

Benefits of Belief X -- The Filling of the Spirit - Part II. When it comes to living a Christian Life, we have a choice.

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- [0 : 0 0] And we are going to be continuing a theme that we began several weeks ago, which has to do with gracious provisions that God has made for each and every believer.
- These are realities provided for us from the time that we have trusted Christ as our Savior. I call them the benefits of being a believer.
- I suppose there are several different names that you could give to it. Gracious provisions God has made for the saints or whatever. There's almost no end to how it could be characterized. But the end result is this.
- It has to do with God's provision for his people to live a life that is pleasing to him, beneficial to them, so that the abundant life of which Christ spoke in John chapter 10 is realized in the life of a believer.
- We are not to endure our Christianity. We are to enjoy it. No one should enjoy life and all that it has to offer more than the child of God.
- [1 : 1 4] And in connection with this subject on the filling of the Spirit or living a Spirit-filled life, I want to make it very clear at the outset, and I probably should have done this last week, I am not an authority on this issue.
- I trust that no one looks to me as that, because if you do, you will be misled. If you are wondering, do I understand all that this involves, the intricacies of it, and do I really have a good, clear handle on it, the answer is, of course not.
- Of course not. But if I wait until I do, when will I teach this? I never will. So, we teach to the level of our understanding and comprehension for where we are at the time.
- I have never, in my, what is it, in my 37 years here with you, I have never fully understood anything that I have taught you.
- And I don't expect to. Because I have a mere human mind with severe limitations, and there are so many things that I do not grasp nearly as well as I would like.
- [2 : 3 5] So, all I can do is teach to the level of my current understanding. That's all anybody can do. And yet, it is line upon line, precept upon precept.
- We learn a little. We grow a little. We back up a little. Because we learn some things that we once thought were so, aren't so. And we reverse ourselves.
- We repent regarding certain things. And we go at it again. And this is the learning process. This is the only way that anybody can learn and anybody can teach.
- So, if you ever have anyone stand before you who claims to fully know their subject, no matter what it is, so that they know it inside and out, and that they've got all of the answers to the questions, just politely get up and walk out of the room.

Because they're not worth listening to. They're a waste of time. I do not know of anyone who is an expert on anything. Now, I mean, I know there are a whole lot of people who know a whole lot more about a whole lot of things than what I do or what you do.

[3 : 47] But an expert isn't simply somebody who knows more about something than somebody else. A true expert, in my opinion, is somebody who really knows the subject fully, thoroughly, completely, has it down cold.

You know what that means? There's just one expert. There's just one expert. All the rest of us are just learners.

We are disciples. That's all. So, with that caveat in mind, I want to continue the theme that we have been pursuing on the filling of the Spirit.

And, by the way, I understand that one of our sources for recording malfunctioned last week, but there was a backup provided for last week's message.

So, anybody who would want to get last week's message and didn't get it or were told last week that it didn't record, we did have a backup of it. And copies are available according to the date, which I think would be October 18.

[4 : 59] And there's a stack of them back there on the table in the corner, so it is available. The baptism by the Holy Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ occurs at the point of salvation.

It is highly unlikely that anyone who trusts Christ and receives eternal life at that point of salvation, it's highly unlikely that they know or knew anything about this.

They were anointed by the Holy Spirit, they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and they were sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption. All of these were a one-time event that happened simultaneously with you coming to faith in Jesus Christ.

These are provisions that God has made on your behalf. You were a recipient of all of these realities, whether or not you understood it, appreciated it, knew it, felt it, or anything else.

All of these things happened to you at the point of salvation. You did not affect any of these works by the Holy Spirit, and as I've said, you were not even aware of them.

[6 : 20] But you, as the recipient of them, benefit from them. These are positional realities. This means just by virtue of your position, being in Christ, all of these ministries of the Spirit of God are true of you.

They are not true of some believers and untrue of other believers. This is for everyone in the body of Christ.

The filling of the Holy Spirit, however, is different in several ways. And our key text for this that we've already considered is Ephesians 5 and verse 18, wherein the apostle said that we are not to be intoxicated with wine, but we are to be filled by the Spirit.

And this means a perpetual filling. It means that we are to... The text in the Greek literally says, Be ye being filled.

It is an ongoing, continuous action. It is not a once-for-all type thing. So, if I may, I would like to just point out some of the areas in which the filling of the Spirit is not to be confused with and is different from the anointing, the indwelling, the sealing, and the baptism.

[7 : 51] First of all, we are commanded to be continually filled. Ephesians 5.18 Secondly, we are strategically involved in cooperation.

That means you are not filled by the Spirit without your cooperation. This isn't something that God just visits upon you and you had nothing to do with it.

It isn't a bolt out of the blue. The filling of the Spirit involves your cooperation. The presence of the Holy Spirit, which every believer has, and Romans 8.9 makes this very clear, that if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

So, what we are talking about regarding the filling of the Spirit is available only to those who possess Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. This is a divine operating asset, but it is limited to the family.

It is only for those who are believers. And if one is not a believer in Christ, and probably wouldn't even have an interest in what we are talking about.

[9 : 13] But we need to understand that this is only for members of the household of faith. If you are not in Christ, then the first step for you is to recognize your need of Him, your own inability to save yourself, or clean yourself up, or make yourself acceptable to God, and place yourself at the mercy of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ, and receive His forgiveness and His salvation.

Then, and only then, are you in a position to realize these other things. So, the presence of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee His filling.

It merely guarantees His availability and cooperation. The filling of the Holy Spirit is a divine provision of condescension on the part of deity.

God condescends to cooperate with us. He is a condescending God. He is accustomed to condescending.

By condescending, I mean stooping and coming down to where we are. The incarnation, God being in the flesh and being made a man, was an act of extreme condescension on His part.

[10 : 42] He came down to our level. And in the filling of the Spirit, God graciously condescends to cooperate with us.

He makes His power and office available to believers who, as a result of their own will, call upon Him for strength and wisdom.

The power of the Holy Spirit is unleashed at the discretion of the yielded or submitted believer. And with that in mind, I want to refer you back to Romans chapter 6 just to refresh your memory and to get this on the table again so it will be clear in the forefront of our minds as we're talking about it.

We are talking about this yieldedness. The yieldedness is nothing more than a surrender. It is an act of submission. And with what do you submit?

You submit with the only thing that you have to submit with. That's your will. Your volition. Romans chapter 6.

[12 : 00] And if you would, look at verse 7. Well, let's start again with verse 6, can we? Yeah, let's start again with verse 6. Well, verse 5.

For if, and this is a first class conditional clause, if, and it means since, it doesn't mean maybe we have, maybe we haven't, it ought to be rendered since, verse 5.

Since we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, this is Christ's death of course, certainly we, and when Paul uses the term, the pronoun we, he is including himself, and the Christian constituency that makes up the church at Rome, to whom he is writing.

So, this is a corporate we, and we would expand that to mean that the we includes all believers everywhere, in the body of Christ. Since we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Knowing this, we do not suspect this, we do not hope this, or wish this, we know this. This is a fact.

[13 : 26] Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him. This old self is the flesh. It is the old Adamic nature that each of us possesses, and that very often possesses us.

And when we are possessed by the flesh, we do the deeds of the flesh that Gary read about earlier. The deeds of the flesh are manifest.

They are in Galatians chapter 5. It is a sordid, ugly list. And everything that the flesh does is destructive.

Everything the flesh does is destructive. It is counter to the plan and program of God. The end result of all of the works of the flesh, of course, is death.

Death is the destroyer. Satan is the destroyer. All of these things are in league with him. God is the creator and sustainer. Satan is the destroyer.

[14 : 39] God is the one who gives life. Satan is the one who takes life. The great combat of cosmic conflict has gone on from time immemorial, and it continues today.

Right now, there is a contest going on for you and for me. There is the power of the flesh and there is the presence of the spirit.

And Paul tells us in Galatians that the spirit and the flesh are at opposite extremes. They war against each other.

he goes on to describe this internal battle that is taking place in his heart and life. And it is within this body that this tug of war is going on.

The flesh lusts or wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. So, this conflict goes on and Paul says, this is really weird.

[15 : 44] You know, I know what I want to do and I know what I ought to do but I don't have the power to do it.

My will wants to go in one way but I have something else in me that is controlling and wants to pull me down.

And I know it isn't right and I don't want to go that way but I give in to it anyway. Oh, wretched man that I am! Who can deliver me from this?

And then he goes on to say, I thank my God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He can deliver us from this. And listen, Jesus Christ not only died on that cross to give us eternal life, but he died on that cross also to provide for us a victorious life in the meanwhile because until we get to the sweet by and by, we've got to contend with the nasty now and now.

And he has made provision for that as well. And that's what we're talking about. So, when Paul says our old self was crucified with him that our body of sin might be done away with, please don't take that as the way it reads because that's not what it means.

[17 : 14] That the body of sin might be done away with, that would be great. Just put out of the way so it is unavailable and we don't ever have to worry about it anymore. That is not reality. That's not what the text is saying.

That will be a reality when we have a glorified body and sin will no longer be an issue. But this isn't it. We are not there now.

What the meaning is is that because Christ is in us we have a power that is available to us that is greater in us than that which is in the world and it is more than adequate to compensate against the desires of the flesh, the temptations of the flesh, the pull and the tug of the world.

What God has provided within us in the person of the spirit of Christ is more than ample to overpower that. that the body of sin might be neutralized, made of no effect, cancelled out, nullified, but it isn't gone.

We are dead to sin. And it doesn't even make any difference if you don't believe that. If you are a believer, you are dead to sin. Someone says, oh buddy, not me, I'm not dead to sin.

[18 : 32] I do this and I do that. No, no, wait a minute. You are dead to sin. Sin is not dead to you.

You are dead to sin. That is your official position. And what that means is sin cannot, sin cannot overrule you and make you do what you do not want to do or what you know is not right to do.

You may succumb and you may give in to it, but it doesn't mean you have to. It means you choose to. You do not have to. The power that Christ provides is more than adequate to overcome the temptations of the flesh.

It depends on whether or not we utilize it. God will not make you utilize it. may I illustrate it this way? And there is no adequate illustration that really explains this, but perhaps this will help.

When you go to the airport and you walk down that long collapsible tunnel that connects the plane, you get on the plane and you are safely seat belted into your seat and those engines rev up and you roar off down the runway, do you realize that when that plane lifts and you start climbing, before you know it, you are at 35,000 feet and the pilot comes on and tells you about the weather in Atlanta and that we are cruising at 35,000 feet and there is a little turbulence ahead but we will go up to 37,000 feet and get above it and so on and so on.

[20 : 31] Do you think that all the while this is going on, that because your plane is airborne and you are flying, do you think for a moment that the law of gravity has been done away with?

If you think so, just cut the engines. It hasn't been done away with. it just means one thing. The law of aerodynamics and the law of jet propulsion rightly applied is more powerful and greater so that it is able to overcome the law of gravity while it still leaves the law of gravity very much in effect.

it hasn't gone anywhere. That's the way it is in the life of the believer. We may protest by saying things like, well, I am unable to resist temptation.

No, you're not. No, you're not. If you do not resist temptation, it's because you didn't want to resist. You wanted to do it. this is called sin.

It isn't called a mistake. Mistakes are unintentional. A mistake is something that you did, but you didn't mean to do it.

[22 : 05] That was not your intent. That's a mistake. We all make them. Sins are downright ugly in that we did it because we chose to do it.

As I said in our last message, just coming to grips with the reality of that will arm you and forewarn you that you really are responsible.

You are accountable. And, listen, you can do this. don't try to tell yourself, oh, I'm weak, I'm helpless, I can't help it, the temptation is too great.

Tommy rot. That's just a cop-out. You're just trying to make an excuse for yourself. You are trying to play the role of a victim. Poor little innocent victim.

It's not your fault. Well, yes, it is. Take responsibility. Step up to the plate. My fault. My bad.

[23 : 16] Buck stops here. This is on me. I'm not blaming the devil. I'm not blaming my twisted, warped childhood. I'm not blaming my mate. I'm not blaming my boss.

I chose to do that. I did. And, do you know, the beauty of that is, you can do something about that.

you can't do anything about your boss or your mate or your childhood, but you can do something about you. The buck stops with you. Once you take that responsibility, you know, I hesitate to use a personal illustration, but I don't know of one that's better or that fits the situation better.

1956. Yeah, there really was such a year. December of 1956, when I came to Christ as my personal savior, I had a two-pack-a-day habit, cigarettes.

LSMFT, lucky strike means fine tobacco. Boy, I like that tobacco.

[24 : 48] Especially after a meal or with a cup of coffee or breakfast in the morning. Nothing. That was dessert for me. But, you know, a few months after I became a believer, I started becoming uncomfortable.

about smoke. And Barbara, bless her heart, she never once, she never smoked, and she never once said, that's a filthy, rotten habit, you ought to give it up, I wish you didn't smoke, blah, blah, blah.

She never, never, she grew up with it in her home, because her stepfather smoked all the time. And she never nagged me about it, she never got on me about it, never told me I ought to quit or anything.

But I just started thinking about it, and I just started wondering, you know, if, if my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that's amazing in and of itself.

And that means I am a steward of this body, I have been bought with a price, I am not my own, I ought to exercise diligence about what I do with this body, what I don't do with it.

[25 : 59] and it seems to me that it might not be a good use of my body to take this weed wrapped up in paper called tobacco, light it on fire and then suck the smoke of that into this body.

that does not seem like a good thing. And I just began feeling, I didn't hear any sermons on the evils of tobacco or anything like that, but I just started feeling very uncomfortable and I decided, well, I want as much of me as possible to belong to the God who bought me in every way that I can, so I'm going to quit.

I'm just going to quit. Yeah. Well, the first day didn't go very well, but I did cut down to a pack and a half.

I didn't smoke as much and I started trying to figure out how could I get a handle on this. I came up with this brilliant idea. I'm going to give Barbara ten cigarettes in the morning and she is to ration these cigarettes out to me.

See, weakness is always looking for an accomplice and she's going to ration these cigarettes out to me. And after I have had the tenth one, no matter what I say, no matter how I beg or plead or threaten or anything else, she is not to give in with the eleventh cigarette.

[27 : 46] And the plan worked just fine up until about four o'clock in the afternoon and had a big fight because she wouldn't give me more than my quota of ten.

And all she was doing was holding her part of the agreement up that we had both previously agreed to. but she should have made an exception, you understand.

But she didn't. She could be a hard-headed little thing. She didn't. And finally, the second day, it got even worse. And after a while, she said, Marv, I'm not going to do this anymore.

If you want to smoke, you smoke. If you want to quit, you quit. Don't pull me into this and try to make me some kind of an irrational support mechanism for what you are not willing to do on your own.

Oh, well, thanks a lot. That's a nice, compassionate, dutiful wife. So, we spent a real quiet evening at home.

[29 : 04] And I struggled with this, and I'd go up and down, and I'd go up and down, and I, and you know, and one day, we were coming back from, we'd been down to the beach somewhere.

This is when we were still out in Washington State. And I was coming back, and I was just kind of down and disgusted with myself because, and I opened up a new pack, and took the top off, and got one out, and put it in my mouth, and reached for the cigarette lighter down there in the car.

And a thought came to me, it was just as if, it was just as if there was a third person in the car.

I didn't hear an audible voice, but I might as well have, and it was almost like I was standing outside of myself, and here's what I said to myself, Wiseman, you could give these things up if you really wanted to, and it just stunned me.

I said, what? What did I just say to myself? If I really wanted to? Well, of course I really want to, don't I?

[30 : 30] No. You don't really want to, because you like it.

You derive pleasure from it, enjoyment from it. It makes you feel good. It relaxes you. You like, you don't want to give these up.

That's why you haven't. And I says to myself, self, you're right.

I have done nothing but con myself. I have done nothing but tell myself I really wanted to give those up when I really didn't want to give those up.

Thank you for the insight. And I took that full pack and I just scrunched it, squeezed it in my hand, rolled down the window, threw the whole pack out, and I said, that's the end of that.

[31 : 42] And she said, what do you mean? And I said, I've just come to the reality of why this has been so difficult and why I haven't been able to quit. I never really wanted to.

She said, oh, I see. I don't think she was terribly convinced. And I don't mind telling you, the next month was very difficult. Very difficult.

Because I wanted a cigarette, my body wanted a cigarette. The nicotine fix was real, and I really, but I didn't have another, not one.

And that was the end of that. But there was no conquering that until I came to the reality that the problem was me, my will.

All I had done was sell myself a bill of goods. You poor little guy. You're trying so hard. You really want to give these things up so bad. And see how sincere you are?

[32 : 48] You've even got your wife helping you with it. And all the rest of this nonsense. It was just a simple matter of the will. And I am convinced this is the way it is with every sin that doth so easily beset.

This is the way it is. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. We like to do what we like to do.

We want to do what we want to do. But we sometimes realize that's not nice. That's not godly. That's not biblical. That's not Christian-like.

So why do I do that? Well, it's just because I can't help it. I'm just weak. I just don't. You know that verse in 1 Corinthians 13 or 10.

10 and 13, I think it is. Yeah. 10, 13. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man.

[33 : 56] But God will, with the temptation, make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it. God makes ways of escape, but God will not make you escape.

He just makes a way for you to escape. But he doesn't force you to escape. When Joseph was confronted with that situation with Potiphar's wife, he was provided a way of escape.

There were two good, young, sturdy legs with feet attached at the bottom. That was his way of escape, and he took it.

God always provides a way of escape. The question is whether or not we will utilize it. We do not have to yield to temptation.

Romans 6 says, yield, rather, your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. who does the yielding? You do. You do.

[35 : 09] Don't sit around and pray and ask God to make you yield. He won't. He won't. He will not override your volition.

God will not make you do the right thing. He will make provision for you to do the right thing. But you don't have to do the right thing.

And every time we don't, we displease God, we injure ourselves or someone else, and we sin. It's as simple as that.

And that always gets us into some kind of difficulty because nothing complicates human living like sin. The power of the Spirit of God is unleashed at the discretion of the yielded or submitted believer.

The filling of the Holy Spirit results in the deliberate decision of the believer's will to choose the will and way of God as opposed to one's own will and way of the flesh.

[36 : 21] love, joy, the filling of the Holy Spirit is the invoking of the power of Christ within so as to manifest his life and his love without.

Hence, the fullness of the Spirit produces the fruit of the Spirit. a la Galatians 5, 16-26.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, goodness, etc. The filling of the Holy Spirit is synonymous with the will of the believer being yielded to God whereby he presents himself to God on a continual ongoing basis.

And here, while we are in Romans chapter 6, look at verse 12. Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lust.

You do not have the right to say in response to that verse, oh, but I can't help it. Yes, you can. Yes, you can. Listen, God is not an unreasonable demanding taskmaster.

[37 : 41] He is not. God does not ask anything of you that he has not already enabled you to do. God does not demand or expect you to be anything that you cannot be.

He is not unreasonable. He is not demanding in that regard at all. His yoke is easy. His burden is light. God does need.

He is not some kind of a bully who goes around making all kinds of impossible demands from us poor little earthlings that we can't possibly fulfill. He does not do that. He is a kind, beneficent God.

And here in verse 12, Paul is saying, do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lust. You don't have to.

You don't have to do that. You, as a believer, you have an option. As an unbeliever, it's not the same.

[38 : 46] As an unbeliever, you still have a will, you still have a volition, you still have the knowledge of right and wrong, but you do not have supernatural power available to you to enable you to do the right.

You don't have that as an unbeliever. Your options are severely reduced, but as a Christian, you do. What this boils down to is this.

Now, this is a tough thing I'm going to lay on you, but I'm absolutely convinced this is what it is. There is absolutely no reason and no justification for you living a life that is not pleasing to God.

You have no excuse for that kind of a life. None. None. Not your upbringing, not your mate, not your circumstances, not your work, nothing. You have no excuse.

You have no excuse for not living the life that God wants you to live. You have no excuse. None. And of course, that means neither do I.

[39 : 52] None of us do. None of us do. one of my favorite preachers now with the Lord, Vance Habner, used to say, the average Christian life is so subnormal that if he ever became normal, people would think he is abnormal.

That's supposed to be the normal Christian life. And listen, what I am sharing with you, this is not for some spiritual elitist.

This is not for some very godly, spiritual, reverential, seasoned, old saint.

This is for everybody who names the name of Christ. This is God's standard for the normal Christian life.

Supernatural resources for normal living. And it's available to every one of us. someone submitted a question.

[41 : 18] Put it in the box. Very good question. I made the analogy about the pistol and the round in the chamber.

And when the trigger is pulled, the hammer comes back and hits the edge or the center of that round that's in the chamber and there's an explosion that takes place.

An enormous amount of energy is released and it propels that projectile through the only opening that is available to it.

And that is right through the barrel and out the muzzle of that gun. Now, you do not provide the power.

You pull the trigger. And when you pull the trigger, the mechanism goes into action and it produces the explosion.

[42 : 30] But there won't be an explosion or release of energy if you don't pull the trigger. trigger. So, where does it begin? With the trigger.

The question that was submitted was who pulls the trigger? You or Christ? The answer is you.

You pull the trigger. The trigger is your will, your volition. God will will be to the sovereignty of God.

Don't have such a warped view of the sovereignty of God that you can't even pull the trigger. He has to pull the trigger. And if he doesn't pull the trigger, the trigger doesn't get pulled, and there's no explosion, and there's no power, and there's no victory, there's just defeat.

But it's not my fault. God didn't pull the trigger. That's nonsense. Absolute nonsense. That, too, is just a cop-out.

[43 : 42] You see, we are so good at making excuses for ourselves as to why we aren't what we want to be, and why we aren't what we know we ought to be.

Well, it's because of this, and it's because of that, and it's because of something. No, it's because of me. it's because of me. I am the problem. And if I am the problem, guess who the solution is?

Me. Me. Me. Once we recognize that, you're in a position to do something about it.

you have arrived at a diagnosis, and there is no treatment until you get a diagnosis. It's a beautiful thing.

Let me explain quickly. Do I do anything quickly? Let me explain what the filling of the Holy Spirit is not, because I'm sure there are some questions.

[45 : 02] It is not a one-time experience. It is not a supernatural ability to perform miracles or speak fluently in a foreign language that you have not learned.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is not mystical or magical, nor is it a tingly emotional feeling of euphoria.

the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a spiritual experience available only to elite super-spiritual Christians who are deserving of the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Nobody deserves this, but it's graciously provided. The filling of the Spirit is not akin to the filling of a vessel, which is half full or three-fourths full, or are you filled with the Spirit, or are you only halfway filled with the Spirit?

It isn't a glass half empty, half full. That's not what we're talking about. The best description of the filling of the Spirit is to simply be under divine control.

[46 : 07] And you are under divine control when you are walking in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the flesh. Then you will carry out the desires of the Spirit, not the desires of the flesh.

The filling of the Spirit is nothing more than walking in an intelligent submission to the authority of Scripture. It is being responsive to the teaching of the Word of God and placing yourself under its authority.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is nothing more than a realization that God has made himself and his power available to you when you activate it by your will and are willing for God to have his way in your life.

Each time you are confronted with a decision, each time you are confronted with a moral decision, let me put it that way, a moral decision, you can go this way, the flesh, or you can go this way with the Spirit of God.

One of those honors God and his standards. You know which one it is. It's up to you as to which way you are going to go. You do not have to go the way of the flesh.

[47 : 27] You do not have to. You may choose to. And God will still love you just as much. He will not withdraw from you.

You may quench the Spirit. You may resist the Spirit. You may grieve the Spirit. but you cannot grieve him away.

The Spirit of God dwells in you and he is the seal until the day of redemption when your body is glorified and then the flesh is completely removed.

and then we have the mind of Christ. But in the meanwhile we've got this thing of the flesh and the will to deal with.

And I realize what I have given you this morning is perhaps not terribly clear to you. I must admit as I did at the outset.

[48 : 42] It isn't as clear to me as I would like it to be. But I'm trying to teach it anyway with the hope that whatever little clarity I have here you can pick up on and benefit from it and use it as one more rung on a spiritual ladder to step up and appreciate a little more and perhaps gain a little more insight.

Are there other questions or comments? Anyone? This is amazing.

I thought there would be hands up all over the place. Well, we will continue on with this theme, not with the filling of the Spirit, and especially since there are no questions, I don't see any pressing need to continue in the vein, but we will pursue the theme that we began about the benefits of being a believer and we will follow this course for the next few weeks.

So, thank you for your kind attention. Let's have a word of prayer and we'll dismiss. Loving Father, Father, we have faced a reality, and for some of us it might be a new kind of reality about ourselves and about your provision.

And we just want to pause even now and thank you for the gracious operation that you have made available to us by the indwelling Spirit and for the revelation that you have given us regarding our own volition, our own will, how that we are very adept at deceiving ourselves because the heart is deceitful above all things, desperately wicked.

[50 : 49] Who can know it? Sometimes we don't even know and understand our own motives, but we really do believe that when we want to and when we are open to your truth, you are more than pleased to reveal truth to us.

And we ask that as a result of what we have considered this morning, realizing that there are many gaps left open, there are many holes that are unfilled, and many areas of understanding that we just don't really grasp, would you be pleased to take what we have understood and what we have shared and help it to make sense to each of us.

And anything that has been uttered from the flesh, as opposed to the spirit, we just pray the spirit of God will remove it from our thinking and our minds and allow it to pass away.

And what has been generated by the spirit of God, may it be fruitful and come to full fruition and productivity in the lives of each of us.

We pray in Christ's name and for his sake. Amen. Don't forget your handouts. Please take one per family. Thank you.