

The Upper Room

Sermon #9: “You Should Leave, Jesus”

John 16:6-13

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- May 21, 2023

Good morning, Grace! I have some great news ... great news for us. I have a new grandbaby, a new granddaughter. Boom! Rosemary Jane Cassidy. Twice the fun now. I saw a great quote: “Grandparents are here to help the child get into mischief they haven’t thought of yet.” So, I am playing my part here. Anyway, I thought you’d want to know ... people have been asking.

Jesus Tells His Disciples That He Will Be Leaving

Hey, if you’ll turn in your Bibles to John chapter 16, we’re finishing up on our series on the Upper Room. This is our ninth week here. Just to remind you of the context, this is the night that Jesus is betrayed. And literally, just hours before He’s going to be tortured and then executed, He’s with His eleven faithful disciples (they’re faithful up to this point, for sure). And He’s going to give them their last set of most intimate teaching. But they just don’t seem to understand what’s happening. They don’t grasp many of the words that Jesus is saying. They think it’s just another amazing Passover with the Messiah himself ... here it is.

And somewhere in there ... they hear Jesus say it multiple times ... but they grasp it when He says, “I am going to leave you.” And they’re just shocked. So, He says, “Let not your heart be troubled.” Then He says, “My peace I leave you. My peace I give you.” And then He says again, “Let not your heart be troubled.” And in between those exclamations of “Do not let your heart be troubled,” He’s going to tell us so many different reasons why it’s really good that He leaves.

As a matter of fact, if they were able to hear through the fear and the confusion, the disciples should have said, “You know, Jesus, You should leave.” Can you imagine? *Jesus, you should leave.* I can’t imagine saying that. But that’s the message that Jesus says. He says it twice.

John 14:28-29

You heard me say, “I am going away and I am coming back to you.” If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father.”

John 16:6-7

Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

In chapter 14 He says, “You heard me say that I’m going away and that I’m coming back to you. If you love me, you would be glad that I’m going to be with the Father.” And then in chapter 16 (and we’re going to look at this today), He says, “Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you.”

So, *Jesus You should leave ...* He gives multiple reasons why it’s good that He leaves. He says, *I’m leaving because I’m going to prepare a home for you.* He says, “In my Father’s house there are many rooms. I’m going to prepare those rooms for you.” The family of God will be living under one rooftop.

Well, Jesus, You should leave, then.

Later on He’ll say that He’s going to give us an eternal mission. Jesus says, *I’m leaving and I’m delegating a purpose and a meaning in life to you. You’re going to do what I’ve been doing and even more so.*

Well, that’s awesome. Jesus, You should leave then.

He’s going to tell us that we are in continual prayer; that He promises that if you ask anything in His name, He’ll do that, so that the Son can glorify the Father. If you ask anything that’s going to give glory to the Father in the context of what His divine will might be, He’s going to answer that. We’re in constant communication with the triune God.

So, Jesus, You should leave.

Jesus Will Send a Constant Companion, the Holy Spirit

John 16:7

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate/Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

And then here's one more reason that we're going to look at. And that is the constant companion, the Holy Spirit. This is the introduction to the Holy Spirit in the entire Bible, for the most part. In verse 7, He says, "But very truly I tell you, it is for you own good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate/Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."

John 16:8-11

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.

So, today we're going to look at another introduction to the Holy Spirit. We saw that in our third week of the series, I think. And now, today, specifically, Jesus is going to send the Holy Spirit so that we might experience a supernatural salvation. Look what it says in verses 8 through 11: "And when the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer." And verse 11: "Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

He's sending the Advocate, the Counselor. Think of these words in the legal context. The counselor is like a lawyer. *Hey, counselor, you need to defend your client.* In the context of the Holy Spirit coming as an advocate and as a counselor, He comes working both sides. He comes to advocate for us to the Father, but He also comes as a prosecuting attorney to convict us. And you can see that in this passage. He's going to convict us of various things.

How Is It That Christianity Has Survived?

Before we look at this, I want us to just stop and ponder this historic truth. How is that Christianity has survived two thousand years against all odds? It is the graveyard of empires. Christianity goes into an empire, the empire can come or go or die, and Christianity thrives in that. And when you think about it, the messengers themselves ... look at the people that Jesus sends out. They're common people: fishermen, accountants, whatever. And they don't have a lot of status, is the point. And they're from Israel. They're Jewish. And that has no clout, politically speaking, in those times. And Jesus sends those people out and says, *Go out into the world and turn it upside down.* And if the messengers themselves are quite bland, the message is humorous at best and insulting at worst. You'd have to hear it for the first time; we've gotten too used to it.

But think about what's happening in the message itself to the two major audiences. First to the Jews. The Jews are hearing this message from these common people, that the one true God, the uncreated Creator, the King of all the universe, has become a penniless, itinerant preacher who was eventually crucified by Rome and is not going to set the nation of Israel free. And if that weren't bad enough, the message of Jesus is that the most righteous are in a moral debt that they can't fathom; their most righteous actions are like filthy, stinking rags in the presence of God. That's not a nice message—not to that audience.

Then you look at the Greco-Roman audience that's all around. Most of them are in the intellectual community and are disciples of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. They would believe in what were called "ideals" like truth and beauty and justice. They were the immaterial ideals. And they had to be immaterial, because the purity required them to be not in the physical world. And the message to them was that those ideals became historic particulars, something that could be touched. And not only that, but flesh. They thought the human body couldn't contain those sorts of perfection. And that flesh was executed as a criminal in a no-count suburb of Rome. And

if that weren't bad enough, the message said that unless you believe the teachings of Jesus, you're not just lost; you're a fool. The Greeks didn't like being called fools.

So, you look at the messengers that were sent and the message itself, and you have to wonder how it lasted five months to two years? It's a historical question. Why would anyone listen to that? And how does Christianity continue to survive in every part of the world, in every empire, in almost any circumstance (except prosperity, in many ways)? And the Gospel message just continues to bury the pallbearers that think they're going to put this thing down.

You might be thinking, *Well, they had dedicated followers*. Well, there are a lot of religious and irreligious groups that have very dedicated followers that will give their lives for whatever that message might be. What does Christianity have? If you're thinking, *A resurrected Savior*, then you're right. That's for sure. That's a significant part of the message—Easter, the resurrection story itself.

But in the context of what we're looking at right here, I want us to focus on this: that the reason Christianity thrives is because it's not like anything else. It's not different in degree, it's different in kind. It is a supernatural salvation. Because Jesus leaves to send the Advocate, the Counselor. In other words, Jesus didn't just send the disciples out on mission; He is sending the Holy Spirit as a missionary. The Holy Spirit is a missionary. And He goes ahead of all the messengers and convicts the souls of people in sin and righteousness and judgment. You can't take the Holy Spirit out of this equation, because He's an integral part.

The Bible clearly says that Christianity is different in kind, not in degree, because it is intrinsically changing. It is something that happens in our spirit that breaks out in our beliefs and in our lifestyle. It says that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, invades our ego and causes it to break out with a whole new paradigm of life. More than courageous messengers, it's the Holy Spirit that proceeds the message itself. That's what Jesus is saying here. It's a supernatural salvation.

The Holy Spirit's Role: To Convict

Jesus sends that Advocate, the Counselor, to (it says) convict. Again, just be thinking about what we're going to look at today. A prosecuting attorney putting any and every soul on the stand and just going back and forth, interrogating them, cross-examining them, boxing us into this inescapable awareness of a shadow life that we live that we cannot escape and believe

that we could have a right standing before God without a supernatural intervention from Him. He invades our moments of reflection. And hopefully this is your story—where it’s on a long walk, or in the shower, or during a restless night, or while driving to work. The tranquility of our life under control is now in violation because the Spirit comes in and He convicts us. He convicts us of our sin, not sins. He convicts us of a need for an external or a foreign righteousness. He convicts us that we should be living under a different ruler.

As a disciple of Christ, when we look at this passage together, here’s what I want us to do. If you’re already a follower of Christ, I want you to look at it in retrospect, in remembrance. And I want you to see how the Spirit was working in your life, maybe, with new awareness; that it didn’t just happen. It was the Holy Spirit pulling and pushing all along. I want you to see how absolutely necessary it was for the Holy Spirit to be involved in these three different expressions of conviction.

And then, if you’re seeking Christianity, I want you to realize why you might be so restless and why you might be having thoughts that you haven’t had before; why your soul feels stirred up. There are three reasons.

1. Conviction of Sin

John 16:9

Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.

One is the conviction of sin. Verse 9: “Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.” He doesn’t say, “Concerning sins …” That’s easy for any of us to admit that we’ve done something wrong or committed some crime, or a vice in our lives. He says, “sin”—singular. And the reason we need to be convicted of sin—He’s connecting it—is “because they do not believe in me.” They don’t believe in the one true God and they do not believe in the one He sent, Jesus, and His message. And this has to be first. Because the message of the Gospel is entirely contingent on our need to understand that we have a problem. If we don’t think we have a problem, we might be kind of upset that we’re getting a solution thrown at us.

Have you ever tried to help someone find the need to go and see medical help, go see a doctor? You sit down with them and say, *Hey, you have all the symptoms of this particular illness. Let's go to the internet. I've got a pamphlet.* That's when you really win the argument, right? *I've got a pamphlet.* That's why they have pamphlets at the doctor's office. It's for you to understand what you might have, so you'll have a talk; or, for you to give to your friend and say, *You need this.* You're being an advocate for health. You're trying to convince them, convict them, that they need something that they don't think they need.

Here's another way of looking at it. Remember before we had smart phones and all the fancy ways of getting around the world? Remember when we just went places? How long does it take a man to admit that he needs to stop for directions? Remember those days?

You're lost.

I'm not lost.

And then eventually, it's *See, honey, here we are. Lake Buchanan.*

And then she says, *That's the Pacific Ocean. I told you we were lost.*

A person won't ask for help until they feel they need help. When the student is ready, the teacher appears. The Holy Spirit's job is to get us ready so that the teacher would reappear. His job is to convict us that we can't fix this and we need to be open to an answer of what can. He will convict us, not of sins, but of sinfulness. And it has to happen first. The love for our Savior will be equal to the desperation of our problem. So, if we don't think we have a problem and we hear the message of the Gospel, we're annoyed. That makes perfect sense. It's an insult. If we think we have a small problem, then we might think, *That's a nice message. Thanks for the help.* If we realize that we're helpless and hopeless, now we can fully appreciate what the message is and the Savior himself.

And the Bible says this: that we would be overflowing with gratitude; that we would be living off of love if we believe what the Spirit is saying to be true. And that is that the only way that we could possibly be acquitted in the eyes of God from our debt and our shame and the powerlessness that we live in is through believing in the one true God and the one He sent, Jesus the Christ who died and rose again to make it right. That's what He's out to do. That's what He's trying to convince us of. If we don't see the problem, we can't appreciate all that God has done for us.

Jesus does the math in real time. He's showing us the algebra equation here. It's not a parable—it's happening. Jesus is visiting a religious leader, and when He comes in He's greeted at the door. They're having dinner. And then the dinner is crashed by a woman of ill repute. And she falls to the ground at His feet and then starts washing His feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. She's kissing His feet and then breaks this vial of perfume all over. If you've missed it before, you can smell it now. It's causing quite a stir. And some people start talking and wondering if Jesus knew who she was and what she had done. If He did, maybe He wouldn't be so agreeable to what's happening here. Jesus knows that. And that's when He does the math that we're talking about.

He says, "Simon, let me ask you a question. If somebody's been forgiven much, they love much, right?"

Simon says, "Yeah."

"And if they've been forgiven a little debt, they love little, right?"

"Yeah. I get it."

"Well, here's the thing. When I walked through your door, no one washed my feet, which is customary. But look at her. She's washing my feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. When I came through the threshold here there was not even a welcome kiss. She won't stop kissing my feet. When people come in, it's usual that we are greeted with having oil poured over our head. I got none of that from you. And look at her ... precious perfume, not on my head, but on my feet. So, what you're seeing here is a person who's been forgiven much, and now she loves much."

And it's very unfortunate; the whole room says, "Oh ... yeah, she has a lot of sins." And that is not what Jesus is saying. She understood her sinfulness. Those religious leaders were just as sin-filled. They thought it was about sins. It's the Spirit of God that comes in and says, *No, these little pricks of your conscience are not what He's after.* It's about the very nature of our spirit before God.

The Spirit comes in and says, *Look, I've got to convict you of sin because you don't believe you need a Savior, because you don't believe in Jesus.* In the deepest part of your soul you think, *I got this. I am presentable to God.*

There are usually two avenues that people go through when they think they don't need a Savior, when they think they're presentable. One is self-righteousness. They think they're doing

enough good things. Sometimes it's temperamental. Sometimes it's compliant personalities that are highly disciplined. And they can just keep a lot of the rules. And they look around, especially when they find themselves comparing themselves to others—because that's their standard—and they win. And they're especially gravitating towards people against whom they do win.

I remember when I was younger we had a good friend who—good night, he was a big troublemaker. And that's why we were friends. His name was Bill. And when he changed his life and became a follower of Christ, his lifestyle changed. Now what was really funny was that a lot of our friends started deeply resenting Bill, not because he was a troublemaker, but because he was now a follower of Christ. They resented him because of his new moral standard of living. And there were a couple of near fights that broke out, and finally we were able to sit some of the guys down and figure it out. Here's why: they hated his goodness because it made them look bad. See, there was always Bill ... *Well, I'm not as bad as Bill.* Well, Bill became like Christ, and now they're thinking, *Uh-oh. Who's at the bottom of the righteousness pile now?* Their standard was broken and they saw themselves for what they were.

When a person living in this self-righteous way finds themselves embarrassed by sin, it's not sin against God; it's against their own reputation of being “that guy” or “that person,” “that girl.” And so, the Holy Spirit comes into that life and says, *You're good, but it's not good enough. It won't work with the standards of God.* And when the Spirit comes in, He'll reveal that even your good works are putrid in the presence of God. And it makes a person want to pursue what God has available, what Jesus' claims are.

Another way that people try to find themselves presentable to God is not this self-righteous and moralistic living. It's a version of that. It's through self-hatred. It looks like it's the opposite of this, but they're very related. It's when a person does something wrong and they say, *I hate, hate, hate myself.* Self-loathing is a form of penance for this type of personality. And they think this: that if they beat themselves enough and hate themselves enough, they will crucify themselves. They'll pay for their sins. Then they'll be acceptable. They'll come into the presence of God and say, *Look how loathsome I am towards my own evil.* And the Spirit of God comes into that life and convicts them, not of their sins, but of their sinfulness, and says, *Your best penance can't fix this. You don't fully grasp the depths of your crimes against God. And you've got to give up on earning your position in the presence of God by your self-hatred.*

He convicts some that their good is not good enough. And He convicts others that their bad is not bad enough. He convicts all that they need a Savior. He “convicts them of sin because they do not believe in me.” And so, you give up hope in this self-righteousness, or you give up hope in this self-penance, and you surrender your debt to God.

Do you remember the moment in your life when you said to God these two words? *I quit. I'm not trying anymore. I can't be good enough, and I can't hate myself enough. I've got to leave this economy.* That was the Spirit of God convicting you of sin. And it's time to believe in the message and messenger, Jesus Christ.

2. Conviction of Righteousness

The second thing the Spirit does—it says He convicts of righteousness. This is interesting.

John 16:10

Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer.

It says, “Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you will see me no longer.” It's not just that the Spirit is going to convince us and convict us that we have this debt to pay. And it's not that Jesus' death and resurrection zeroes out our debt or our balance to God. We find ourselves needing more to be in His presence. In other words, we can't just go there with dreadful, stinking clothes on. Now we've got those taken off with justification. But how do we get clothed in righteousness?

The Bible says that the Spirit convicts us that we need a different kind of righteousness—not our own. In Romans chapter 1, Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation ...” And then soon after that he says that this “righteousness comes through faith, not by works.” The Spirit convicts us that there's this infinite gap between our lives, even justified, and the holiness of God. And that gap has to be filled by the righteousness of Christ, of Jesus. We don't need to be made better; we need to be made new.

Another phrase is “a foreign righteousness” given to us. And how do we get the foreign righteousness? It's a gift.

The second part of this conviction here is the understanding that it's not my righteousness that needs to be improved upon; that I have nothing to bring in the context of having an audience with the holiness of God. I need His righteousness given to me as a gift. It is a gift, just like all parts and all aspects of salvation. It is a blessing from God, so we talk about God all the time.

It's interesting—here's the way it might roll out in your life. Here's how it sounds sometimes. We have a forgiveness experience in our life, and then we have this intuitive thought: *Okay, I've been forgiven. Now I need to get to work. He's granted me a debt-free life, morally speaking. And now He's zeroed out my account. Now I have to earn His love.* They're still on this earning thing. They still think that something has to happen from themselves to Him.

And then, boom! The Spirit comes and convicts them about righteousness, because He's returned to the Father. He's sitting at the right hand of the Father. And He is arguing our case, saying, *That righteousness that man or woman has is my righteousness.*

Sometime it happens to us—it's a strange event. Many of you have some kind of church experience in this second conviction where you grew up going to a good Bible-teaching church. You memorized Holy Writ, good verses that are true. You sang hymns that are full of beautiful doctrine about righteousness. But you're still on this treadmill of trying to earn God's love and favor so that He will like you. Then ... boom! You realize that working on your own goodness ... you start recalling ... here's what I'm trying to get you to remember. Remember the time that you recalled a Bible verse that you memorized so that you could get some badge? It was all about the badges anyway. And now you read it, and maybe it's from Galatians where it says, "What God began as a gift are you now going to perfect in works? What?" He says, "You foolish Galatians, what you began in the Spirit are you going to perfect in works? What?" And then just a little later on it will say, "If righteousness could be had through works, then Christ died needlessly. Why send a Savior if you could do this?" And you see it and you think, *It was there all the time.*

Salvation by grace; righteousness is included in that. It's imputed, it's imparted. It's outside us, it's foreign, it's given to us. It's the righteousness of Jesus. That's the conviction. And when that happens, we find ourselves at peace with God and no longer working; just receiving.

The Spirit convicts of sinfulness. And self-righteousness and self-loathing doesn't work. We believe in the message and messenger. And now we're convicted of righteousness, that all

the necessary things are required and we don't have shame before God; we have honor that we've received from Jesus.

Conviction of Judgment

John 16:11

Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

And the last thing that the Spirit does is to convict us of judgment. Listen, this is about power. Verse 11: "Concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." The Prince of the world has been cast out. Know this, if this is all you hear. Salvation is about who has a right to rule creation. That's why we pray in the Lord's Prayer "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *It's Your kingdom, it's Your rule.*

And so, what's happening here is that, concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been defeated, has been judged, has been cast out—if you're not following Jesus—if He's not ruling your life—then you're being ruled by the world, by Satan and by his schemes. And usually it looks like you being ruled by your own ego. When you do whatever you want you're just dancing to the tunes of the devil. And when we're convicted of judgment, we are set free from that. We realize that we don't have to live with that anymore. The Bible says ... well, you know what? Bob Dylan says, "You may serve the devil or you may serve the Lord, but you're going to serve somebody." And the conviction of the Spirit is that judgment is over. You don't have to serve the devil anymore.

Romans 6:16-18

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.¹⁷ Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.¹⁸ Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

Paul says it like this. “Don't you realize that you become a slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can become a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin”—but it came under judgment—“but now you wholeheartedly obey the teaching we have given you. Now you are free from your slavery to sin so that you can become slaves to righteous living.”

Now that you're free (because judgment has happened to the evil one and your evil ego)—you are now free to be slaves to God and His righteousness. Now there's a new king in your life. It's not your self-centeredness. Now the King is Jesus. Now you pray the prayer “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in my life as it will be done in heaven.”

Look at the power that we're talking about here. If you look at this passage, there are at least three applications that I came up with kind of quick, if you don't mind. The first one is, in your conversations and your heartfelt desire to help someone understand the Gospel and the claims of Jesus Christ, sometimes we can feel defeated or discouraged, or sometimes, even angry. And a lot of times, it's because we're not playing our part. If you look at this passage carefully, it says, *Look, play your part. Stay in your lane. Let the Holy Spirit do the heavy lifting.* You can't convict someone of sin. It's too deep of an issue. It's a supernatural event. Don't be trusting in your eloquence.

So, in your conversation, one of the best things you can do for a friend or a family member—someone you want to talk to about Christ—is, according to this, pray. Pray for the Holy Spirit to do His work in that person's life; that the Holy Spirit would go and have an ego-piercing conviction to convince them of sin and righteousness and judgment. And then you come in and just speak truth and love. So, I just want to remind you that prayer is the power, because the power is in the Holy Spirit.

In your own life, I feel like that just a review of what the Spirit has done in our lives is a trip down memory lane. It's a very good and powerful thing. Sometimes we forget how bad we were and all that Christ has done for us. When we see what the Spirit is doing in our life, we're supposed to be living as we are infinitely loved. And because of that we're released and have freedom to obey. We should live courageous lives with our heads up and our shoulders back, because the King has not just relieved us of our debt, but given us His honor and set us free from the domain of the world.

The stars may fall from heaven, but his love for me will stand because his love for me is not based on my perfection. It's based on his perfection. The determining factor in my relationship with the Father is not my past or my present, but Christ's past and Christ's present.

--- Tim Keller

The late Tim Keller—I couldn't get through this sermon without quoting him—says this: “The stars may fall from heaven, but his love for me will stand because his love for me is not based on my perfection. It's based on his perfection. The determining factor in my relationship with the Father is not my past or my present, but Christ's past and Christ's present.”

That's how we're supposed to live.

Here's a third application, and that's if you're seeking the truths of the Gospel, the one true God and the one whom He sent. You need to understand that it might be the Spirit working in your life, convicting you that your best isn't good enough and your debt payments are not even a drop in an ocean. You have to quit that whole way of thinking you can have forgiveness. You have to understand that you're not forgiven in the context of righteousness so that you can now be on a forever performance review and always be checking in, and God has His list of stuff. No. His righteousness is given to you as a gift as well.

And the last thing is—listen, you don't have to live in this dominion of darkness where you just do whatever makes you feel good, look good, and feel satisfied. You can be given a new King. There's no debt, there's no shame, and there's now power over that, and no authority in your life except God himself. That's what we learn here.

When you see this passage, we're supposed to say, *Wow, Jesus, You should leave. Let me get the door for you.* It's hard to even say that. But Jesus says it twice. He says, *I need to leave so I can prepare a place for you for eternity, so I can give you a mission and a cause, so that I can answer your prayers, and so that I can send a supernatural salvation to you.* That's why He says, "My peace I leave you, my peace I give to you." *I'm going to have to leave to make that happen.* And so, He did. And now we can appreciate it.

It's still hard for me to say it—*Jesus, You should leave.*

Spiritual Gifts

Here's another thing ... pause ... here's another thing that we get with the Holy Spirit that I'd like to bring up. And that is that when the Holy Spirit comes into your spirit—the moment it happens—it's like if you've ever had a social event and someone brings a gift, a housewarming gift. It's like that. The Holy Spirit show up into our souls, into our spirits, and He gives us a gift. In the Bible it's called a spiritual gift. And He gives us that gift to help us build up the Church and help each other so that we might become like Christ in all of life. The spiritual gift is this. Spiritual gifts are gifts to do certain things well, given by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church. We're all gifted to serve.

And we're going to spend the next two weeks talking more about the spiritual gifts. And then we're going to spend the next ten years re-emphasizing it. We're going to say over and over again, *Hey, what are your spiritual gifts? And how are you using them at the church?*

So, here's how we can get started on this. This is your homework assignment for this week. Everybody go online—go to the website at grace360.org and on the home page there's a "Gifted to Serve" logo. Click on that. There's a spiritual gift assessment tool. And you're going to answer simple questions and at the end of those it's going to print out for you three of the top possible spiritual gifts you might have. In the next two or three weeks, in the next ten days or ten years, we'll be talking about how to use those gifts in the local church. But everybody who is listening, everybody who visits our church, this is your home church. Go and take that assessment so that we can all be on the same page, especially starting next week. Would you do that? Sure, I'll do that.

Well, let's end today with being thankful. It's really hard for me to say this: that we can be thankful that Jesus left. I've said it two hours now; I've said it six times in each hour, and it's hard to believe. But that's what He said. It must be true.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we are glad you left. Because now the Holy Spirit indwells every spirit of every believer. And even to get there your Spirit preceded you and convicted us of our sin. And what a dreadful moment that was. It led to us quitting—quitting trying to earn Your approval through good deeds or through self-deprecation. You set us free from that. You gave us Your righteousness. And we thank You that Your Spirit convicted us that we can't even clean up our own righteousness and make it worthy of being in Your presence. And finally, that we're no longer pawns of this culture, of this world and of our own pride. We can turn our lives over to you. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in my life, in my choices.

We're grateful for the Spirit not just convicting us of those things, but giving us the power to live a life that doesn't just have a supernatural salvation, but a supernatural lifestyle that reflects that; a life filled with God stories. Because Your Spirit lives within us. We're glad You left so that Your Spirit could live within us. We pray that we might live lives in a way that would give You glory and all that we speak of and brag about is You and what You've done. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.