walk with any new believer. It was a mindset that allowed Him almost limitless opportunity to do His miraculous transforming work.

It was certainly understood in the early church ...

Had not the **Lord Jesus Himself** clearly said ...

*"If any man would come after me, he must deny himself (put himself to death), take up his cross (lest he ever come back to life again) and follow me."
(Mark 8:34)*

Did not the **Apostle Paul** express what should be the desire of every believer's heart when he wrote to the Philippians ...

*"I want to know Christ and the Power of His Resurrection
and the Fellowship of Sharing in His Sufferings ...*

BECOMING LIKE HIM IN HIS DEATH."

Did not that same Apostle share this glorious testimony in his letter to the Galatians ...

*"I have been **CRUCIFIED** with Christ and I no **LONGER** live, but **CHRIST** lives in me."
(Galatians 2:20)*

He could have said (using our current terminology) ...

*'I have experienced a complete 'brain transplant' ...
My old way of looking at things, my old way of thinking about things,
my old way of dealing with things has been removed (put to death) and
an entirely 'mindset' has been placed in me (brought to life).*

*I look and think and deal with everything completely differently.
It's like Christ's mind has been placed inside my own head.*

*It's like I have died and come back to life as a totally different person –
a much better version of myself.'*

Now it's important to point out right now that this is not just something for specially called ones like the Apostle Paul.

Paul was simply sharing from his own experience that such a thing can happen and that such a thing is expected to happen.

In fact, it's the very thing that must happen if 'Pneuma' is going to successfully complete His 'Ministry of Transformation' within us.

Thus, Paul's directive to us to 'Have' - to 'Adopt' - to consciously 'Embrace' - the mindset of Christ.

Specifically, today ...

To be willing to 'Embrace Death' for the sake of the Kingdom.

Time for us to declare what exactly we are talking about.

Time to consider ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

What Does it mean to 'EMBRACE DEATH'
for the sake of the KINGDOM?

1. EMBRACE THE FACT THAT YOU ARE ALREADY DEAD.

*"For you DIED and your life is now HIDDEN with Christ in God"
(Colossians 3:3)*

What a tremendous difference it makes once we 'accept' – 'embrace' – the fact that our Heavenly Father has already added our names to the list of the 'recently deceased.'

In His eyes, we indeed experienced a very special kind of 'death' when we gave our lives to Christ. It's part of the 'New Birth' experience. Old things (theoretically, at least) have passed away, all things have become new.

It's an incredibly freeing thing to 'be dead' to all the harmful 'stuff' that used to 'trip us up' – to all those things that the writer of the Book of Hebrews called 'the sins that so easily beset us.' The point is ... 'Dead men can't sin' or 'mess up.'

That's what the Apostle Paul was getting at when he wrote these words in his Epistle to the Romans ...

*"We were **BURIED** with Christ through **BAPTISM** into **DEATH**"
(Romans 6:4)*

The first application of death to our lives was when 'Pneuma' Himself baptized us (immersed us) into the Body of Christ at the moment of our salvation. He (as it were) 'buried us' spiritually speaking even as He then 'raised us' to newness of life in Christ.

Water Baptism is a tremendous symbol of that death experience and for many can serve as almost a 're-enactment of the moment.'

I've been so blessed (in recent years especially) to hear people say:

'My life completely changed the day I was baptized.'

So ... The first thing that you must do in 'Adopting' this aspect of the Mindset of Christ is to ...

*'Embrace the Fact that (In God's eyes, at least)
you are already very, very dead.'*

The **second** thing (which seems like it should be automatic but isn't) is that you must ...

2. EMBRACE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO 'SEE YOURSELF' AS DEAD

It's a sad fact that **theology** (what we know in our head about God and His Ways) does not always turn into **reality** (how we live out our faith in our daily lives).

Knowing a thing to be true and living as though it were true are frequently two different things.

Here are two verses from Romans chapter two that highlight the relationship between the two.

Paul says in the sixth verse of Romans chapter six ...

*"We know that our OLD SELF was crucified with Him."
(Romans 6:6)*

Now that's the fact that we said a moment ago that we must '*embrace*.'

Embrace the fact that you are already dead, that is, your old nature, your sinful natural nature, your fallen nature, was put on the cross with Christ.

In that great '*Eternal Now*' that we spoke of when we discussed the ongoing Heavenly Ministries of Jesus Christ, it is as if your old self is this very moment taking its last breath on that cross even as your Savior is taking His.

See it happening – see your fallen nature struggling to survive – see those habits and sins that would ruin your life and all your earthly relationships gasping for one last breath of life – for one last chance to '*mess you up*.'

Now see that old nature succumb to the cross – see its life force weaken and vanish – see it taken down and cast into the ditch just like the bodies of Rome's worst criminals were.

If you can and if you will, then you will be ready to hear and able to heed the instruction given in this next verse – Romans 6:1 ...

*"COUNT yourselves DEAD to SIN"
(Romans 6:11)*

*"Count yourselves" – "Reckon yourselves" – "Consider yourselves" –
"Announce to yourselves (and to the world) that you are" Dead to Sin!*

*"Thank God, I am dead to that!"
should be your response when former temptations arise.*

That's the truth you are responsible to speak when the devil or the world or your old friends tell you lies. They will all act as though the person you once were is who you still are. They will all expect you to join into things just like you once did.

You are the only one (not counting your Heavenly Father and your Savior, Jesus Christ and your Earthly Companion, 'Pneuma' and hopefully some equally committed Christian friends) who can say:

"That's no longer who I am (He is) - I have (He has) died to all that stuff."

One more thing remains ...

In addition to '*Embracing the Fact that you have already died*' and '*Embracing the Responsibility to See yourself as dead.*'

Embracing Death as part of 'Adopting the Mindset of Christ' means to ...

3. EMBRACE THE NECESSITY OF REMAINING VIGILANT

Here are some additional instructions on the matter that the Apostle Paul gave in his Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 3:5).

*"PUT to DEATH whatever belongs to your earthly (fallen) nature."
(Colossians 3:5)*

Why do we have to '*Kill something that is already dead*'?

Well, technically speaking, Paul doesn't actually say '*Kill the earthly nature.*' He tells us to '*Kill whatever belongs to the earthly nature.*'

Perhaps it's like the Alcoholic or Drug Addict who has successfully become sober; he has arisen to a new style of life altogether. He no longer seeks the things he once sought from the bottle or the pill – He has found a new life altogether. He rejoices in that new life – He says to himself ...

*"I will never go back – I have died to all of that'
and he truly has.*

And then one day while cleaning up the house, he finds a bottle that he had previously hidden away. He must not allow it to '*Re-Create Old Desires*' – He must not allow it to '*Re-Generate Old Regrets.*'

There's only one thing to do – **FLUSH IT!**

The truth is ... Things that '*belong to the old nature*' can '*pop up*' anytime – at the most inconvenient times – at our most vulnerable moments.

Don't allow those old desires – those old habits – those old practices to come back into your life. See then for what they are ... See them for the danger they present. **Kill them quick.**

Let me suggest that perhaps that's one reason Jesus said that we must '*take up our cross*' when we choose to follow him ...

Because at any given moment we might need to '*nail something to it*'... Something that needs to be '*put to death*' immediately.

It's imperative that we, who would embrace death for the sake of the Kingdom, '*Embrace the necessity of remaining vigilant.*'

Today's **Key Confession** seeks to zero in on the central action contained in our discussion this morning. Here's how it reads ...

TODAY'S KEY CONFESSION ...

O '*Pneuma*' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will **SEEK** to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my **DAILY** life.

Specifically, I will 'embrace the death' of **ANYTHING** and **EVERYTHING** that remains in me of my 'old **FALLEN** nature' as I walk with You and am filled by You.

This '*Walk with Pneuma*' can truly be characterized as a '*Walk Into Death*'

Stage One: I have died ('*Pneuma*' actually found me at my funeral)

Stage Two: I am dying ('*Pneuma*' is continually helping me to put to death things that do not belong in my life.)

Stage Three: I will one day be completely dead (Willful deliberate involvement in the sins of the flesh will no longer be part of my life – '*Pneuma*' will fill me.)

Our **final that** this morning contains a contrast between what is frequently done at the end of a year and what we as believers **could do** and **should do** and that I challenge us **to do** every time we enter into a new year.

Final That ...

A New Year's **RESOLUTION** focuses upon a '**TINY DEATH**' – "*This area of my life will not survive the old year – I will 'put it to death.'*"

A New Year's **REVOLUTION** focuses upon a '**TOTAL DEATH**' – "*Nothing of my old fallen self will survive the old year – I will 'put it all to death.'*"

May the Spirit of God grant us the **GRACE** and the **STRENGTH** and the **RESOLVE** to live lives of true spiritual **REVOLUTION!**

WALKING WITH 'PNEUMA'
"Pneuma's Most Magnificent Moment"
(Revelation 19:6-8)

Intro ... Today as we draw to a conclusion this Series of Messages called "Walking With Pneuma", I would draw your attention to what I am calling this morning ...

"PNEUMA'S MOST MAGNIFICENT MOMENT."

This magnificent moment will come at the very end of the Journey upon which '*Pneuma*', our earthly companion, even now '*companions*' us.

This magnificent moment will mark the culmination of all His efforts on our behalf – It's the moment for which He hungers and thirsts.

This magnificent moment will bring to a glorious conclusion the assignment given Him by the Father and the Son.

This is the moment for which He was sent into the heart of every believer. This is the moment upon which all of His '*Testifying*' and all of His '*Gracing*' and all of His '*Enlightening*' and all of His '*Enabling*' and all of His '*Prayer-Enhancing*' and all of His '*Fruit-Producing*' and all of His '*Transforming*' has been focused.

This is the moment toward which He has been leading us from the day we first placed our hand in His.

Those who keep their hand in His – those who ***keep in step*** with him and who do not ***resist*** or ***grieve*** let alone ***quench*** Him - will indeed share that ***most magnificent moment*** with Him.

And so, we come to ...

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION ...

What is this '*Most MAGNIFICENT Moment*' - this '**MOMENT**' that will bring '*Pneuma's*' **MINISTRY** to such a **GLORIOUS** conclusion?

ANSWER:

It's the moment when '*Pneuma*' **TAKES** the **HAND** that has been **PLACED** in **HIS** and **PLACES** it in the **HAND** of **CHRIST!**

Oh, what a moment that will be ... The Apostle John caught a glimpse of that moment when he wrote these words in Revelation 19:6-8 ...

*Then a voice came from the throne, saying:
"Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!"*

*Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude,
like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:*

*"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the
wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made
herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)
(Revelation 19:6-8)*

Can you see it ... Can you wrap your mind around it?

There in the Presence of the Almighty whose Throne is surrounded by 'creatures both small and great' – living beings upon whom human eyes have never gazed - *stands our Exalted Savior*, the Eternal Son of God, the One who willingly left this splendor that almost blinds our eyes to take upon himself human flesh and human humiliation that He might provide a way of salvation for fallen, sinful men and women ... that out of that fallen world, He might discover a Partner – a Bride - for all Eternity.

And now that Bride has been thoroughly prepared by '*Pneuma*' – the Holy Spirit of God Himself.

He has totally invested Himself in the process but it has been well worth the effort for He sees pure delight not only in the eyes of the Son but in the Father's as well.

And so, when the question is posed ...

"Who gives – who presents – who has in fact prepared -
this Bride for this Groom?

'*Pneuma*' Himself answers "*I have*" and "*I do.*"

And then He takes our hands individually and collectively (hands He has carefully and faithfully held for a long time) and places them lovingly and joyfully into the Hand of Christ Jesus – His Fellow Divine.

And silence falls throughout heaven's realm as the Son of God beholds His Spirit-Readied Bride.

Now that's what this is all about ...

That's where this is all heading ...

That's why '*Pneuma*' has been sent into our lives ...

That's why we have invested this amount of time in this study ...

There is coming a **DAY** for which '*these days*' are '*preparation*.'

And if these are indeed to be '*Days of Preparation*' for you, if you are to be one of those who has been '*made ready for the Savior*' then there are several things that you (that we) must do ...

Let me share them briefly as we conclude what has been a life-altering study for us all.

If you (we) would be prepared to meet Christ as a Bride who has been made ready, you (we) must:

***1. Recognize that '*Pneuma*' is the
CURRENT EARTHLY AGENT of the Godhead.***

This is so fundamental ... It's exactly what Jesus told his disciples before He left them – before He ascended to heaven and began those awesome heavenly ministries that He even now performs on behalf of all of us who have placed our faith in Him.

It is absolutely imperative that we see '*Pneuma*' accurately – He is the **Divine Person** with whom we relate (our earthly companion) not merely a **Divine Power** upon which we rely.

The devil has won many battles over the years and the Church has been severely weakened and believers have spent much time frustrated as a result of this fundamental truth being forgotten or misunderstood.

'*Pneuma*' is the current '*earthly*' agent of the Godhead – He is the ONE with whom we relate day by day and through whom all Grace for living an abundant Christian Life comes. That's fundamental.

Secondly, if you (we) would be prepared to meet Christ as a Bride who has been made ready, you (we) must:

2. Recognize that the BRIDE is responsible for her own PREPARATION.

"The Bride has made herself ready" – Revelation 19:7

Here is where the 'DOs' and the 'DON'TS' of this relationship with 'Pneuma' come into play.

It is our responsibility (yours and mine) as we 'Walk with Pneuma' through life that we **DON'T** '*Resist Him*' when He speaks – that we **DON'T** '*Grieve Him*' through thoughtless or careless, let alone sinful actions – and surely that we **DON'T** '*Quench Him*' by hardened rebellion.

It is our responsibility (yours and mine) that we **DO** (carefully and intently and submissively) '*Listen for His Voice.*' It is our responsibility (yours and mine) that we **DO** '*Watch out for the 'Red Flags'*' that signal we have fallen out of step with Him. It is our responsibility (yours and mine) that we **DO** (continually and gratefully) '*Warm ourselves at His Flame*' – that we **DO** embrace Him, enjoy Him, and delight in Him even as those early Disciples delighted in Jesus Himself.

Those 'DOs' and 'DON'TS' are our personal responsibility – 'Pneuma' cannot (and will not) do them for us.

Thirdly, if you (we) would be prepared to meet Christ as a Bride who has been made ready, you (we) must:

3. Recognize that NOTHING by way of PREPARATION can be ACCOMPLISHED without 'Pneuma.'

This also is fundamental – As the Apostle Paul testified so agonizingly in Romans chapter seven – there are times when '*wanting to do the right thing*' is simply not enough – when '*hating the wrong thing*' is not sufficient either because we still live in the midst of some overpowering realities.

The **Flesh** is too strong – The **World** is too attractive –
The **Devil** is too deceptive – to be overcome by sheer grit
and determination.

Without '*Pneuma's*' powerful presence in our lives – without a yielding of ourselves and our actions to him – we will fail and fail badly. He and we will experience great grief.

So *fourthly*, if you (we) would be prepared to meet Christ as a Bride who has been made ready, you (we) must:

4. Recognize that 'TRANSFORMATION' through '*Pneuma*' is the ONLY way that such PREPARATION can be achieved.

Remember this wonderful truth that the Apostle Paul shared in his Letter to the Galatians ...

"Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature)
(Galatians 5:16)

And this one found in his Second Letter to the Corinthians ...

"And we ... are being transformed into His Likeness with ever-increasing glory which comes from ... the Spirit."
(2 Corinthians 3:18)

Though, in and of ourselves, we will fail and fail badly as we seek to '*prepare ourselves,*' living by and under *Pneuma's* authority and influence we will succeed and succeed gloriously!

Pneuma's touch is what truly '*prepares us*' to meet our Savior as those who indeed '*Belong to Him and with Him.*'

Only one thing remains – the thing that more than anything else I would have us take from this Series of Studies.

Fifthly and finally, if you would be prepared to meet Christ as a Bride who has been made ready, you must:

5. Resolve to 'PLACE YOUR HAND' in '*Pneuma's*' HAND EACH and EVERY DAY!

Here's a key directive that the Apostle Paul gives to us all.

It's found in his Letter to the Galatians – Chapter 5 verse 25 ...

*"Let us keep in step with '*Pneuma*'"*

Just like the '*flesh*' that we put to death each day seems to '*come back to life every morning*' so the relationship that we have with '*Pneuma*' can seem to '*vanish every night*.'

Every day is a new day – It's imperative that we communicate to ourselves and to '*Pneuma*' first thing every morning that '*Nothing has changed*.'

We need to make clear (to Him and to ourselves) that we are heading into this new day **with** our hand placed in His – **with** our ears attuned to His Voice – **with** our feet eager to follow His Lead – **with** our mind wrapped around His Truths – **with** our heart filled with a Spirit of Thanksgiving – **with** an eagerness to more and more completely '*Adopt the Mindset of Christ*' that we might indeed on that day – in the midst of His '*Most Magnificent Moment*' – be found perfectly prepared to be presented to our Savior Himself!

To that end I share ...

Today's Key Series Concluding Confession ...

O '*Pneuma*' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I recognize that You alone can **PREPARE** me to spend **ETERNITY** with **JESUS** as a member of His **BRIDE**.

I desire to be one upon whom He can **LOOK** with genuine **PRIDE** and **PLEASURE**.

I **RESOLVE** to **PLACE** my **HAND** in Yours each and every **DAY** of my life. **PERFORM** your Ministry of **TRANSFORMATION** within me as I walk in step with You and am filled by You.

And now as we conclude, our '*final thot*' would once again focus our attention upon what has been this series '*Central Scripture*' ...

Final Thot ...

"Not by MIGHT, not by POWER but by my SPIRIT"
says the Lord Almighty!

(Zechariah 4:6)

**CONFESSIONS OF ONE WHO WOULD
"WALK WITH PNEUMA" ...**

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God,
What do you have in store for me today?
I desire this day to follow your lead and match your stride.
Grant me the vision to see and the grace to step out boldly."*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I ask You to fully implement
the Plan of God in this World and in our Church and in my Life,
For I truly desire to walk in step with You and be filled by You!*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I ask You to testify convincingly
to my heart that I truly am a Child of God and that Jesus Christ is
everything that God's Word declares Him to be and that this
present world is anything but what it ought to be.
Erase all doubt and disbelief from me – Build confidence and
assurance within me as I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, do indeed 'walk' me in the
direction of Prosperity.' Cause fleshly desires to wither and die
within me as I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, shine the light that is
Jesus Himself upon me – Flood my soul with an ever deeper
understanding of the Gospel of His Glory.
Lift me from dimness and bring me into the brilliance of His Truth
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You."*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, enable me to speak clear and
compelling words of witness when I am called upon to do so.
Speak the truth about Jesus through me – remove all stress and
strain from me, as I walk in step with You and am filled by You."*

*"O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, enhance my prayers
and cause them to be heard and heeded on High.*

*Help me to truly believe that my Heavenly Father is working
for my good in the midst of all the circumstances of my life.*

*Remind me each day just how important it is to give myself to prayer
As I walk in step with you and am filled by you."*

*O 'Pneuma', Most Holy Spirit of God, I praise You for being the Giver
of all spiritual gifts ... I trust you to pour into my life each day
all the 'giftings' that my life circumstances require
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You."*

*O 'Pneuma' Most Holy Spirit of God, produce within me the fruit of
Genuine Love that I might truly experience life's 'Most Excellent Way.'
Enable me to express that love fruitfully in all the circumstances
of my life as I walk in step with You and am filled by You."*

*O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – do 'Have Your Way' in me.
Sensitize me to the things that would 'Grieve' or 'Quench' you.
The last thing I ever want to do is 'Resist' you.
I surrender my will completely to you
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You."*

*"O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – walk me in the direction of
true earthly glory
by conforming me more and more to the Image of my Savior, Jesus.
Cause my life to shine with the Glory of His Grace and Goodness.
I yield complete control of my life to you
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You.*

*O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to maintain a
'Spirit of Thanksgiving' within me at all times for I know that such a
spirit greatly pleases You and releases You to do Your work in my life.
I will 'give thanks' in all things and for all things
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my daily life.

*Specifically, I will seek to more and more 'relinquish my hold' on whatever personal rights or privileges or agendas that the world or my flesh or the devil tell me I possess
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my daily life.

*Specifically, I will seek to function as a servant in my daily life.
Help me to accurately assess the needs of the people around me and help me to lovingly accommodate myself to them
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my daily life.

Specifically, I will seek to respond obediently to both the written and whispered Word of God.

*I willingly surrender myself to the Call of God upon my life
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I will seek to adopt the very Mindset of Christ as I go about my daily life.

*Specifically, I will 'embrace the death' of anything and everything that remains in me of my 'old fallen nature'
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*

O 'Pneuma' – Most Holy Spirit of God – I recognize that You alone can prepare me to spend eternity with Jesus as a member of His Bride.

*I desire to be one upon whom He can look with genuine pride and pleasure.
I resolve to place my hand in Yours each and every day of my life.
Perform your Ministry of Transformation within me
As I walk in step with You and am filled by You!*