

“THE GRIEVING AND THE QUENCHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

First Christian Reformed Church

May 26, 2013, 10:30AM

Scripture Texts: Ephesians 4:30-32; I Thessalonians 5:19-22

Introduction.

Last Sunday we spoke of the receiving and filling of God’s gift of His Holy Spirit. Whenever God gives a gift, the gift reflects the giver. His gifts are huge, they are extravagant, they are generous, they are over the top, they are the best. They are what you would expect from someone like God.

For centuries before Christ God’s Spirit was only given to a few people and sometimes only at special times. His Spirit would come and go. For centuries the presence of God Himself was localized in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies at the mercy seat over the Ark of the Covenant between the two seraphim.

Then Jesus came. In Him dwelt the fullness of God in human form, the Immanuel, God with us. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. After Jesus, the Father and the Son sent the promised Holy Spirit. The Temple was no more. Each believer became the temple of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling place of God.

This indwelling of this great gift has huge effects. By the Holy Spirit we are raised from the dead and born again into new life. By the Holy Spirit we are united with Jesus Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places. By Him we are filled with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, we are given power and victory over sin and temptation. By Him we are sanctified so that the good work that was begun in us is brought to completion. By Him we are enlarged in our ability to love God, to live and walk by faith, to forgive and serve others, to die to ourselves, and take risks for the sake of the kingdom. By the Holy Spirit we are sealed for the great day of redemption.

Here is the promise to all of us from Ephesians 1 concerning the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, **14** who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

The Holy Spirit is the seal and promise and down payment of God which guarantees our future inheritance. What a promise, what an inheritance, what a gift from God.

I remind us of this so that when we read that we can quench the Holy Spirit or that we can grieve the Holy Spirit it might stir up a greater response in our hearts, so that we might actually recoil from such a thought and take what Scripture says seriously, take it to heart, and seek by God’s grace and every other means possible not to do that.

First, what’s the difference between Paul’s two warnings, “do not **quench** the Spirit” (I Thessalonians 5:19) and “do not **grieve** the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30)?

Quenching the Spirit is what we do, grieving the Spirit is what the Spirit does in response to what we do. When we quench the Spirit, the Spirit grieves. The Spirit grieves when we quench Him. They are two sides of the same problem.

The word quench here doesn't mean quench a thirst as in satisfying a thirst. It means quench as in douse or put out or suppress. It has a negative connotation here.

I like how the NIV translates it here, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire" (NIV).

It's used in Mark 9:48 for putting out a fire and in Matthew 25:8 for putting out a lamp. That's what it means, to extinguish, as in pouring water on a fire.

How do you put out the Spirit's fire? Well, let's start with the implied analogy. How do you quench a fire? **Two ways.**

By dousing it with water or dirt, meaning by our direct actions; or by ignoring it and letting it die out, by our inaction or lack of attention.

There are **two examples in the OT** of men who both by their actions and by their neglect quenched the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In **Judges 13** and following we read of the life of **Samson**. We know from Scripture that he was a man filled with an incredible power from the Holy Spirit. God blessed him and raised him up to be a judge and deliverer for Israel. But he abused his power and he neglected it and wasted it in disobedience and sin. The Spirit of the Lord was quenched and left him (Judges 16:20).

In **I Samuel 15 and 16** we read of the life of **King Saul** and his disobedience. He did not listen to God and rejected the word of the Lord. He willfully did something God told Him not to do and didn't do something He was told to do and so the Spirit was taken from him and given to David.

Consider seriously with me what Scripture says about quenching and grieving the Holy Spirit.

In **I Thessalonians 5:19** Paul makes this general plead, don't quench the Holy Spirit or don't put out the Spirit's fire.

What does Paul mean? We can begin by looking at the context. Just *before* this Paul has listed several instructions to the Christians in the church in Thessalonica (vss. 12-18).

Respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord (pastors, elders, teachers).

Strive for peace in your relationships with each other.

Don't be lazy, help the weak, be patient with each other.

Make sure that you don't repay evil for evil with anyone.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances.

He closes by saying this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

To the extent that we resist or deny or neglect or ignore these things, to that extent we are quenching the work of the Holy Spirit.

Do we love, honor and pray for those that God has placed in spiritual authority over us?

Are we living at peace with each other, or is there strife and grumbling and complaining and gossip? Are we diligent or lazy? Are we using our time fruitfully or wasting it on worthless pursuits or pastimes?

Do we repay evil with revenge, or backbiting or bitterness or anger?

Do our attitudes and actions reflect Christ and glorify God? This is what the Spirit comes to do in our lives, to transform us to live and act like Jesus in daily practical ways.

God has created you and gifted you and filled you with His Holy Spirit for good works. What are you doing? How are you using this precious gift and promise that has been made to you? Do you even think about it?

Right *after* our text Paul lists three more things that can quench the Spirit (vss. 20-22).

Don't despise prophecies; don't despise the Word of God by neglecting the Word of God. Hold fast to what is good and abstain from what is evil.

Prophets and prophecies in the NT generally don't refer to predicting or telling the future. It refers to rightly dividing the Word of God, receiving it for edification, encouragement, admonishment and rebuke.

The Spirit of God's great work is the Word of God. Jesus promised that He would send His Spirit of Truth to teach us all truth and to guide us into all truth. Where there is the Spirit, there is truth, there is doctrine, there is faithful preaching and reading and believing.

For this reason alone it's safe to say that the Holy Spirit is being quenched in America today. Doctrine and truth are being watered down, ignored, and denied. God is deeply grieved by what's going on in churches and denominations today.

In our world today we *call good evil and evil good*. We call abortion freedom of choice; we call killing old people mercy killing or death with dignity; we call sodomy gay. We call lies, little white lies; we call gossip, prayer requests. Be aware of this tendency and fight it. Resist the devil and his lies and traps. Be aware of what you watch, see, hear, do and what you wink at or let pass or slide by. The world, the flesh and the devil are like dirt and water that douse the Spirit's fire.

Hear Paul's warning to Timothy in II Timothy which could have been written today.

II Timothy 3:1 ... in the last days there will come times of difficulty. **2** For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **4** treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

Avoid such things and such people, they quench and grieve the Spirit.

Listen to this description of the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit in Galatians.

Galatians 5:17-25 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you

want to do. ... **19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, **21** envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

We need to consider more seriously how we are constantly in danger from the world, the flesh and the devil. We carry this flesh around with us everywhere we go, we are never free from it nor are we ever free from its desires. The flesh quenches the Spirit.

Too much earth quenches the fire. The dirt of the world will stifle our Spirit's fire. What are we taking in, who are the voices we listen to most? The old computer term really applies. GIGO – garbage in, garbage out.

Isaiah 59:2 but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

I Peter 3:10 For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11** let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

We quench the Spirit when we trust or depend on the world and worldly ways. We quench the Spirit when we don't believe God can help us or think our problems are too big or beyond the reach of God; when we don't look to the Holy Spirit to give us our victory over sin; when we try to improve our lives by doing better, being better and trying harder. That is flesh over Spirit and that quenches the Spirit.

[The work of sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit by which He separates us farther and farther from our sin and sinful ways and sinful habits and desires.

Just as quickly as we can douse the fire, so we can fuel the fire and fan the flames.

II Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to *fan into flame the gift of God*, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, **7** for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. **13** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, **14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Not by our own goodness or strength but by consciously relying of the help of the Spirit. What would be the fruit or change in our lives if we started each day with a prayer for refilling and refueling.

“Spirit of the living God, Spirit of Christ, fill me afresh today, fill me with your power and presence, enable me by your strength to resist the devil, enable me today to walk not in the flesh but by your Spirit, enable me to walk by faith and not by sight, enable me to love today, to love you and to you my neighbor and those closest to me. Today, Lord, more light, more heart, more fire, more power and presence, more of Jesus. Lord, pour more gas on the fire, add logs. Thank you that with you there is no shortage, no limit to your supply.”

Philippians 4:19 My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. **20** To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Application and conclusion:

The old Green Bay Packers QB Bart Starr is quoted in a book about his coach Vince Lombardi, “To win, you have to have a certain amount of mental toughness. Coach Lombardi gave me that. He taught me that you must have a flaming desire to win. It's got to dominate all your waking hours. It can't ever wane. It's got to glow all the time” (p 86).

It's got to glow all the time.

Did any of you have a parent or a Grandma or Grandpa who said, “I like to keep a good fire?” In days past much depended on keeping a good fire burning. The Jews had a similar perspective.

“Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.” (Leviticus 6:13)

God is the source of fire. He starts it and He fuels it. It's His gift. He sends it down from heaven. Don't quench it and instead keep it burning.

Let's us not forget that one of God's chief purposes for us on earth is "to wean our hearts from things below and cause us to set our affection on things above" (Pink, *Elijah*, 49) on the things of the Holy Spirit.

II Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to *fan into flame the gift of God*, which is in you.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit of the Living God, power and presence of Holiness, eternal flame, we acknowledge that we have grieved you again and again by quenching you. Here you are dwelling in us, living with us and our words and actions are hurting and offending you constantly. And in order to stop quenching you, we have to ask you to show us first of all how we are doing that each day and then we have to ask you to give us the power and strength and will to stop. But Holy Spirit if you don't do this then we will fall prey to the world, the flesh and the devil. Help us, light a fire in our souls that burns up the sin and the sinful desires, burn up the pride and selfishness, the gossip and rumor spreading, the judging and critical spirit, the way we talk about each other. Make us a congregation of people who love and care and bless, who speak in a way that edifies and builds up those around us. Make us a congregation on fire, burning for your glory, a light on a hill, spreading peace and joy to this community. Come, Holy Spirit, fall afresh on us. For the sake of the name of Jesus and the glory of the Father, Amen.