

Summer Mix Tape Part 5

The Forgotten God

Romans 8:11

Memory Verses: Romans 8:11

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

This summer we are mixing it up a little. For almost seven years I have preached exclusively through either books of the Bible or topical studies. This summer we are in a non-series series where each week is a new topic. Three weeks ago David Pierce talked to us about having a positional attitude in Christ. Two weeks ago Jim Bradshaw spoke to us on the dangers of an apostate church. And, last week I spoke about the American Covenant. If you've missed any of those messages please check them out on our website or Facebook page.

This week we are going to be looking at a subject that I wish I could address more and hopefully will in a series next year. The subject is the Forgotten God, or more specifically, the Holy Spirit. You may think that calling the Holy Spirit the forgotten God is a bit extreme but I don't. In my opinion the Holy Spirit has been tragically neglected for far too long and for all practical purposes has been forgotten, not just by secular society, but by the church itself. Francis Chan, in his book *Forgotten God*, says, "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." This cannot be tolerated and must be addressed.

Some people talk a lot about, or even boast about, the Spirit, but their lives don't produce any of His fruit. Others speak about Him in theological terms but don't have any connection with an experience of His actual power. Still many simply ignore Him and rarely feel a relationship or intimacy with God.

My purpose this morning is to awaken us to our need for the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our church and to show us how to make him relevant and real in the way we live. When I read the Bible I see the necessity of a life fully surrendered to, and dependent upon, the Holy Spirit. **Romans 8:11** says, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." If the Holy Spirit moves, nothing can stop Him. If he doesn't move, we will not produce fruit, we will not exhibit a genuine example of Christ to the world, and we will not find the strength to push through complacency and trials. Most of all, **if the Holy Spirit doesn't move we will continue to be satisfied with the superficial means of this world rather than the**

supernatural moving of God.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to recognize this morning is that... **Without The Holy Spirit We Cannot Be Transformed.** If we were to understand what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit we would undoubtedly have an eager desire for Him in our lives. In **John 14:16** Jesus comforts his disciples by telling them that he is sending them another helper. In **John 16:7** he says that it is to their advantage that He leaves and the Holy Spirit comes. In essence, **it's better for you to have the Holy Spirit in you than to have Jesus physically with you.** That is almost too much to comprehend. For those of us who struggle to even see the effects of the Spirit in us or feel his power through us, we would probably say, "I'd much rather have a physical Jesus over an invisible Spirit." But Jesus assures us that the Spirit is better.

If we actually believed this then we would expect a great deal from the Holy Spirit and he would not be forgotten in our churches. And we would expect our new lives in the Holy Spirit to look much different than our lives without him. Unfortunately this is not the case for most. For some reason we don't think we need Him and we don't expect him to act in our lives.

After all, haven't we gotten along just fine without Him anyway? Our churches seem to grow without Him. With a combination of nice facilities, charismatic speakers, talented worship teams, creative events, and children's and youth programs we can get people to attend a 1 hour a week service. With catchy tunes and positive messages we can get our music on the radio. With enough marketing we can get the word out that we are the best show in town... but it certainly does not mean that people walk out the doors moved to worship, are convicted of their sins, and are being transformed to be more like Christ.

How can we be saved and yet not feel the Spirit living inside of us? How can we be the church yet not depend on his power to transform us? **Romans 8:9** tells us that we are not in the flesh but the Spirit if the Spirit dwells in us. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** tells us that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. If it's true that the Spirit of God lives in us then shouldn't there be a huge difference between the person who has the Spirit and the one who doesn't? **When the world sees no difference in our lives they question our integrity, sanity, or even worse, our God.**

I think about the **caterpillar**. I'm sure you've all seen this book, the hungry caterpillar. He eats and eats and eats. What a boring life. Slinking along very slowly from one limb to the next just eating leaves. The caterpillar most likely doesn't think his life has much purpose or meaning but to simply exist. So what does he do? He does what most of us do when we get depressed with life. He eats some more and then takes a very very long nap. Why get up when this is all there is to life. But one day he finally decides to get out of bed. But something is drastically different this time.

What could it be. Wait, I've got wings? And they are beautiful? What happened to my plump wormy body? Now I'm a beautiful specimen. And I can fly? Whoa... this is... this is pretty incredible. I'm totally different. I'm totally transformed. And then he flies away to live his best life. Pretty cool huh? As believers we should experience the same thing with the Holy Spirit. Once we were meandering through this life just eating whatever we thought could satisfy us but now in the Spirit we have purpose, a new outlook, a new hope and joy to sustain us. Now we can fly! Go back to **Romans 8:11**. The power of the one who raised Christ from the dead lives in you now and now you are raised to new life too! I don't know what the spirit will do or where he will lead me but I know this... I am tired of living like those who have no idea of the Holy Spirit. I want to live with an awareness of his power. I want to be different today than I was yesterday. I want to be transformed. **if the Holy Spirit doesn't move we will continue to be satisfied with the superficial means of this world rather than the supernatural moving of God.**

The second thing we need to recognize this morning is that... **Without The Holy Spirit We Cannot Be Empowered.** So we know the Holy Spirit lives in us and has the power to transform us, but how exactly? It is very important that we know what we believe about the Holy Spirit because what we believe determines how we will respond to him. A bad theology of the Holy Spirit will lead us down the wrong path towards inerrancy and heresy, while a good theology of the Holy Spirit will lead us toward a true relationship with Him.

So what exactly does the Bible tell us about the Holy Spirit? First, He is God and He is in the lead. As one of the persons of the trinity, the Holy Spirit above all is God. He is all knowing, all powerful, and ever present. You can't contain him, categorize him, or control him. He does what he wants when he wants to. **Isaiah 40:13** implies that the Spirit of the Lord is immeasurable and needs no counsel from us. **1 Corinthians 12:11** tells us that the gifts of the Spirit are given to individuals as he wills. Meaning, as God in us, He will do through us what he alone desires to do! He has plans for us and a desire for our transformation. But don't ever think you can lead him! **The Holy Spirit is the leader of our souls. We can choose to follow Him or not, but make no mistake, we cannot lead him!**

Secondly, He has emotions and can be grieved. **Isaiah 63:10** and **Ephesians 4:30** both tell us that the Holy Spirit can be grieved. I don't know how that hits you, but it blows my mind. I don't know how to process the fact that my sin can make God grieved. My sin hurts him. It causes a rift in our connection and when there is a breach in our relationship it must be mended. If our sin hurts him, then it should hurt us more! If we truly cared about the Holy Spirit's grief more than our own

personal grief perhaps there would be fewer fights, divorces, and church splits.

And thirdly, of course, He empowers us to live supernaturally. Naturally I want to live in sin and selfishness. Naturally its all about me and getting mine. The only way I can live differently is with the power of the Spirit. **Mark 13:11** tells us that the Spirit helps us speak when we don't know what to say. He can literally put words in our mouths. Words that are better than my words. He does it for me every Sunday. According to **John 14:26** He helps us to know the truth, remember the truth, and live according to the truth of God's word. In **Romans 8:26** He prays for us when we don't know what to pray. In **Acts 1:8** He gives us power to boldly witness for him to the ends of the earth. In **Romans 15:13** He fills us with joy, peace, faith, and hope. In **Ezekiel 36:26-27** He softens our hearts to his will and causes us to walk in his ways and obey his commands. In **1 Corinthians 2:13** He gives us the ability to interpret spiritual truths. In **Romans 8:2** he gives us the power to put to death our sin. In **John 16:8** he gives us the gift of conviction of our sins. In **1 Corinthians 12:7-11** he gives us the gifts of the manifestation of the Spirit to encourage the Church. In **Galatians 5:22-23** he gives us the fruits of the Spirit; attitudes which draw people to the love of Christ. And in **Romans 8:10** and **2 Corinthians 3:17** there is true abundant life and freedom. Why would you not want the power of the Holy Spirit in your life? Why would you want to grieve him with your sin when with his help you can truly live and be free and find a purpose beyond yourself? Allow him to lead you! **If the Holy Spirit doesn't move we will continue to be satisfied with the superficial means of this world rather than the supernatural moving of God.**

The last thing we need to recognize this morning is that... **Without The Holy Spirit Our Churches Will Be Impotent.** Augustine said, "what the soul is in our body, the Holy Spirit is in the Body of Christ, which is the church." In **1 Kings 18** we see a story of a church service. The preacher is named Elijah and his message is simple; God is the only God and other gods like Baal are false idols. The invitation was clear. Stop worshipping your false god and accept the true God. Now this simple message could have easily fallen on deaf ears as messages preached on Sundays often do. Or, the people could have easily left the service saying, the music was good, and that Elijah, man he can preach, but that would have been it. Instead, the people all left radically changed, on their knees crying out in **1 Kings 18:39**; "The Lord, he is God, The Lord, he is God." Why? What made the difference? Simple: the fire of God literally fell down! The people were changed because the words of the prophet were accompanied by the power of God!

This example should remind us that often we are just like the prophets of Baal, running around trying to conjure up some kind of

manifestation of God, rather than simply relying on him to do what he's going to do! We are going to have to get to the point where we throw up our hands and let the Holy Spirit do his thing! If we can make something happen in our own strength then it's just human. **The church becomes irrelevant when it becomes purely a human creation.** We shouldn't want a life or a church that can be explained apart from the Holy Spirit. I want people to look at my life and my church and know that I couldn't be doing any of this in my own power! I guess it comes down to this. Are you in desperate need of the Holy Spirit's power or are you okay on your own? **The Holy Spirit often shows up when there is nothing left to steal his glory! If the Holy Spirit doesn't move we will continue to be satisfied with the superficial means of this world rather than the supernatural moving of God.**

Application

So you say, "Shevi, that's great. I agree that the Holy Spirit is awesome and that I need him in my life. But what do I need to do differently than what I'm already doing to see Him move in me?"

First, I would say, if you are a believer, you already have the Holy Spirit in you and He is working even if you can't feel it or see it. He is always working behind the scenes. Secondly, I would say that in order to see Him working in your life to visibly transform you, empower you, and consume you with his fire then you should be focused on four main obstacles.

The first obstacle is Comfort. Perhaps your life is too safe and easy. When we don't feel like we need help we don't often ask for it. Why would we need the comforter to help us when we are already comfortable. If you need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit in your life then it is quite possible that you need to surrender some comforts, give away some wealth or luxuries, and find a place where you actually need his help!

The second obstacle is Volume. Perhaps your life is too loud. Are you too busy or too entertained to spend some quiet attentive time with God. It is hard to feel God when you are experiencing everything the world puts in front of you. It's hard to hear from God when you don't stop and take time to listen. A fresh filling of the Holy Spirit often comes to those who spend concentrated time in prayer and in His word. Perhaps it is time for you to stop and be still before the Lord.

The third obstacle is Emotion. God loves emotions. He created them. But what he doesn't care for too much is when you allow your emotions to determine your belief or actions. Many people are looking for the Holy Spirit to set them "on fire." But often being filled with Holy Spirit is simply being obedient to God and living according to his commands. Stop chasing a feeling and chase the truth of who the Holy Spirit is

according to the word of God.

And the fourth obstacle is Pride. There are a lot of people who don't like to ask for help. No wonder they ignore the helper. The point of all of this is simple. You can't do it by yourself! You can only do anything great for the kingdom and for the glory of God if you allow the Spirit of God to work through you! At some point you are going to have to be desperate for help. At some point you are going to have to cry out for his help and his power in your life! If you have not known and experienced God in ways you cannot deny, I would suggest that you are not living in a needy and dependent way.

Conclusion

So ask yourself these questions. When is the last time I surrendered to the leading of the Holy Spirit and allowed him to transform me? If you can't answer the question, "when was the last time I was changed to be more like Christ in my daily walk" then you need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit today.

When is the last time you felt the power of God in your life? If you can't answer the question, "what power is evident in my life right now that I couldn't conjure on my own" then you need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

When is the last time I saw God send down fresh fire upon his church? If you can't recall the last time you saw the Holy Spirit show up in an unexplainable way then you and your church need a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit today!

Surrender your comfort, spend some quiet time with God, quit waiting for an emotional experience, and drop your pride and desperately call upon Him this morning! **If the Holy Spirit doesn't move we will continue to be satisfied with the superficial means of this world rather than the supernatural moving of God.**