

## The Jesus Series: RELY, Part 6

Sunday, November 18, 2018

### John 7:37-39

If you are visiting with us, as a church we are currently in a journey through the Gospel of John. For the past 6 weeks we have been hovering over one particular passage in **John, chapter 7:37-39** which is on your handout, and have been talking about the gift of the Holy Spirit. Today will probably be our last day in this little mini series we have called RELY.

So what is the BIG IDEA of this RELY series? If we had to summarize this last 6 weeks...

**The BIG IDEA of RELY:** Christ followers must constantly resist the inclination to depend upon human faculties for help and fulfillment; and should instead demonstrate total dependence on Christ by continually seeking the transformative presence of the promised Holy Spirit.

As I have said several times, I want this idea of RELY to permeate our lives, and to serve as a distinguishing characteristic of this church. Today and onward, I want this to be before us. I do not do this often, but if you missed a sermon in the past 6 weeks I encourage you to go back and listen to those on the website or podcast. This one sentence cannot capture all that we have discussed, but it does get to the heart of the matter. And this BIG IDEA statement is built on **5 principles** that have permeated this series:

- 1) **Your soul thirsts.** We spent a lot of time talking about spiritual thirst. This is the language that Jesus uses in **John 7**, when he stands up among the crowd and says “**if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink**”. Jesus uses the physical to explain the spiritual. Your soul thirsts - which I define as the **longing for purpose and satisfaction**.
- 2) **You are inclined to depend on that which is natural.** You seek that which can quench the thirst of your soul. The obstacle is that we tend to look to **human faculties** (*this means our natural capabilities, natural capacities, natural solutions; your sense, your means, your reason, your power*). When you are young, you may RELY heavily on your IDEALS, your education, and how you think things should be. When you are older, you may RELY heavily on your experience, tradition, or how you have always operated. But as you long for purpose and satisfaction in life - you are inclined to find fulfillment in *your self or that which your self can create*.
- 3) **The call of Christ to come be satisfied, is the call to salvation.** Back in John 7, Jesus says **if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me.** This is a call to receive a new way of life, in which you stop depending on that which is natural and instead RELY totally upon Christ for **everything**. The invitation to come and drink, is the invitation to be - as he bible calls it - Born Again. Christianity is not primarily about believing facts and participating in religious rituals. Being saved is not merely about reciting a statement or praying a prayer. Salvation is about coming to Christ for the satisfaction of your soul. Your eyes are opened to your need: Sin has separated you

from God, every place you have sought fulfillment has dead ended. You hear the call of Christ to come and drink, and your weary, dry soul turns to him. **Is he able to satisfy? Is he willing to help you?** And the resounding answer to those questions is YES! Today I implore you, be reconciled to God by believing upon Jesus; not as a historical figure, but as the satisfier of your soul. **\*PRAY\***

- 4) **The way in which Christ satisfies your soul is distinctly practical.** John 7 again, “**If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive’.**” When you say YES - I believe Christ **is willing and able** to satisfy my soul - God the Father and God the Son send God the Spirit to abide in you. And in some ways that sounds rather mystical, because He is not visible. But this reality is distinctly practical because God the Spirit is a person; And just like breath or wind (*meanings of the word Spirit*) you can feel His presence and you can see his effects upon you. And Jesus says this how your soul will be satisfied when you come to Him. We have discussed how surprising the words of Jesus are about the Holy Spirit. If given the choice, do you think it would be better to have the physical presence of Jesus where you had access to him; where you could hear his voice, listen to his teaching, have him tell you what to do OR Would it be better to have the Spirit? And Jesus taught in **John 16:7** that the reality of the Holy Spirit is so practical, so tangible - that it is more beneficial for you that Jesus physically leave the earth and instead send the Holy Spirit to be with you and in you.
- 5) **The reality of the Holy Spirit in you should be life-altering.** His presence is transformative. Too many Christians agree with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, yet fail to benefit experientially from His presence. And this should not be. The New Testament tells us to be FILLED with the Spirit (**Eph 5:18**) which in the Greek literally means ‘*Be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit*’. Last week we talked about how throughout ACTS believers are said to have been FILLED with the Spirit, and each and every time what followed was increased or extraordinary power for life and ministry.

If we do not seek the power of the Spirit (everyday) then we are continuing to give into the inclination of relying on human faculties; and ultimately our lives, our marriages, our families, our churches, our ministries, our witness, our legacies will be much weaker than they had to be.

If I were Satan and my ultimate goal was to thwart God’s kingdom and purposes, one of my main strategies would be to get churchgoers to ignore the Holy Spirit. Without Him, people operate in their own strength and only accomplish human-size results. The world is not moved by love or actions that are of human creation. And the church is not empowered to live differently from any other gathering of people without the Holy Spirit. But when believers live in the power of the Spirit, the evidence in their lives is supernatural. The church cannot help but be different, and the world cannot help but notice. – **Forgotten God by Francis Chan**

For the rest of our time today, I want to continue from last week thinking through the practical impact of believers, the church, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and walking in His power. In **principle #1**, I said your soul thirsts, it longs for purpose and satisfaction. In **principle # 4**, I

argue that Christ says He satisfies the thirst of your soul by sending you the Holy Spirit when you turn to him in faith. So could it be that a believer wrestling with the meaning of life, needs to ask for the Holy Spirit with impudence (as we saw last week Jesus taught in [Luke 11](#))? What if a key to understanding your purpose in life, is to get on your face each day and ask God for a fresh infilling of His presence through the Holy Spirit?

I want you to see 4 ways in which I believe the Holy Spirit specifically empowers our purpose as believers.

- The Holy Spirit conforms you into the Image of Jesus.

Numerous NT passages speak of God's plan to transform you into the likeness of His son, not physically but through attributes such as moral character, mindset, behaviors, reasonability, and fellowship with God. [Romans 8:29](#) may be one of the clearest on this **For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.** The stated goal of God for your life, is that you would be like Jesus. He is moving you from the old image of the fallen man, Adam; and making you into the new image of the perfected and glorified God-man, Jesus Christ. There is a big church word for this and it is called **Sanctification** and [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#) says unequivocally: **For this is the will of God, your sanctification...** And furthermore the Holy Spirit is working in you to give power and effect for this change. [2 Corinthians 3:18](#) speaks to this as does [1 Cor 6:11](#) - **You were washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.** Let me encourage us, DO NOT let this be a small thing to you - that God has chosen not just to save you, but to remake you into the image of the King of all creation; and He has placed his spirit in you to empower this purpose in your life. So ask for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit to bring about Christ-likeness in increasing measure.

- The Holy Spirit unites you with other Christians.

[Corinthians 12:13](#) speaks of the unity of believers saying, **For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.** At the moment you look to Christ for the satisfaction of your soul you are immersed by the Spirit into the **Ecclesia**; which is the Greek word we translate as church; the assembly of believers. God is saving a people and molding them into one. And HE has ordained for their to be local Ecclesias wherever there are believers. Local churches serve as an expression of the larger, global church of which all of us are made to be apart of. You are not saved in isolation. The idea of private faith, not lived out in community with other believers, is not a biblical idea. It is an American cultural idea. The Spirit unites you to other Christians and He is completing the same purpose of Christlikeness in them that He is completing in you. And we are called to love, encourage, equip, rebuke, teach, and share with one another as we all grow up together in spiritual maturity. The Holy Spirit empowers God's purpose to join you into His family. It is my conviction that every Christian should belong to a church. I don't care if you use the word membership. There is nothing wrong with that word - except for many of us we have a wrong idea of what being a member is. If you are a member of a gym or of a club - it means you pay dues and then you receive benefits. But **belonging to a church** is much, much different. It is primarily about investment. That is how we describe it here. What does it mean to belong to this

church? It means that you are committing yourself to the shared mission and purpose of this assembly; that you are going to invest yourself in other believers who are being made into the image of God and you will allow others to invest in you for the same goal - all for His glory!

- The Holy Spirit points you to Service.

Most of the time when we think about purpose, we desire to do something significant. We want to make a difference, and leave a mark. We might use the term greatness - we want to be great. The disciples of Jesus would argue among themselves about this and it has always struck me how Jesus never rebuked them for it. What he did was redefine for them what it meant to be great. In the Gospels, such as **Mark 10:43-45** Jesus said **"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."** What if we have so much trouble finding satisfaction and knowing our purpose - because we do not have a true sense of what greatness really is? For the Christian who desires to be GREAT, here is the path: **Serve**. See yourself as a servant to all. **Jesus emptied himself to take the form of a servant (Phil 2:7)** and it is the purpose of Christ for us to the same. It is evident throughout the narratives of Acts, and the instructions in the NT epistles, that the Holy Spirit points you to do the same. Naturally this will be hard - **because you cannot serve without sacrifice**. To serve you must give something up - you will have to relinquish your time, your money, your energy, your home, your desires. Christian author Marshall Segal said that *the call to live and be great is a call to serve and die*. You won't always want to serve and meet a need. But the Spirit will empower you to push past your natural inclinations of finding satisfaction in what you can accumulate and help you experience the grand purpose for which you have been called: finding satisfaction in what you can give of yourself for the glory of God.

- The Holy Spirit gifts you, so that you may impact others effectively.

God is so serious about us serving, that He sends His Holy Spirit to be in us and to give us Spiritual gifts. Spiritual gifts are various supernatural enableings of grace given to Christians by the Holy Spirit to be used to build others up and point them to Jesus. There are several NT passages on Spiritual gifts - including: **1 Cor 12:4-7**. And this passage from Peter in his first letter to the church **As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace. 1 Peter 4:10**. So we could do a whole series on spiritual gifts - as a matter of fact we did, which I will tell you about in a moment. But let me say this briefly based on this texts: Each believer has a gift (probably more than one). Your gifts are a means of bringing grace to the lives of those around you, especially in the Ecclesia. Notice what we are stewarding in **1 Peter 4:10**, we are stewarding God's varied grace. We do this by using our gifts to serve each other. Your gifts are not to make you unique, or create a name for yourself; the point of your gifts are not to elevate you above anyone else; the point of your supernatural enablement is that you might impact others effectively for God's glory and advance His Kingdom. And in His purpose you will find your own. **1 Cor 12:10** says **All (gifts) are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills**. So the Holy Spirit gives gifts as He wills and in doing so empowers our God given purpose. There is nothing more rewarding than to be able to join Christ in what He is doing in another believer's life.

*Much like Paul said to the Corinthians, I do not want us to be uninformed about Spiritual Gifts. (Introduce books, honor Kadie, Remind them they are raw sermons, I have electronic copies, have parents permission if you are under 15)*

2 Encouragements:

First, Let your gifts help your service to others, not hinder it.

Don't wait to discover your gifts until you serve. And don't assume your gift is the only way God intends for you to serve. Remember the goal is Kingdom advancement.

Secondly - Not asking for the Spirit, not seeking to conform to Christ, not aiming to serve or using your gifts - can result in a loss of purpose. Aimlessness can lead you to sin. And it can also lead you to wandering.