

Crazy Uncle

The Holy Spirit

We are in our second week of this series called "All In" It is a series about that moment in your life when you decide to follow Jesus with everything you have, without any hesitation, and no matter what it costs you. True followers of Jesus reach a point in their walk when they must decide if they are all in.

I call these moments flash points. Moments in your life when you know you will never be the same again. Moments when you know you can never go back and be the person you used to be.

These moments are when you decide with the Spirit that you will go anywhere, do anything, at any time...as long as the Spirit leads you. It is a moment when you know you are no longer living your life for you....but rather for God. A moment when you realize you are available and expendable for a mission much greater than yourself. It is a moment when you are finally free and at peace, because you have placed all that you have into the hands of God.

We serve one God who manifests as three. All equally God. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Or as some of the old timers said when I was young...Behave or the Holy Ghost is going to get you!

That is part of the problem. We know how to relate to a Father...we may not know a kind benevolent Father but we get the relationship idea of a Father. And we can relate to Jesus, He came here as a man. Fully God and fully man...but we get how to relate to Him.

But when you get to the Holy Spirit....the relationship becomes weird. How do you relate to a Spirit? How do you relate to a GHOST! We know how to develop relationships with people....but this is like trying to have a relationship with the wind.

A lot of believers have never developed their relationship with the Holy Spirit. There is something that seems weird about Him. The Holy Ghost....The Holy Spirit....It is sort of like that Crazy Uncle that everyone seems to have.

Not real threatening....Not totally avoided...Just weird...everyone feels it but no one talks about him. You don't really know how to relate to him....You try, but it seems like there is a disconnect...you don't really understand him...can't really relate to him...yet you are related...and he keeps showing up.

Like your crazy uncle, the Holy Spirit wants have a relationship with you. Wants to connect with you. Has some important stuff to teach you. The Father we can imagine....Jesus people saw...but the Holy Ghost? The Holy Spirit? Not so much.

I guess if he was like Casper the friendly ghost...but this is our problem. I often say and will repeat in this series that I wish God had named the Holy Spirit Bob. That is by the way how I learned to develop a relationship with Him.

We will get to this in detail in this series, but the Scriptures are clear that the Holy Spirit is a person. He is a person. Keep repeating that until you know it. If it helps you to think of Him as Bob until that sinks in...ok.

It is critical to understand as we begin because you can only develop relationships with other living beings. The Holy Spirit is a person....the third PERSON of the Trinity.

He seems to be the Forgotten God. That crazy uncle we deal with but don't embrace. I believe the greatest challenge in the church today is the lack of relationship most believers have with the Holy Spirit.

Simply, we are often not Spirit led because we don't have a relationship with the Spirit. We are reborn Spiritual Beings...ignoring the very Spirit that empowers and leads us.

Now the Holy Spirit...He is often ignored...or misrepresented in churches...but He never draws attention to Himself. His sole purpose is to point to Jesus. So we never see Him.

Every Spiritual experience we have ever had is with the Holy Spirit but we say it is with Jesus. Jesus has been in heaven since His ascension. If you have had experiences with God it was the Holy Spirit that engaged with you.

We will learn that He is the one who pursues you, convicts you of sin, leads you to repentance, teaches all things, reveals all things, grows you... spiritually....gives you Spiritual gifts....grows within you Spiritual fruit.

The relationship that you think you have with Jesus....is actually with the Holy Spirit. But He never draws attention to Himself. He is fine giving Jesus all the glory.

John 16:13-15 (ESV) 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

He is the forgotten God...doing all the work....and glorifying Jesus all the time. It is not wrong to claim you have a relationship with Jesus....If the Holy Spirit is guiding youYou too will glorify Jesus and not Him. I just want you to know and realize where that desire comes from.

The whole of creation was created for the glory of Jesus Christ. As such, God pours out the Holy Spirit for the glory of Jesus Christ. If someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, they will make much of Jesus. Christ-less Christianity is a contradiction of terms; if you are filled with the Spirit you will glorify Jesus.

I believe that one of the ways you can discern if something, (healings tongues, prophecy), is from the Spirit or not....is this. Is the attention on Jesus or on the Spirit? If what happens glorifies Jesus it is likely from the Spirit. If what happens seems to glorify the Holy Spirit....it is probably not of God.

We will cover this in detail later. But know that the Holy Spirit never glorifies Himself...He glorifies Jesus. And we will learn, they are one in the same. One God three persons.

Flashpoint

In week one of this series, we studied Moses. He had some amazing experiences with God. We learned that God told Him.. "I know your name" God spoke to him like a man speaks to a friend. And yet we learned....that Moses wanted more.

He wants more...please show me your glory....again. Moses wanted a flashpoint. I want something supernatural to happen.

It is easy for us to want more...stuff...but Moses wanted more of God. After all Moses experienced....He still wanted more....Show me your glory...!

We are tempted all the time to have more stuff. To make our lives about gaining stuff...for us...on earth. But for those who follow Jesus...there is another longing. A longing like Moses...for more of God.

In the midst of the pleasures of this life...something is missing. We have this internal homing beacon that draws us home. It is a desire....to experience and be somewhere much better than this. It is a longing that comes from the Holy Spirit. The desire grows as you grow Spiritually.

Years ago, I was traveling the country in my old beat up car interviewing for residency programs. I had a seven week loop around the south...Duke, UNC, Vanderbilt, Memphis, Charleston, Emory, Gainesville, Jacksonville, and New Orleans were the highlighted stops.

Tammy flew out to Atlanta to join me for a few days. We saved up our money to get her there and I booked a 5 star hotel for the first few nights she joined me. We were excited. Graduating from Med School...Starting Residency and Yes Pregnant with our first child.

Within a few days of Tammy's arrival, she started to miscarry. I had to put her on a plane back to Dallas urgently and then drive home to be with her. I drove straight from Atlanta to home as fast as I could go.

I remember that feeling....I have to get home....nothing is more important than going home. I talked to Tammy several times and it boosted my spirits, but I was desperate to be home. To be with her....

That desire to go home. The need to be and feel AT home. Nothing satisfies you...Nothing can substitute for it...I just want to go home.

Is that how you feel? How you feel Spiritually? No matter what happens here on earth....there is a part of you that wants to go home? I find that the older I get, and more I understand the Holy Spirit, the stronger that pull becomes. I think it is one of the gifts given to us by God. It almost feels natural as you mature in your faith, as you mature in age, to long for home.

I long to be in a place of genuine love, true peace, unlimited joy, overflowing kindness, and an explosion of goodness. To be in a place where Jesus is honored and given the respect, authority, and glory that He deserves.

No sin, no death, no disease, no tears, no lying, no manipulation, no one taking advantage of anyone. Everyone in pure love pulling for one another, celebrating with one another, and encouraging one another. No pretenses, no hidden secrets, no jealous thoughts, no envy. Pure relationships. I could go on and on....but honestly as I get older...the pull to go home gets stronger

When I was younger, I thought Paul's statement was nuts.

Philippians 1:21-24 (ESV) 21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. 24 But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

As I get older, as I mature in my faith...I think I understand a bit more about what Paul was saying.

Honestly, the stronger your faith becomes....the more you understand and believe the promises of God...the more you embrace the certainty of God's promises....going home....just seems to fit. Yet God has called to work. So we stay here on His mission...but we long for home.

Jesus longed to go home.

In John 13, Jesus begins to tell the Disciples about going home

John 13:3-4 (ESV) 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

Jesus modeled for the disciples what He was leaving them here to do...you are to serve others. But...then the bombshell...

John 13:32-33 (ESV) 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'

Jesus says, I am leaving you here on mission. What mission? Next verse.

John 13:34–35 (ESV) 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

I am leaving you here....to love other people...and show them who I am.

Jesus knows it is His time to go home. His mission on earth will soon be accomplished. His Father is in Heaven....He longs to take His place there on the throne. He tells them that He will be back for them.

John 14:1–4 (ESV) 1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."

That is when the freak out starts....We have to connect with the emotions of the disciples in this moment to understand what Jesus is trying to teach us.

John 14:5 (ESV) 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

It is not in Scripture, but I would guess they would be thinking....What does that even mean? You are the way home...you are leaving!

It is great that you are coming back Jesus...but I am messed up right now Yes my sins are forgiven..but what about the ones I am getting ready to do now?

You see I am tempted...and feel powerless. I read your word...but I don't understand it

When people ask me about you- I don't know what to say I can't wrap my mind around you... How am I ever going to explain you to these people? I don't have the words...

I need strength and encouragement- but I feel powerless and hopeless I don't know where to go...or what to do...You can't leave us here. We don't know how to love the way you love.....we don't have the peace the you have.....you have a kindness we can't even fathom....we aren't good like you...Jesus we need you...We need you right here with us....We don't know what to do....You are powerful....you bring the miraculous...we don't.

They want to kill us because of you... How are we going to have the strength to avoid that...if you are not with us? That task you have given us is too big. We are not equipped. We need You....

And Just like we studied Moses in week 1, Jesus you are going away! ..if your presence will not go with me...with us.. I don't want to go....I can't live without you. You can't abandon us...the mission is just starting.

We know all about you Jesus...We were witnesses to what you did...it was all incredible...it was supernatural...You are God....that was God stuff we saw. You calmed storms, raised the dead, healed the sick....we have spent every moment for three years with you... But if you leave...We don't want to live...We will fail

But do you not understand that in the meantime....I NEED YOU I don't want your blessing..if I can't have your presence. I can't live...if living is without you.

When you understand the Disciples...their fears...their limitations...you begin to understand why Jesus said He was sending a Comforter.

John 14:15-17 (ESV) 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper (Comforter), to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:25-26 (ESV) 25 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper (Comforter), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 16:4-6 (ESV) "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart.

Jesus tells them that they should celebrate that His mission is accomplished...and be thrilled that He is going back to His place of Honor with the Father....but, they are thinking about themselves and are thus sorrowful.

John 16:7 (ESV) 7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Odd that Jesus felt compelled to say... I tell you the truth..Isn't that A given?

John 16:8-11 (ESV) 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

John 16:12-14 (ESV) 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Now it is Peter's turn to blurt out something...I love Peter...my favorite...

John 13:36-37 (ESV) 36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow

afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

We remember the next verse about denying Jesus before the rooster crows 3X But Peter's heart was broken... Jesus was going away...Peter is grieving. He would rather die than not go with Jesus

Yes Peter will fail...He will deny Jesus... But when that happens... Jesus is not beside him and the Promised Spirit was not in him

He had no chance....He knew it. Without Jesus He could do nothing. I would rather die than not go with you....because I will fail Peter may have denied Jesus... But He recognized his desperation and need for Jesus

Peter was ALL IN. He would do anything, go anywhere, at anytime. Just as long as Jesus was with Him. Without Jesus....Peter knew he would fail...and he is about to prove it...three times.

So what about you? How desperate are you....for His presence in your life?

Think about this...Jesus left the earth... He is right now..sitting at the Right Hand of the Father He is not here walking with you...He is not guiding you... He is not teaching you...reminding you...comforting you...or empowering you He is gone...He'll come back...but right now...He is gone.

Everything that you have seen or experienced on earth...has come from the Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit inspired the writers to write Scripture...Jesus was in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit convicted you of your sins, taught you the truth about Jesus, and led you back to God. Jesus is in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit has taught you everything that you know about Jesus. Jesus is in Heaven. He revealed the truth to you... He revealed the mysteries of God's word to you He is the one who prompts you to stay on your knees and in the word. Jesus is in Heaven.

If anything of God has happened in your life..it was the Holy Spirit that did it.

Every experience we have had with God in our lifetime Has been mediated and driven... By the Holy Spirit.

So why does it seem...that He is the Forgotten God?

Bill Bright was the President of Campus Crusades for Christ He guides us (John 16:13), empowers us (Mic. 3:8) and makes us holy (Rom. 15:16). He bears witness in our lives (Rom. 8:16), comforts us (John 14:16-26), gives us joy (Rom. 14:17)... As our teacher of spiritual truths, the Holy Spirit illuminates our minds with insights into the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:12,13) and reveals to us the hidden things of God (Isa. 40:13,14)... As you are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Bible becomes alive, prayer becomes vital, your witness becomes effective and

obedience becomes a joy. Then, as a result of your obedience in these areas, your faith grows and you become more mature in your spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit is key to Christian Life No matter how much you know about the Bible... No matter how much you discipline yourself... No matter how hard you try to serve and please God... If you are not connected to the Holy Spirit... Your Christian walk will stagnate...

The Christian life is not a ritual or a set of teachings but rather a relationship. He was given to us to make our walk with Christ experiential- to make Jesus real.

That is why Jesus told His disciples to wait until they were fully empowered before going out into the world and trying to represent Him.

Luke 24:46-49 (ESV) 46 And said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

The dynamic full life that Jesus promised to believers is a natural outgrowth of intimate friendship with God, the Holy Spirit

So why do we have such a hard time? Why does it seem so hard to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Humans can't have a relationship with someone unless we see them as a person

Many Christians can't relate to the Holy Spirit Because they don't understand who He is They think of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal "higher power" Like the mysterious force in Star Wars They treat Him like a power plug on the wall...just want to plug in and get what they need.

The First thing we must know...the Holy Spirit is a Person... Come back next week and we will cover that

As we start this journey to better understand Him. I want us to spend some time at the altar in prayer. I want us to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in this church.

All believers have an upper room moment in their Spiritual walk. They understand, believe and know that Jesus died on the cross, paid for their sins, resurrected and ascended to heaven. They have few doubts about that. They have surrendered to Jesus and received His gift of Salvation. They have been baptized. But now what?

Now the Holy Spirit who dwells in you...leads you to your upper room. That place where you realize that Jesus could take you up straight to heaven the moment that you believe....and yet He didn't...He left us here. Why?

So that we can love people like He did and share the gospel with them. We are still here because we are on a mission for God and He has work to do through us.

We have two choices really. We can go out into the world and try to pretend to represent Jesus through our own efforts....a path destined to fail but well traveled in churches.

Or we can ask God to send the Holy Spirit to us...We can get on our knees, express our need to God, and beg Him to empower us so that we can share the gospel with others.

Luke 11:13 (ESV) 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

James 4:2-3 (ESV) You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

So....you have experienced Jesus....You have surrendered to Jesus....But you are here on earth and He is not. He said to wait until you receive power from on High. You know you are helpless...to go show the world what Jesus did. You have been His follower....not His sole representative. You know you are not Him and if you try to be Him you will surely fail. Something extreme better happen. You need a flashpoint.

Jesus has promised to send the Helper to you...You don't fully understand Him...but He is a person...like Jesus...He is not going to walk with you...but rather come into you. Just as Jesus was born as the Holy Spirit came over Mary....You will be born spiritually as the Holy Spirit comes into you.

Some right now...starting to get nervous You grew up in a conservative church... You tend to have a conservative theology...me too

When we start talking about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit You begin to get a little nervous. Are we going to become one of those weird churches? Are you going to flop people, are people going to vibrate and stuff? I hope he doesn't go there...

But let's be totally honest here... When you read this book...and you read what the Holy Spirit does When you read the passages about the Holy Spirit... Doesn't your own Spirit start to stir?

Don't you feel something inside of you saying "there is so much more"? I know that there is more than what I have experienced

I know it is not all about experience and feelings...I know it must align with Scripture But The Scriptures say there is something more. Something supernatural

And if the Spirit of God is in me... And it is better than having Jesus right next to me There sure was a lot going on when Jesus was here And there has to be more going on inside of me...in my life...as the Spirit lives through me

If I have the power to do more than Jesus.. Shouldn't my life be exploding? Shouldn't there be a lot more supernatural going on in my life? If the Holy Spirit of God really does live in me Doesn't your Spirit cry out...I know there is something more...and I have to have it

I don't know what it looks like For you...For me....For our church Those in the upper room...had no idea what it was going to look like either They just wanted all the help and power that Jesus promised

They didn't know...and we don't know what the Holy Spirit is going to do He is like the wind...He comes and goes and does as He pleases.

When I read the Bible...When I read about the Holy Spirit...my first thought is... There's more...I know that there is more

There is more that He wants from me...More that He wants to do through me He wants me to experience so much more... This is not all that God has for me on this earth My guess is that you feel the same way too. There is more..and the Holy Spirit will bring it. And I want us to pray for that

Just like the Apostles in the Upper Room God I don't understand it all... But you told me to pray for the power from on High Before I go to witness or do anything in your name Like them...I don't know what it looks like.... But I want more

Because I am tired of reading this book... Knowing there is more... And not seeing your power in my life. I am going to start us out in prayer...and then the altar is open. We are going to have an extended time of prayer. We need to be more empowered from on high. Lets pray.

God...I am praying for a flashpoint in my life. I want everything that you have planned for me. But I want it for one reason and one reason only. I want more of the Spirit So that I can use my life to glorify you. I have been selfishly praying for more of your Spirit hoping it would make my life easier. I don't have because I have been asking for the wrong motives. But now God, I am starting to understand. The Holy Spirit...He is teaching me to live for something much greater than just me...my needs and my wants.....

God I am doing my best to go ALL IN. I don't care what happens to me, what you do through me, how you want to use me, what you require me to go through, IF the Holy Spirit is truly leading my life....all I can do is what He does... glorify you. That is what I am praying for...God I need a flashpoint in my life....I need the upper room experience. Please God remove anything from me that keeps me from receiving all that the Holy Spirit wants to give to me. I am committing today....to be all in....the altars are open....take your time...we are going to abide this morning.